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Shepherd Warrior's Life Reported in Newspaper

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Shepherd boy slays Philistine giant

David, son of Jesse, prevails over Goliath of Gath

A sling and stone was all it took for a young shepherd boy to mortally wound the Philistine champion, witnesses at the battle scene said.

The two armies, which had been mobilized to fight at Shochoh for the past 40 days, watched in shock and disbelief as David, son of Jesse of Bethlehem-judah, launched the stone like a projectile. The stone struck the 13-foot Goliath of Gath in the head and David beheaded the giant with his own sword.

"Who is this young man," King Saul asked Israelite Army Captain Abner of the shepherd who had recently come to his court to serve as the King's armor-bearer and personal musician.

"As my soul lives, I do not know," said Captain Abner, commander of the King's hosts.

"Well, find out who is his father," the King of Israel ordered.

For 40 days, Goliath had been tempting, taunting and testing the Israelite armies, hurling insults at the Lord God, the King and the Israelite nation.

"I couldn't believe that this small young boy had actually killed this terrifying giant," an unidentified soldier told The Testament Spectator.

"We were greatly afraid of Goliath. It

formidable opponent for an experienced soldier who was similarly armed. But a lightly-armed, fleet-of-foot shepherd is tactically the right strategy in facing that behemoth," said the officer, noting that perhaps shepherds should be drafted in the Army.

Military analysts said what tipped the balance of power toward the young lad was his quick, frontal attack.

'I knew that the Spirit of the Lord was on this lad when I anointed him at his father's house' — Prophet Samuel

took tremendous courage for the young lad just to even face him, much less defeat him," he said.

Face and defeat Goliath of Gath young David did, much to everyone's amazement.

"He had managed to convince King Saul that his prowess as a shepherd could outmaneuver Goliath," an intelligence officer said.

"A reconnaissance report on Goliath's fighting style indicated he would be a

But the Prophet Samuel, still mourning for King Saul because the Lord rejected the Israelite monarch as leader, credited the Spirit of the Lord for David's success.

"It is easy for our military leaders to explain David's victory militarily, but I knew that the Spirit of the Lord was on this lad when I anointed him at his father's house," he said.

Prophet Samuel predicted that young David will become King of Israel.

Shocked Philistine enemy routed at Shochoh battlefield

Their dead was strewn along the Shaaraim Road to Gath and Ekron

Shocked at seeing the death of their champion by the sling and rock of a young shepherd boy, the Philistines were routed at Shochoh battlefield.

"When the Philistines saw that their hero [Goliath of Gath] was dead, they turned and ran away," said a spokesman for the commander of King Saul's host, Israelite Army Captain Abner.

The two armies had been mobilized, poised to fight at Shochoh battlefield — encamped between Azekah in Ephesdamim — for the last 40 days.

Goliath of Gath, the Philistine giant reported to have towered between nine and 13 feet tall, repeatedly challenged one of the "servants of [Israelite King] Saul" to a duel.

"If he is able to kill me in a duel, we will become your subjects; but if I am victorious, you will become our subjects and serve us," said Goliath, tempting, taunting and testing the Israelite soldiers.

But David, the youngest son of Jesse (the Ephrathite of Bethlehem-judah) convinced the King to accept Goliath of Gath's challenge to fight. He killed the giant with just a sling and a single rock.

'When the Philistines saw that their hero [Goliath of Gath] was dead, they turned and ran away' — