

Hello everyone,

PERCENT OF BIBLE COMPLETED: 26.2%

Weekly Readings will cover: 1 Samuel 23 - 29, Psalms 54 & 63, & 1 Chronicles 12

Sunday: 1 Samuel 23, Psalm 54 & 63

Monday: 1 Samuel 24

Tuesday: 1 Samuel 25

Wednesday: 1 Samuel 26

Thursday: 1 Samuel 27 & 1 Chronicles 12

Friday: 1 Samuel 28

Saturday: 1 Samuel 29

Current # of email addresses in the group: 602

This week we get back to our reading plan and in these chapters cover some of my favorite stories from 1 Samuel. I hope you each enjoy your bible study!

Website archive location for audio files & PDFs:

<https://www.ucg.org/congregations/san-francisco-bay-area-ca/posts/audio-links-re-three-year-chronological-deep-dive-reading-program-circa-2022-2025-903711>

3-YEAR CHRONOLOGICAL STUDY: Week 45

Read the following passages & the Daily Deep Dive on the daily reading.

Day 288 - SUNDAY: November 19th

1 Samuel 23, Psalm 54 & 63

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: "As we study the life of David, we see some similarities between his life and the life of Jesus Christ. In chapter 23, we see David as "savior." Furthermore, David does not act on his own initiative. Instead, he inquires of the Lord whether or not to fight the Philistines, who are assailing the city of Keilah, a city about 15 miles southwest of Jerusalem belonging to Judah (see Joshua 15:44) and just south of David's stronghold at the cave of Adullam. Likewise, all of Christ's saving work is subject to and in harmony with the will of God the Father.

Moreover, David renews his inquiry as conditions warrant, the condition in this case being the fear David's men naturally have in facing such a formidable foe. Though not fearful himself, David is understanding of his men's fears and goes back to God for their reassurance. Jesus is the same way with us. He knows our frame (Psalm 103:8-14), sympathizes with our weaknesses (Hebrews 4:15) and intercedes for us with the Father. (The Father, of course, knows our frame too—yet He has appointed Christ, who has actually walked in our shoes, as intercessor.)

David then *saves* the inhabitants of Keilah (verse 5). But in doing so, he puts himself in jeopardy by giving away his position to Saul. In Christ's saving work, He divested himself of divine glory to die an ignominious death in human flesh (Philippians 2:5-8). Part of Christ's saving work, which we must all learn to emulate, was laying down His life for others (compare John 15:13). While David did not literally die for others in this case, it is clear that he was willing to. He certainly endangered himself.

Saul, in 1 Samuel 23, makes a classic mistake in the way he deludes himself and takes God's name in vain—crediting God for his own evil plan seeming to work out (verse 7). Sadly, people sometimes use God's name this way to lend credibility to their clearly *ungodly* wrong motivations or actions. In verses 6 and 9, we find out how David was able to inquire of the Lord—through the use of the ephod, to which was attached the Urim and Thummim. Abiathar had managed to take it when he escaped from the scene of Saul's massacre (22:20).

With the ephod, David learns very distressing news—the people of Keilah will betray him to Saul. In this world, loyalty is too often only one-sided. David has been loyal to the Keilahites, but they do not reciprocate. How often Jesus Christ has experienced this with mankind. He has laid down his life for us but even the whole professing Christian

world, though considering Him Savior, betrays Him time and again through failing to always honor and obey Him.

God saves David by revealing to him that the ungrateful Keilahites are about to betray his presence (verses 10-12). God's plan is sure. Our prayers are always answered when they are in accordance with His will. David and his men depart to the Wilderness of Ziph (verses 13-14), "about four miles southeast of Hebron [in Judah]. This region had many ravines and caves in which David's men could hide" (*Nelson*, note on 23:13-14).

Psalm 63 is introduced as being written by David "when he was in the wilderness of Judah," so it was likely written around this time. Though still pursued by Saul, things are going somewhat better for David as God continues to give him victories. David remains humble and gives God all the credit. As we read this psalm, we sense that David is more secure, realizing that God is working out His plan. David, enjoying true fellowship with God, knows he has God's protection: "Because You have been my help, therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice" (verse 7).

