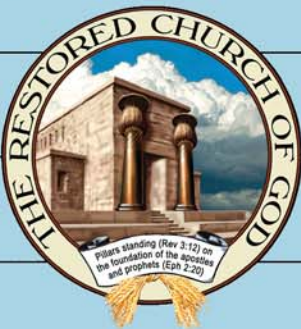


THE RESTORED CHURCH OF GOD

CHILDREN'S BIBLE LESSONS



Israel Receives a King



LEVEL 4 LESSON 9

Israel Receives a King

Samuel warned the Israelites that their demand to have a king to rule over them was a big mistake, and that it would cause many problems. But the people did not care. They wanted a king so they would be like the nations around them. God told Samuel, “They haven’t rejected you. They no longer want Me to rule over them. Listen to them and give them a king.”

Israel’s First King

In the nation of Israel lived a handsome young Benjamite named Saul. He was taller than any other man in the nation.

One day, Saul’s father came to him, and said, “My donkeys have wandered off. Would you take one of the servants and find them for me?” The two men searched in the hill country and neighboring lands for the lost donkeys, but they could not find them. Finally, when they came to the land of Zuph, Saul suggested that they should go home.

“A man of God named Samuel lives in this city,” said the servant. “Why don’t we go ask for his help? I’ve heard he is an honorable man and that all he says comes true.”

“But we don’t have a gift for him,” Saul replied. “We don’t even have a piece of bread to give him.”

The servant answered, “I’ve got a silver coin with me. We can give that to the man of God for helping us.”

Since their search so far had not turned up where the donkeys were, Saul agreed that they

should go to see Samuel the prophet. As they went up the hill to the city, they met a group of young women coming out to draw water from a well.

“Is the prophet here?” Saul asked them.

“He is. He has come to the city because the people are making an offering at the high place,” they answered. “If you hurry, you’ll be able to see him before he goes up to the feast to bless the offering.”

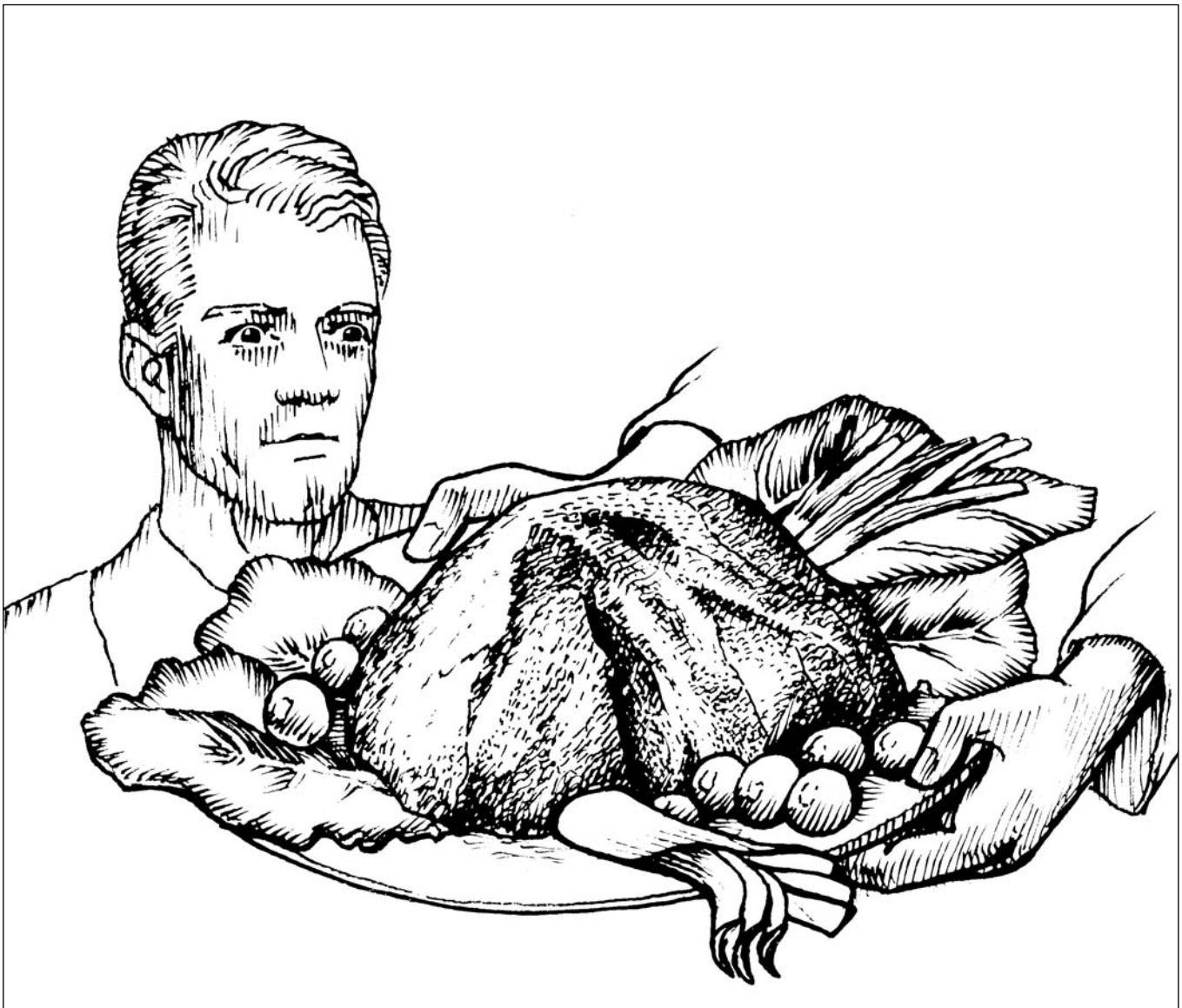
Saul and his servant hurried into the city. As soon as they passed through the city gates, they saw a man coming toward them on his way to the feast (I Samuel 9:1-14).

Now the day before, God had spoken to Samuel, “Tomorrow about this time I will send to you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be king over Israel. He will save my people from the Philistines.”

When Samuel saw Saul, God told him, “Here is the man of whom I spoke. He is the one who shall rule over My people” (vs. 15-17).

Saul walked over to Samuel, “Can you please tell me where the house of the prophet is?”

Samuel answered, “I am the prophet. Please attend the feast as my guest. In the morning, I will send you on your way, and I will tell you all that you want to know. Meanwhile, I can tell you that your father’s donkeys were lost three days ago. But don’t worry about them, they have already been found. And all of Israel desires you to be their king.”



Saul was stunned at what he heard. “Who am I?” asked Saul. “Am I not from the least of all the tribes of Israel? Is not my family the least important of all the families of Benjamin? You must have the wrong man!”

Samuel led Saul and his servant up to the feast and gave them a place of honor at the table. He instructed the cook to bring Saul the choicest cut of meat set aside for the guest of honor. Saul was feeling uncomfortable about the unexpected fuss being made over him. Samuel told him, “Go ahead and enjoy it. It was put aside for you. I have invited these 30 guests here in your honor.”

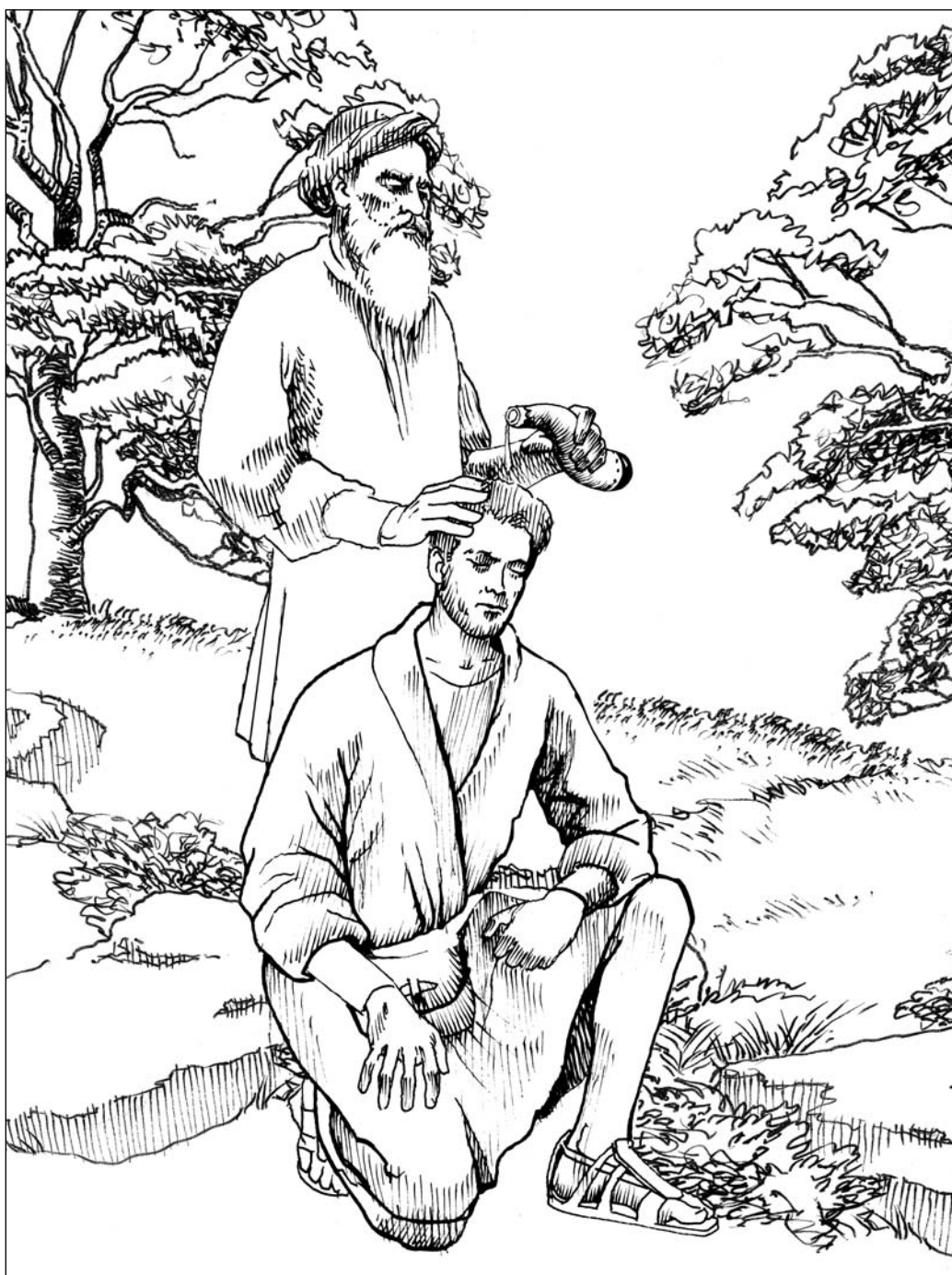
After the feast, Samuel invited Saul to return to his house for the night. He made a bed

for Saul on the roof and talked with him about what God had said. The next morning, as the sun was rising, Samuel called to Saul, “Time to get up. I must send you on your way.”

Once they began walking, Samuel told Saul, “Send your servant down the road ahead of us, and when he is out of sight I will make known to you the word of God” (vs. 25-27).

Saul sent the servant ahead while he stayed back with Samuel.

Then Samuel took a vial of anointing oil and poured it on Saul’s head, and said, “The Lord has chosen you to be king over His people Israel. You shall reign over them and save them from the enemies who surround them. As a sign to you that God has appointed you



to this position, on your way home, you will meet two men. They will tell you that your father's donkeys were found, and now your father is no longer worried about them, but has concern for what has become of you. Next, you will meet three men going up to Bethel to worship God. They will offer you two loaves of bread that you will accept. Then, near a camp of the Philistines, you will meet a band of prophets, and musicians will

be playing before them as they go" (1 Samuel 10:1-5).

When Saul left Samuel, his mind was busy with all the prophet had told him. He caught up with his servant, and as they traveled home, they came upon each of the groups that Samuel had prophesied they would meet.

Saul told no one that he had been anointed king.

Samuel Introduces Saul to the People

Samuel called the people of Israel to gather at Mizpeh to meet their king. Everyone was excited, wondering who would be chosen. Samuel told them, "God brought Israel out of slavery from the land of Egypt. Since then, He has rescued you from all the nations that trou-

ble and attack you. But instead of being grateful, you have rejected God and have asked for a king."

In Old Testament times, lots were sometimes drawn when a difficult choice had to be made. To learn from where in Israel the king would come, lots were drawn among all the families and tribes until Saul was chosen. Everyone looked around, hoping to get a look at the new king, but he could not be found.

Finally, Samuel asked God for help, “Where is he? Is he among us?”

God replied, “Saul has hidden himself among the baggage.”

Several leading men went to find him. When Saul stood in front of the people, Samuel told them, “Do you see this man the Lord has chosen? There is none like him among the people.”