When David mentions "the king" in verse 11, he is referring to himself. Despite present conditions, He knows that he is the rightful king— anointed of God by Samuel. And he knows that God will yet fulfill this purpose in him. As Christians, we too can be confident in God's promise to make us kings and priests in His coming Kingdom (see Revelation 1:6)." [END]

Verse 1 – Keilah was a city in the tribe of Judah (David's tribe), which bordered the Philistines.

Verse 14 – What a wonderful reminder of God's protection. This chapter clearly shows that when David was in danger and needed

direction, he turned to God for guidance, direction and deliverance. Saul tried to find David every day, but God was watching over and protecting David. David's life wasn't easy during this time and would have been stressful, yet God was always right there with him.

Verse 16 – Jonathan was a “son of encouragement”. He knew his friend must have been struggling and he came alongside his friend and encouraged him (which is one way the KJV translates this Hebrew word translated here “strengthened” in other places in the OT.

PSALM 63 – The UCG reading plan states: “In its introductory note on Psalm 63, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* says, "In spirit it is close to Psalm 42:1-2 [given the reference to thirsting for God and longing to be in His presence] and fits well with Psalms 61 and 62 as a collection of psalms bound by a common concern for closeness and fellowship with the Lord."

According to its superscription, Psalm 63 was written when David "was in the wilderness of Judah"--and verse 6 tells us that people were then seeking to kill him. The setting is likely when he was living in the Judean wilderness while on the run from Saul, and we earlier read this psalm in that context (see the *Beyond Today Bible Commentary* on [1 Samuel 23:1-14](#); [Psalm 63](#)). It is possible, however, that it was written much later, when David fled during Absalom's rebellion and stayed for a brief period in the wilderness (see [2 Samuel 25:23-28](#); [2 Samuel 16:2, 14](#); [2 Samuel 17:16, 29](#)). Advocates of this view cite David's reference to himself in Psalm 63:11 as king. Yet, as was pointed out earlier in the *Beyond Today Bible Commentary*, even as Saul pursued him, David knew he was the rightful king, having already been anointed so by Samuel. Moreover, he was looking to the future in this verse.

At the opening of the song, David expresses his faith in God and how *earnestly* he desires to be in His presence. The NKJV translation of

the second line of verse 1 reads, "Early will I seek You," while the NIV reads, "Earnestly I seek you" (as does Green's Literal Translation). The Jewish Tanakh just has "I search for you." *Expositor's* explains that the phrase "earnestly I seek" (NIV) is derived from a root word related to the word for "dawn." This relatedness "gave rise to the tradition of treating Psalm 63 as a morning psalm with the translation 'early will I seek You' [but] The NIV correctly emphasizes the *eagerness* rather than the *time* of the 'seeking,' as the verb [elsewhere] denotes a *diligent search* for godly wisdom as most important to life (cf. Proverbs 2:1-4; Proverbs 8:17-21)" (footnote on Psalm 63:1, emphasis added).

It is also interesting in verse 1 to note the parallelism of "soul thirsts" and "flesh longs" or "body longs" (NIV). *Expositor's* states: "The longing for God consumes the whole being. The NIV rendering 'soul...body' reflects the M[asoretic] T[ext], but it should be remembered that the Hebrew for 'soul' (*nepesh*) signifies one's whole being, as does 'body' (lit[erally], 'flesh'; cf. 84:2)" (same footnote). Note that the word "soul" or *nepesh* here does not refer to some inner immortal spirit personage, as many today imagine, but the whole living being. While other verses do refer to a spiritual component within human beings--which together with the workings of the physical brain forms the human mind--that spirit is not conscious apart from the body. This is why a future resurrection is required for an awakening of consciousness.

David compares his longing to enter the sanctuary of God with his continuing thirst for water in the desert, again recalling Psalm 42. God's lovingkindness (*hesed*, also meaning loyal love, covenant faithfulness or mercy) is "better than life" (verse 3), so David finds great satisfaction in praising and blessing Him (verse 5).

David refers to his meditations during the "night watches." Among the ancient Israelites, the night was divided into three watches of four

hours each, and at times David focused his thoughts on God to pass sleepless hours (verse 6). Because God had helped him in the past (verse 7), David trusts that he will continue to remain sheltered under God's wings (as in Psalm 61:4) and even rejoice there (Psalm 63:7). And he will go forward with God as a little child whose parent holds his hand while walking to keep him from falling (verse 8).

David declares that his enemies will not succeed in killing him because they will die instead (verses 9-10). Everyone who "swears by" God (verse 11)--in this broad context meaning that they live by promissory commitment to God and follow through (see Deuteronomy 6:13)--will receive honor. But those who live by deceit--including those who are hypocritical in their faith--will be silenced." [END]

PSALM 54 – The UCG reading plan states: "Psalm 54 is the third *maskil* of David out of four in a row. *Neginoth* in the superscription, which may be part of the postscript of Psalm 53, is probably correctly rendered in the NKJV as "stringed instruments" (and in the next superscription, which may be part of the postscript of *this* psalm).

Psalm 54 begins a cluster of seven prayers of David for help against enemies and betrayal at the center of Book II of the Psalter (Psalms 54-60). Note in going through these psalms that the main weapon of the enemy in most of them is the mouth. We earlier read Psalm 54 in conjunction with the account of the event mentioned in the superscription--when the people of Ziph informed Saul that David was hiding in that area (see the Beyond Today Bible Commentary on 1 Samuel 23:15-29; Psalm 54).

These informants put David's life in danger, as Saul was out to kill him. So David prays for God to save him by His "name" (verse 1), meaning

everything God's identity implies--who He is and what He stands for. He further asks God to vindicate him (same verse)--the context here meaning either to prove David right for trusting God (by God coming through for him) or to prove David, though a fugitive, *in* the right (by saving him and judging his enemies).

The "strangers" who have risen against David (verse 3) apparently refers to the Ziphite informants. And the "oppressors" seeking his life (same verse) would seem to refer to Saul and his officers. None of these, David says, are following God.

In verses 4-5, David declares his confidence in God to help him and his supporters and to punish his enemies. He prays, "Cut them off in Your truth." *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* states: "The resolution of the prayer lies in the conviction that God is just. He will not permit his children to suffer without vindication. The imprecation [or curse] is not vindictive but expressive of trust in divine justice. Evil must be repaid. The people of God believed in the boomerang effect of sin: 'Let evil recoil [i.e., come back on those who perpetrate it]'" (note on verse 5).

Trusting in God's deliverance, David says he will "freely sacrifice" to God (verse 6)--or "sacrifice a freewill offering" (NIV). This refers to a peace offering (see Leviticus 7:11-18; Leviticus 22:18-30; Numbers 15:1-10), "given only when the worshipper wanted to say an extra-special thanks to God for his gracious, saving love" (George Knight, *Psalms*, Daily Study Bible Series, comments on Psalm 54).

God's name, hearkening back to verse 1, is good-and worthy of praise (verse 6). Verse 7 may mean that deliverance has come in the midst of the song's composition, though it perhaps more likely means that David has foreseen it clearly. Rather than including the NKJV's interpolated words "*its desire*," a better sense might simply be "My eye has seen *what will come* upon my enemies." [END]

Day 289 - MONDAY: November 20th

1 Samuel 24

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: "David and his men are hiding out in En Gedi, a lush oasis with rugged cliffs, canyons and caves near the Dead Sea. As soon as Saul finishes with the Philistines, he receives word that David is hiding out here and returns to seek him. David and his men are taking refuge in a particular cave (1 Samuel 24:3). What must have been going through David's mind as he once again appears hopelessly trapped? The answer is Psalm 57. David pleads with God to be protected from his enemies.

In answering David's plea, God must have been driving the point home to him: "I will protect you and save you—I will always be there for you." And what an answer it is! While hidden deep within their cave, David and his men are astounded to see Saul choose this particular cave for a restroom. David's men tell him, "This is the day we've been waiting for—God has delivered your enemy for you to do whatever you like" (compare 1 Samuel 24:4). Indeed, David could have easily killed Saul and assumed the royal throne—particularly since it was clear that this must have been from God. But David's heart isn't like that. Instead, he evidently sees what God is doing here as a test. David has the faith to realize that since God had established Saul, only God should remove him. David trusted God to handle the problem in His own time and way. Again, David sets an example of godly leadership, resisting bad advice.

However, David can't resist the temptation to cut a piece from Saul's robe, demonstrating that he could have easily killed him. Some even see the cutting of the hem as symbolic of taking the emblem of royalty. But David would not be the one to take Saul out. He immediately regrets shaming the king in the eyes of his 3,000 soldiers (verse 5). The men with David would take matters into their own hands so David has to restrain them from killing Saul (verse 7). David explains to his men,

and then to Saul, that he will not lift his hand to harm God's anointed king (verses 6, 10). "Isn't this proof that I've never sought, nor ever will seek, to harm you or take your throne?" David asks Saul (compare verses 8-14).