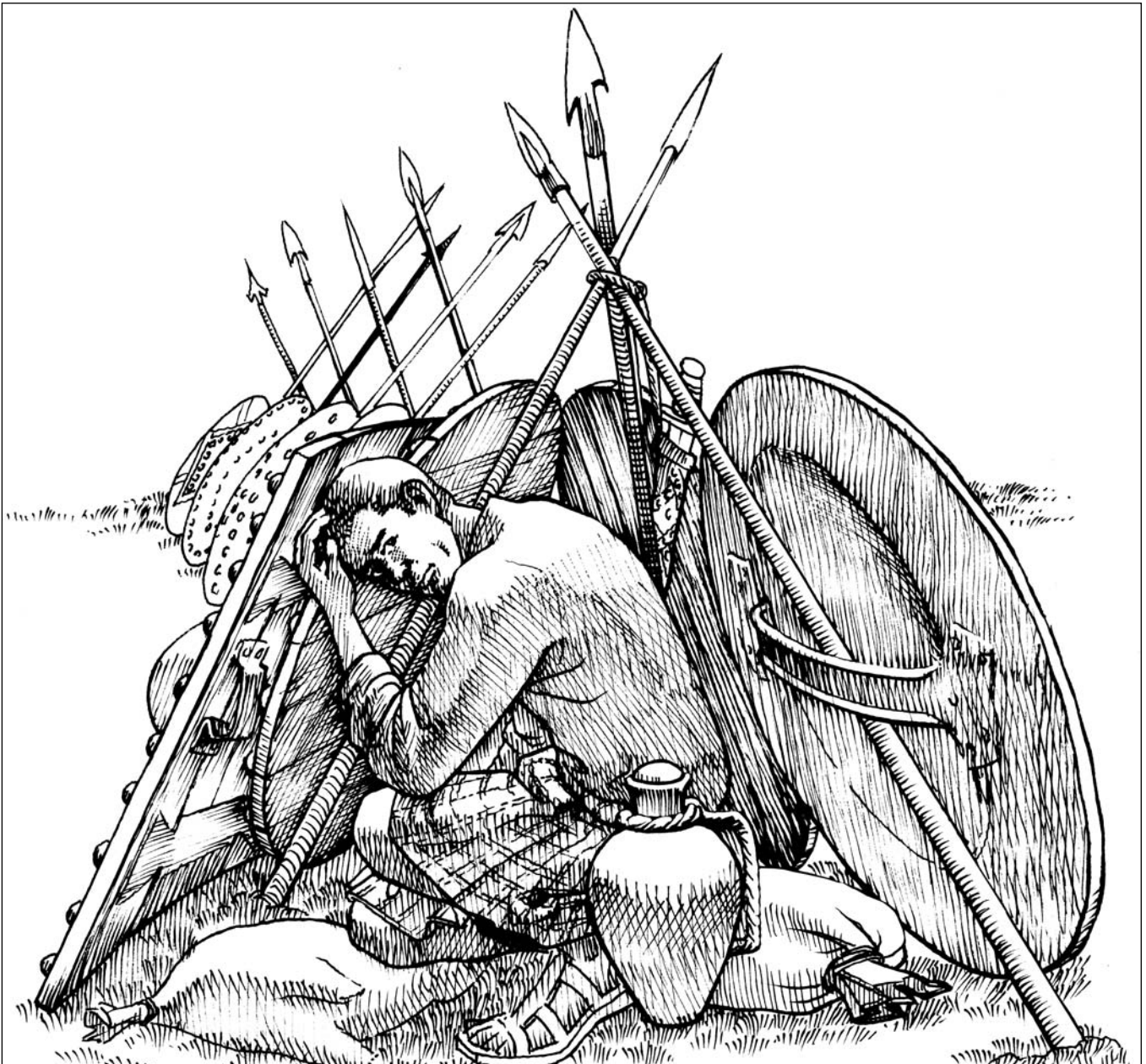
All the people shouted, “Long live the king!” (I Samuel 10:17-24).

Then Samuel sent all the people to their homes. Saul went to his home with a group of brave men who became his close friends.

The Ammonites Are Defeated

Nahash, the king of the Ammonites, led his army to attack the Israelite town of Jabesh-gilead. The town leaders could see they were badly outnumbered, so they went to Nahash, and said, “If you will make a peace treaty with us, we will serve you.”

Nahash replied, “I’ll make a truce with you on one condition. Every person agrees to let me put out his right eye. Then your shame will be seen by all of Israel.”