Verse 15 explains what has been going on since Saul set out to destroy David. God had already delivered David out of Saul's hand time and again. Indeed, what has just happened in the opportunity to spare Saul is itself an amazing deliverance—as Saul responds gratefully to it, even acknowledging David as the successor to the throne (verse 20). But even with Saul's public display of remorse and sorrow, David knows that he can't count on Saul keeping his word, so he continues to keep his distance from the unstable king (verse 22).” [END]

Verse 3 – The NKJV of the bible says that Saul went in “to attend to his needs.” The literal translation of the Hebrew words says “to cover his feet”. John Gill’s commentary discusses the possible meanings: “the Targum is, to do his necessaries; and so Josephus; and the Jewish commentators generally understand it of easing nature; and as the eastern people used to wear long and loose garments, these, when they performed such an action, they used in modesty to gather them close about them, that no part of the body, their feet, and especially the parts of nature which should be concealed, might be seen; but the Syriac and Arabic versions render it, "and there he lay" or "slept"; which suggest, that his going into the cave was in order to take some sleep and rest, when it was usual to cover the feet, both to prevent taking cold, and the private parts of the body being exposed to view; and this accounts better for Saul not hearing David's men in the cave, and for his being insensible of David's cuttings off the skirt of his garment, and best agrees with the use of the phrase in Jdg 3:24; the only place besides this in which it is used;” [END]

In verse 7, we will see that Saul “rose up” (“got up”) which would seem to align with the view that Saul took a nap in the cave.

Verse 8 – Notice the great respect that David still shows Saul’s position, even when Saul dishonored that position. This is a tremendous example for us all.

Verse 16 – David is Saul’s son-in-law, and David’s words have a temporary impact on Saul’s heart. Instead of calling David, “Son of Jesse” (compare 1 Samuel 20:27), here Saul acknowledges David as his son and weeps.

Day 290 - TUESDAY: November 21st

1 Samuel 25

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: “Samuel, the prophet of the Lord, dies. Greatly respected by all Israel, people gathered from all over the nation to honor him at his burial. As his death comes during the short-lived truce between Saul and David, it is possible, though not directly stated, that David was able to attend this memorial. Afterward, David ventures south into the wilderness of Paran.

Then follows the story of Nabal and Abigail. Nabal, a descendant of Caleb of the house of Judah, lived in Maon with his great flocks in nearby Carmel. Carmel is a town in the general area of Ziph and Maon in Judah (see Joshua 15:55-57), some 20-30 miles south of Jerusalem. (It is not to be confused with the northern Mount Carmel by the sea, which figures later into the lives of Elijah and Elisha.) Saul had set up a monument to himself in Carmel following his war with Amalek and before his final rejection by God (see 1 Samuel 15:12).

David and his men acting as a protective militia had protected Nabal's property from marauding bands of thieves. Nabal's name means fool, and he was true to his name. Even his own wife Abigail remarks, "Nabal is his name, and folly is with him" (verse 25)—or, in modern parlance,

"Fool is his name and folly is his game." Abigail, on the other hand, was a woman of understanding who deserved better than Nabal (verse 3). Apart from a world of arranged marriages, it would be hard to imagine two such people ever getting together.

It was expected that those who were being protected would contribute to the support of those who made it possible for them to prosper—and Nabal is prosperous (verse 2). Yet Nabal, in his foolishness, denies any support to David's men (verses 4-11). His impulsive anger aroused in righteous indignation, David fully intends to wipe Nabal from the face of the earth (verse 22).

As the King James Version shows, the literal Hebrew of verse 22 says David will kill everyone who urinates against the wall. Most modern translations render this as simply meaning all the males. However, verse 16 mentions David's protection as a "wall" and David's reference may be to all those who were treating his help and protection with contempt (see "David's Threat to Nabal," *Bible Review*, October 2002, pp. 18-23, 59).

Abigail comes to the rescue of her husband and her household. She is wise enough to realize that Nabal's foolish rejection of David's men will bring a terrible and swift reprisal. So she brings generous supplies, part in payment of what is due and part to appease David's wrath. She explains Nabal's nature to David, but, as his wife, takes the blame and asks forgiveness, declaring herself David's servant, as her husband should have done (verses 25, 28). Abigail is well aware of David's reputation.

Abigail gives David some insightful counsel. She realizes that his life is fully interwoven with the plan of God and points out that this insult by Nabal is nothing compared to the glory David will one day have—particularly since God Himself will deal with David's enemies. But, she

goes on to say, if David were to react to what is now a small matter, it would then become a *huge* matter for him, as it would be a horrible mistake he would regret for the rest of his life.

David accepts her good advice (verse 33). And note this: He gives God the credit for Abigail's intervention! He fully realizes how close he has come to making a disastrous mistake. He accepts and appreciates the intent with which Abigail has given her gifts (verse 35).

After Nabal recovers from a drunken stupor, Abigail tells him what she had done for David and his men. Apparently, Nabal's rage is so violent at this news that he has a massive stroke and dies about 10 days later (verses 36-38). Again, David gives God all the credit for keeping him from making a terrible mistake and for avenging him.

Abigail's request to be remembered (verse 31) brings her to David's side in marriage (verses 39-42).” [END]

Verse 3 – The house of Caleb was from the tribe of Judah, therefore both David and Nabal came from the same family tribe.

Verse 7 – John Gill’s commentary states: “they did not steal a sheep or lamb from them, as was common for soldiers to do; nor did they suffer any of the Arabs, that dwelt in the wilderness of Paran, to rob them, who lived upon plunder, or any of the wild beasts to hurt them, as much as in them lay; so careful were they of them, and were a wall unto them by night and day, as Nabal's servants owned, 1Sa 25:16; and this was the case:”

Verse 10 – John Gill’s commentary states: “his two questions, which relate to the same person, do not well agree together, since by both he would suggest as if he knew not the person they came from, and whose name they made use of: had he stopped at the first question, it might

have gone so, but his second question betrays him, and plainly shows he did know him, though he speaks with contempt of him, calling him "the son of Jesse", as Saul often did, 1Sa 20:27."

Verse 14 – It's interesting that even one of Nabal's young men/servants understood that Nabal did not do right by David and David's men. He felt compelled to go to the one he knew had wisdom & understanding; Abigail.

It also says that Nabal "reviled them". This word is only used three times in the OT. It can mean "to scream/shriek" (BDB) or it can mean to "swoop upon". We might say in English to "jump all over". But it seems to indicate that Nabal treated them poorly and aggressively. John Gill states: "gave them very abusive language, represented David and his men as a parcel of scoundrels, fugitives, and runaway servants, 1Sa 25:10; or "he flew at them"; or "upon" them, in great wrath and fury, calling them hard names, bidding them begone about their business; the allusion is to a ravenous bird, which will fly at persons when it apprehends its young in any danger."

Verse 16 – This young man backs up what David had his men tell Nabal. David and his men were a blessing and benefit to Nabal, protecting his animals and servants, but Nabal treated them terribly. John Gill states about the protection David provided: "Protecting and defending them against the Philistines, who, as they robbed the threshing floors of Keilah, would have plundered the flocks of Nabal; or it may be rather against the incursions of the Arabs in the wilderness of Paran, the posterity of Ishmael, who lived by plunder, and against the wild beasts of the desert, who otherwise would have carried off many of their sheep and lambs, by night or by day:"

Verse 17 – The NKJV says "scoundrel". The Hebrew is "son of Belial". John Gill states: "meaning Nabal, who was such a worthless, passionate, and ill natured man, such a lawless and imperious one, that

he would not suffer a man to speak to him about anything; and it was to no purpose to attempt it, which was a reason this servant did not choose to speak to him about this affair, but to Abigail; and suggests, that it would signify nothing for her to speak to him about it, but it would be most advisable for her to consider with herself what was to be done immediately, without consulting him:"

Verse 18 – I found the type of “skins of wine” interesting. Adam Clarke’s commentary states: “That is, two goat-skins full. The hide is pulled off the animal without ripping up; the places where the legs, etc., were are sewed up, and then the skin appears one large bag. This is properly the Scripture and Eastern bottle.”