Of course, the leaders did not like that idea, so they said, “Give us seven days to see if anyone else in Israel will come to help us. If not, we will agree to your terms.” Messengers went throughout the land, looking for men to help Jabesh-gilead. Everyone wept loudly when they heard what Nahash had in mind, but no one offered to help save the town.

At his home in Gibe-ah, Saul was plowing in the field when he heard a great uproar among the people. “Why are the people crying so loudly?” he asked. One of the messengers told him about the terms Nahash had given the leaders of Jabesh-gilead, and reported that, so far, no one had stepped forward to help.

That made Saul very angry. He cut up into pieces the two oxen that pulled his plow. Then he sent messengers, each carrying a piece of the oxen, to all the tribes of Israel. His message said, “See this? This will be done to the oxen of anyone who does not come to help Saul and Samuel” (I Samuel 11:1-7).

Since the people dreaded that outcome more than what Nahash had threatened, 330,000 men came to help.

Samuel and Saul sent a message to the leaders of Jabesh-gilead, “Tomorrow, by the time the sun is high, you will no longer have to worry about Nahash’s threats.” They were relieved to hear this good news.

In turn, the leaders of Jabesh-gilead sent a message to Nahash, “Tomorrow we will give ourselves up to you to do to us as you please.”

Saul separated his army into three equal companies, and they marched to Jabesh-gilead. They slipped secretly into the Ammonite camp before the sun was up. When the Ammonites woke up, they found themselves surrounded by Israelite soldiers on every side.

The battle continued until the sun was high. By that time, the few Ammonites who had not been killed ran off in all directions in fear for their lives.

Saul told his soldiers, “Today the Lord has rescued us from our enemies.” Then Samuel

and Saul led the army to Gilgal, where they celebrated their victory.

Samuel’s Warning

In Gilgal, Samuel called all of Israel to a meeting. “I have listened to you, and now you have a king to rule over you. I am old and gray, but I have walked before you from my youth until this day. I have always judged you fairly. If anyone says this isn’t true, let him tell me now, and I will right whatever he feels I did wrong.”

“You have always treated us fairly,” the people replied.

“Then God is witness against you this day that you have not found any wrong I have done against you,” Samuel said.

And the people said, “He is witness.”

Samuel continued, “Ever since the Lord brought you out of Egypt, He has rescued you from your enemies. But time and time again you have forgotten God and disobeyed Him, so He has used other nations to punish you. Then you said, ‘Give us a king,’ when it was God who ruled over you. Just as you asked, God has given you a king. If you will fear God and serve Him, listen to and obey His laws. If you and your king will faithfully follow God, it will be well with you. But if you turn against God, He will be against you and your king. And now, I pray that God sends thunder and rain; then you will know that you have behaved wickedly in the sight of the Lord, because you have asked for a king.” Samuel prayed, and God sent thunder and heavy rain all day, so the people feared both God and Samuel.

“Please pray and ask God to stop the rain before we all die,” they begged Samuel. “We know we have been wicked in asking for a king.” So Samuel prayed, and the rain stopped. “Fear God and serve Him faithfully with all your heart,” Samuel reminded them. “But if you continue to do wickedly, both you and your king will be destroyed” (I Samuel 12:25).

Test Your Memory:

- 1) Israel's first king was named _____.
- 2) When Samuel went to introduce the Israelites to their new king, where did God tell Samuel he was hiding? _____
- 3) What did Saul cut up and send to the tribes of Israel? _____
- 4) How many men came to help Samuel and Saul in the battle against the Ammonites? _____
- 5) Samuel prayed for God to send a sign to show the people of Israel they had behaved wickedly by wanting a king. What was that sign? _____

Saul Does Wickedly

In the second year of Saul's reign over Israel, 3,000 men served in his army. His son Jonathan commanded another company of 1,000 men. The rest of the men of Israel he sent home.

Jonathan and his soldiers attacked and captured the camp of the Philistines in Geba. When the Philistines heard about that, they brought 30,000 chariots, 6,000 horsemen and troops as numerous as sand on the seashore. This huge army camped across the valley from Geba in Michmash and prepared to fight against Israel.

Meanwhile, Saul was still in Gilgal. Samuel had told him to wait for seven days until he arrived to make a burnt offering and peace offering to God before Israel went into battle. When the men of Israel heard how many Philistines had come up to fight, they were so afraid that they ran to hide in caves, behind rocks and inside wells.