Verse 39 – Matthew Poole’s Commentary states: “David sent, to wit, messengers; which he thought fitter than to go himself; partly because if he had met with a repulse, it had been less ignominious; and partly because he would leave her to her freedom and choice, and would not so much as seem to take her by violence. But this doubtless was not done immediately after Nabal’s death, but in some convenient space of time after it; though such circumstances be commonly omitted in the sacred history, which gives only the threads and most important passages of things.” [END]

Verse 41 – John Gill’s commentary states: “which she said through her great humility, this being one of the meanest services she could be put to; intimating, that she was so far from being worthy to be the wife of such a man that she was only fit and it would be honour enough to her to perform the meanest services to those that waited upon him;”

Verse 43 – Most conclude that Ahinoam was David’s wife before Abigail as she is always mentioned first (compared 2 Samuel 3:2).

Day 291 - WEDNESDAY: November 22nd

1 Samuel 26

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: "This is the second time the Ziphites attempt to deliver David into the hands of Saul. Saul's respect for David's knowledge of battle is evident as he takes 3,000 soldiers with him in his pursuit of David and his 600 men. After a 25-mile march south, from Gibeah to the wilderness of Ziph, where David is hiding, Saul and his troops make camp. It is here that God directly intervenes for David. Abishai, David's nephew (1 Chronicles 2:16), volunteers for what seems an extremely dangerous plan. In any given troop deployment, there are always sentinels who stand watch over an encampment. From 1 Samuel 26:12, we find that God causes a deep sleep to come on Saul and his troops, allowing David and Abishai unrestricted access to the campsite. As David has constantly been on the run from Saul, fearing for his life, this miracle no doubt greatly encourages David. But we should also observe that he resists the natural inclination to read it as license to take matters into his own hands.

As these scriptures are intended for examples (1 Corinthians 10:11), let's pause here for a *self*-evaluation of this incident. Would we have acted as *Abishai*, and assumed that the intent of God was to have Saul killed? Or would we have thought like *David*, a man who made many mistakes yet who is referred to as "a man after God's own heart"? It is important for us to ask the question in light of any given situation, What is God's will? David knows that Saul is king over Israel by God's direct decree, and he feels strongly that it will be God's hand that will remove him.

Indeed, Acts 13 says: "And afterward they asked for a king; so *GOD gave them Saul* the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. And when *HE had removed him, HE raised up for them David as king*, to whom also He gave testimony and said, 'I have found David the

son of Jesse, a man after My own *heart*, who will do all My *will*" (verses 21-22).

So David does not take Saul's life, but he does take his spear and his canteen—symbolic of Saul's strength and sustenance—as proof of his venture. After returning safely from the campsite, David chastises Abner (captain of the guard and the one ultimately responsible for Saul's safety). This embarrassment may be instrumental in Abner's temporary refusal to acknowledge David as king after Saul's death.

But David's humility ("...for the king of Israel has come out to seek a flea," 1 Samuel 26:20) causes Saul to acknowledge his foolishness, at least for the time being. David still keeps his distance as he knows that Saul has a habit of quickly changing his mind and attitude. Though not yet written, we find here, in principle, Christ's admonition of Matthew 10:16 in use: "Be wise as serpents and harmless as doves."

After this incident, it appears that David and Saul never see each other again." [END]

Verse 6 – Abishai is a skilled warrior. In 2 Samuel 21:17 he slays the giant Ishbi-Benob and two chapters later in Samuel 23:18 we will see where he kills 300 men by himself.

Verse 8 – Sometimes we receive advice that we may want to hear, but here David being centered and grounded in God, doesn't listen to the advice and trusts God. What a tremendous example of faith and a tremendous example to all of us of the right way!

Verse 10 – David understands God doesn't need him to kill or remove Saul. God can do anything He wants.

Verse 19 – Adam Clarke’s commentary states: “His being obliged to leave the tabernacle, and the place where the true worship of God was performed, and take refuge among idolaters, said in effect, Go, serve other gods.”

Day 292 - THURSDAY: November 23rd

1 Samuel 27 & 1 Chronicles 12

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: “As 1 Samuel 27 opens, we see an example of one who was instrumental in God's hands apparently at a point of weakness in his faith and perhaps fallen into depression. As is clear from other biblical examples, such as Elijah (1 Kings 19:4) and Jonah (Jonah 4:3), servants of God sometimes suffered *terrible* depression. With evidence to the contrary, David here imagines that Saul will one day succeed in killing him (verse 1). One would think that with God having already had David anointed as king (16:13) and having delivered him on so many occasions, there would be no reason to be depressed. In this chapter, we can understand David's weaknesses as much as we can acknowledge our own. The Bible reveals both the *ups...* AND the *downs* of God's servants.

So David, ironically, seeks refuge in Gath, one of the royal cities of the Philistines, home of Achish the king. Accompanying David are his two wives, Ahinoam and Abigail (remember that David's first wife, Michal, had been given to another man by Saul in contempt for David, 1 Samuel 25:44). Also with him were his 600 men with their wives and children. So the total number of people would, no doubt, exceed 1,000. Being under the constant watchful scrutiny of the enemy of Israel probably proved to be rather strenuous for David and his company. After a time, David is given his own city, called Ziklag, about 20 miles south of Gath, as a city of refuge from Saul. When Israel first entered the Promised Land under Joshua, Ziklag belonged to Judah but was eventually ceded to Simeon (Joshua 19:1-9). Using Ziklag as his fortress, David now has

the freedom to attack neighboring nations. However, he is not forthright in his explanation to Achish of his attacks on these nations. Even though David is accomplishing what the Israelites have previously failed to do in driving out the Canaanites (Numbers 33:51-53), he gives Achish the impression that he is warring against his own people. Therefore Achish says, "He has made his people Israel utterly abhor him" (1 Samuel 27:12)." [END]

Verse 10 – John Gill’s commentary states: “he meant against some people that lay to the south of the land of Judah, without it; but expressed himself so, that Achish might think he meant the southern parts of Judah within the country; which, though not a downright lie, was an equivocation, and made with a design to deceive; and was by no means agreeably to the character of David, nor to be defended nor imitated”

Read 1 Chronicles 12:

Day 293 - FRIDAY: November 24th

1 Samuel 28

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: “The Philistines move from Aphek, where they had dismissed David (1 Samuel 29), to Jezreel (29:11) to confront Saul and the Israelites. They gather at the town of Shunem, a place we will again read about in the days of the prophet Elisha (see 2 Kings 4:8), while Saul pitches his camp at Mount Gilboa, about four miles south (1 Samuel 23:4).

David had previously stated regarding Saul, "As the LORD lives, the LORD shall strike him, or his day shall come to die, or he shall go out to battle and perish" (1 Samuel 26:10). Saul's time to die is now at hand. It is a very gloomy and depressing time for him. Samuel has died and any appeal to God goes unanswered. God explains to us, "But your

iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He *will not hear*" (Isaiah 59:2). Saul does not have the confidence he possessed when God's Spirit was working with him (compare 1 Samuel 11:6; 1 Samuel 16:14). The day before the battle (1 Samuel 28:19), he becomes fearful and desperate and, instead of true repentance, once again turns away from God—this time by essentially turning to Satan for an answer.

God's instructions to Israel are quite clear in this matter:

"Give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after them, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God" (Leviticus 19:31).

"And the person who turns to mediums and familiar spirits, to prostitute himself with them, I will set My face against that person and cut him off from his people" (20:6).

"There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you" (Deuteronomy 18:10-12). The original King James Version renders "medium" as "consulter with familiar spirits."

Saul in fact, during his reign, did obey God's instruction in this matter by removing these "abominations" from the land (1 Samuel 28:3). Evidently, though, there is at least one who evaded detection, a woman of the town of En Dor.

Now we come to a two-part question that many, including many biblical scholars, do not know how to answer: Does the woman really

conjure up a spirit? And is that spirit actually the prophet Samuel? Let's look at some facts:

Some would argue that there is no entity really brought up here because Saul does not actually see one himself—he only reasons that Samuel is present from the woman's description. But whether or not the woman is a fraud and trickster, what happens surprises even her (verse 12). And even though Saul does not see anyone, the account says that "the woman saw Samuel" (verse 12). Moreover, there is clearly spoken communication from this "Samuel" (verses 15-16). But is this truly Samuel, the deceased prophet of God? It would not *have* to be from the wording here. For instance, a person on a hallucinogenic drug might say he saw something that was not really there, and we would consider that he did "see" it—seeing in this context being a matter of perception rather than sensory input from light actually entering the eye. Since the Bible says the entity spoke, something was definitely present. But what the woman sees is not actually visible to the naked eye—or Saul would be able to see it too. This means that the image the woman sees must be projected into her mind through supernatural means. So we ask: Is the prophet Samuel the one doing this?