Saul grew more and more troubled when he saw how fast his army was shrinking. By the end of the seven days, when even more of Saul's army had run away, and because Samuel had still not arrived, Saul offered the burnt offering—even though he knew that was against God's laws (I Samuel 13:8-10).

As soon as he had finished the offering, Samuel arrived. "What have you done?" Samuel asked.

Saul responded, "You didn't come within seven days as you said you would. My army was shrinking to almost nothing. When I saw the huge army of the Philistines, I knew we couldn't wait any longer, so I forced myself to offer the burnt offering."

Samuel shook his head, "You have done foolishly. You have deliberately disobeyed God's Law. Now your kingdom, which God would have established forever, will not continue. God will take it from you, and He will choose another man to be Israel's king, a man who will obey Him."

Samuel left Gilgal and went to Gibe-ah. However, Saul and the 600 men who remained went to Geba to join Jonathan and his troops.

While the Philistines camped at Michmash, they sent raiders to the surrounding areas to steal whatever they could, and to frighten the people of Israel.

Years before, when Israel had come under the control of the Philistines, they had made sure the Israelites had no swords or spears. The men of Israel had to travel to a Philistine blacksmith to get their farm tools sharpened because the Philistines did not want the Israelites making swords and spears from their farm tools. So on the day of the battle, no Israelite had a sword or spear except Saul and Jonathan (I Samuel 13:19-22).

Jonathan Attacks the Philistines

Without letting his father Saul know of his plan, Jonathan and the young man who carried his armor went sneaking out of Israel's camp across the rocky valley separating them from the Philistine army at Michmash. Since most of the Philistine army was out raiding the countryside, only a small company of soldiers had been left in the Philistines' camp.



Jonathan told his young companion, "It may be that the Lord will work for us, because God is not held back by numbers of men. We will show ourselves to the Philistines, and when they see us, if they tell us to wait, we will stand still and not go up to them. But if they tell us to come forward, then we will know God has

delivered them into our hands" (I Samuel 14:9-10).

The Philistines saw them, and called out, "Look, the Hebrews are coming out of their holes where they have hid themselves. Come here, and we will show you what a real army looks like!"

Jonathan climbed up the rocky sides of the hill with his armor-bearer close at his heels. At the top, Jonathan took his sword and began to fight the soldiers who came rushing at him. He quickly killed more than 20 of the enemy. The rest of the Philistine soldiers panicked, thinking that the entire Israelite army came to attack them by surprise. They became so confused they began to fight and kill each other.

Saul Joins the Battle

A watchman called out for Saul to come see the strange sight happening across the valley. Philistine soldiers were scattering in all directions.

"No one is to eat a single crumb of food until sundown and our enemies are defeated," Saul ordered before he took the army and joined in the fight. The Israelite soldiers grabbed swords and spears from the Philistine soldiers who had been killed and used them to fight against the remainder of the Philistines.

Now Jonathan did not hear his father's order about not eating. When he and some soldiers chased some Philistines into a forest, he saw a fallen beehive on the ground, dripping with honey. Since he was tired and hungry from the battle, he dipped the end of a stick into the honey and ate it.

The soldiers with him grew silent. One of them said, “Did you not hear your father’s oath? He said anyone who ate even a crumb of food before sundown would be cursed!”

“No, I didn’t hear that. But we are all tired and hungry. We could fight better if we had food in our stomachs,” Jonathan replied (I Samuel 14:24-29).

By the time the Philistine army was defeated, Saul’s army was weak from hunger. They were so starved that they began to kill captured animals and eat the meat raw with the blood still in it.

God forbids eating the blood of animals (Leviticus 17:10-13). When Saul found out what his troops were doing, he put a stop to it. He demanded that everyone properly bleed the animals before eating the meat—so as not to sin against God’s Law.

After dark, when the army was well fed and had rested, Saul decided they should go finish off the Philistine army. Samuel said, “Before you do that, we should see if God approves.”

Saul asked God to make known His will in the matter, but God did not answer (I Samuel 14:37).

Jonathan’s Mistake is Discovered

Saul gathered all the soldiers, and said, “God has not heard my request. That means someone here has sinned. Who is it?”

No one answered.

“We will cast lots to determine who has caused God to turn from us.” One by one, the lots were drawn until the last one came to Jonathan.