First of all, the Bible very clearly points to a future *resurrection* of the dead. Many "orthodox" believers, however, maintain that this is simply the rejoining of a conscious, disembodied soul with a new body. Yet the Bible repeatedly describes the current state of the dead as one of "sleep" (Daniel 12:2; 1 Corinthians 11:30; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-15; 2 Peter 3:4). Ecclesiastes makes it even more clear: "For the living know that they will die; but *the dead know nothing... for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave* where you are going" (Ecclesiastes 9:5, Ecclesiastes 9:10). Thus, a dead person is completely unconscious. The resurrection is an awakening—a return to consciousness.

What this means is that there is no such thing as ghosts, as they are commonly defined—the spirits of the dead still wandering the earth. But there certainly *are* spirit beings who, unable to materialize, can appear as ghostly apparitions (compare Luke 24:39—where Christ shows His disciples that He is *not* one of these). The Bible elsewhere calls these beings unclean spirits—or demons. They are fallen angels, spirit beings who have rebelled against God under the arch-demon, Satan the Devil.

Now, the woman of En Dor is a medium, consulting with, as already noted, "familiar *spirits*" (1 Samuel 28:7 KJV). Are these dead people? No. For we have already seen that there is no consciousness in death. Consider also: Why would God impose the death penalty for communicating with dead friends and relatives if that were really possible? One scholar explains: "The reason the death penalty was inflicted for consulting 'familiar spirits' is that these were 'evil spirits,' or fallen angels impersonating the dead.... God hardly could have prescribed the death penalty for communicating with the spirits of deceased loved ones if such spirits existed and if such a communication were possible. There is no moral reason for God to outlaw, on pain of death, the human desire to communicate with deceased loved ones. The problem is that such communication is impossible, because the dead are unconscious and do not communicate with the living. Any communication that occurs is not with the spirit of the dead, but with evil spirits" (Samuele Bacchiocchi, *Immortality or Resurrection?*, 1997, p. 168).

Furthermore, it would be quite odd for God to send a message to Saul through the prophet Samuel when the account very clearly states that God will not answer Saul's inquiries "either by dreams or by Urim *or by the prophets*" (verse 6). And consider that this is because of Saul's disobedience (compare Isaiah 59:2). So why would God now go ahead

and answer him in the face of even *greater* disobedience on Saul's part in the use of a medium? That just does not seem reasonable.

Thus, the being the medium sees ascending out of the earth (1 Samuel 28:13) is nothing more than a demon. Even "the church fathers [early Catholic theologians] believed that a demon impersonated Samuel and appeared to Saul" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on 28:12). Saul only *perceives* that it must be Samuel. He certainly *wants* it to be Samuel! The apostle Paul is inspired to write: "And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into [or disguises himself as] an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into [or disguise themselves as] *ministers of righteousness*, whose end will be according to their works" (2 Corinthians 11:14-15). So it would not be unusual for a demon to appear as Samuel. And we know from all other scriptures that pertain to this subject that this is *not* the prophet Samuel speaking.

Let's look at the conclusion of Saul's deed. He certainly doesn't come away with *anything* profitable. In fact, he is so disheartened that he can barely eat! These scriptures should once again remind us of God's instructions *against* consulting with the evil spirit realm." [END]

I don't have anything additional to add to this section.

Day 294 - SATURDAY: November 25th

1 Samuel 29

Daily Deep Dive:

The UCG reading program states: "In 1 Samuel 29, we find the Philistines gathering for battle at Aphek, about 30 miles north of Gath and "about 13 miles northeast of Joppa" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on 29:1-2)—close to modern Tel Aviv. The Israelites under Saul are approximately 40 miles further to the north in Jezreel. David has evidently gathered his forces and marched behind Achish and his

troops as they come together at Aphek. Whether David sincerely intends to fight against Saul and his own people is not made evident. It certainly would not be consistent with David's established pattern, however, as he has previously refused to fight against Saul

But we do know this: God gives David a way of escaping this volatile situation (compare 1 Corinthians 10:13). The Philistine generals do not have the confidence in David that Achish does and strongly persuade the king to send him back to Ziklag. Thus, David will not have to fight against Saul in the upcoming battle—but neither will he be there to *help* Saul in defense of his own country against the Philistines. And this battle, as we will shortly learn, will be Saul's last." [END]

Verse 1 – Adam Clarke's commentary states: "To be near a fountain, or copious spring of water, was a point of great importance to an army in countries such as these, where water was so very scarce. It is supposed"