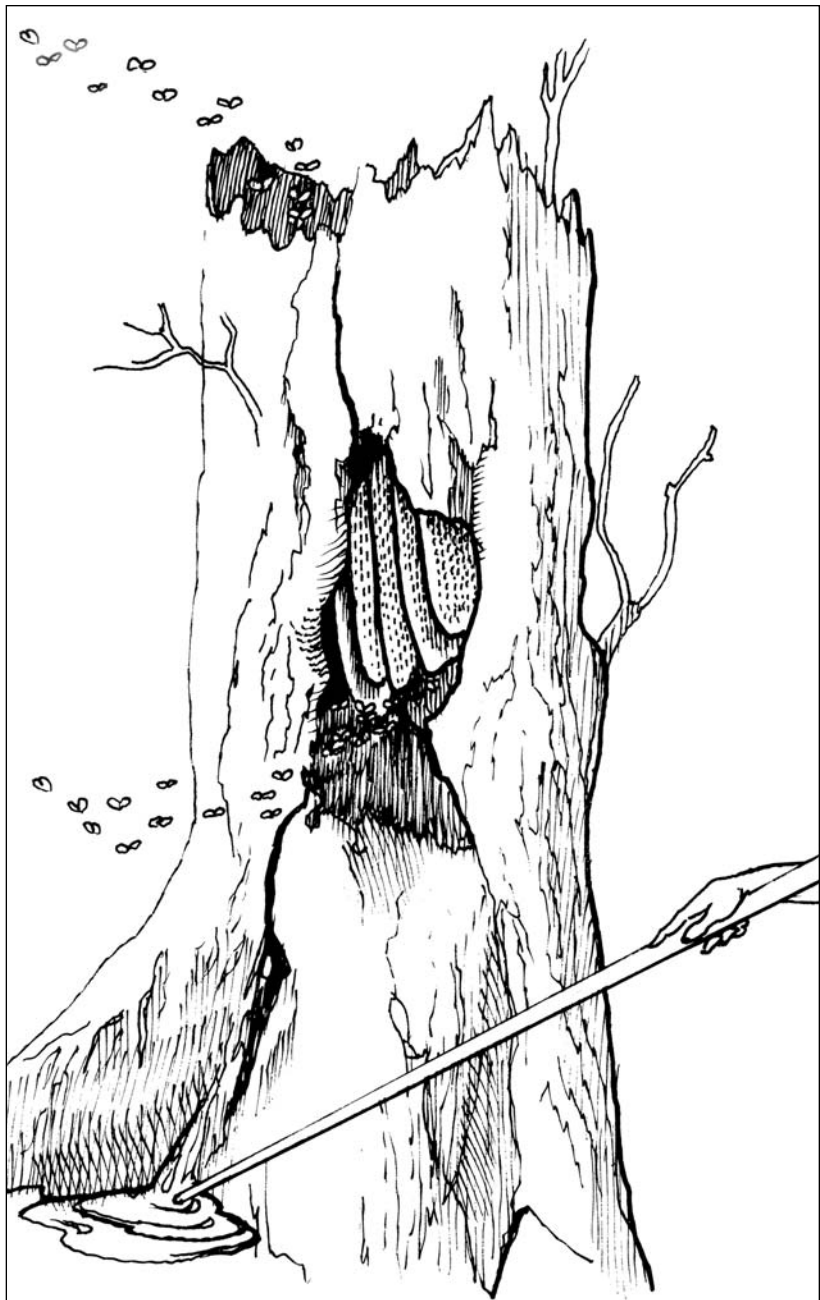
“What have you done?” Saul demanded of his son.

Jonathan looked directly at his father, “I didn’t know of your order not to eat. I found a beehive of honey

in the forest. I was so hungry I dipped a stick in it and ate a little of it. Only afterward did your soldiers tell me of your order” (I Samuel 14:43).

“Now you must die for causing God to turn His back on us!” Saul said angrily. He did not want to kill his son, but he had made the rule binding on all of his troops.

But the soldiers told their king, “Will you kill Jonathan who has brought Israel this great victory over the Philistines? If you kill him, you will have to kill us all!”



Saul said nothing for a long while, and then finally said, "He will not die."

Then Saul and his army returned to their homes, and the Philistines went back to their own land.

Punishing the Amalekites

Some time later, Samuel came to Saul with a message from God. "God will punish what Amalek did to Israel in opposing them when they came out of Egypt. You are to attack the Amalekites and completely destroy all that they have. Do not spare them, but kill every person and every animal."

Saul and an army of 210,000 soldiers marched to the city of Amalek. They waited in a nearby valley until a group of Kenites, who had shown kindness to the Israelites when they were coming out of Egypt, could get out of harm's way. Then Israel's army attacked the city of Amalek, quickly defeating the people. However, Saul did not destroy every living thing as God had said. Instead, he took Agag, king of the Amalekites, alive, as well as saving the best of the animals.

God spoke to Samuel, "I'm very sorry that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following Me and has not obeyed My commands" (I Samuel 15:11).

Samuel was very angry, and cried to God all night. Then he got up early to meet Saul.

When he saw Samuel coming, Saul told him, "I have done what God ordered me to do." "Is that true? Then why do I hear the bleating of sheep and lowing of oxen?" Samuel asked.

"Oh, that. You see, the people wanted to offer to God the best of everything the Amalekites had, but I can promise you that we have completely destroyed the rest of it," Saul answered.

"Stop!" Samuel shouted. "I will tell you what God thinks of your idea. When you were anointed king over Israel, you didn't think of yourself as high and mighty or as knowing better than God. Now God has sent you on a mission, and said, 'Go, utterly destroy the sinners,

the Amalekites, and fight until they are all dead.' Why did you not do what God told you? Why did you take the best of the animals instead of obeying God?" (I Samuel 15:19).

Saul should have admitted that what he had done was wrong and determine to do better. Instead, he made up excuses and blamed the people, saying, "I did exactly what God told me to do. I only spared the Amalekite king. The people took the rest of it to offer to God in Gilgal."

Samuel replied, "Do you think God would rather have an offering than obedience? To obey is better than any offering. To God, rebellion is just as wrong as witchcraft, and stubbornness is the same as disobeying God's Law and worshiping false gods. Because you have turned away from following the word of the Lord, He has rejected you from being king" (I Samuel 15:20-23).

Saul's face filled with sadness. "You are right. I have sinned, for I have not obeyed the word of the Lord because I feared the people and obeyed their voice. Forgive my sin, and return with me that I may worship God."

Samuel said to Saul, "No, I will not return with you. Just as you rejected God's word, God has rejected you from being king over Israel."

As Samuel turned to leave, Saul grabbed his coat so tightly that it tore. Samuel said to him, "Just as you have torn my coat, the Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day and has given it to someone else. God will not change his mind."

Saul pleaded with Samuel, "At least will you return with me so I can worship the Lord?" "Very well, I will go with you for the sake of the people of Israel," Samuel said.

Later, Samuel called to have Agag, the king of the Amalekites, brought to him. Agag smiled widely at Samuel, "Surely there's no more need for death."

Samuel took a sword and quickly finished the job that God had sent Saul to do. Then he traveled to Ramah, and Saul returned to his home in Gibe-ah. Samuel did not see Saul again until the day he died.



However, Samuel continued to feel deeply sorry for Saul. Then God spoke to him, “How long are you going to feel unhappy for Saul? Take your anointing oil to the house of Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have chosen one of his sons to be king” (I Samuel 16:1).

Test Your Memory:

1) Samuel told Saul to wait in Gilgal for _____ days.

2) Saul decided not to wait for Samuel, and broke God’s Law. What did he do? _____

3) Saul failed to kill the king of the Amalekites. What was his name? _____

4) To where did God tell Samuel to take his anointing oil? _____

5) Samuel told Saul, “Because you have _____ the word of the Lord, He has also _____ you from being king.”

BIBLE MEMORY: I Samuel 15:22

WORD SEARCH

W	S	B	E	E	H	I	V	E	S
N	P	E	H	O	N	E	Y	A	E
J	O	N	A	T	H	A	N	N	T
R	E	J	E	C	T	E	D	O	I
H	H	A	S	K	I	N	G	I	L
S	A	M	U	E	L	B	A	N	E
A	K	I	N	G	O	I	G	T	A
U	V	T	S	A	U	L	A	I	R
L	R	E	J	E	C	T	S	N	S
G	O	D	S	W	O	R	D	G	I

Hint: The words and phrases are forward, backward, up or down.

BEEHIVE
HONEY
JONATHAN
SAUL
KING
AGAG
SAMUEL
ANOINTING
BENJAMITE
ISRAELITES

REJECTED AS
KING

SAUL REJECTS
GODS WORD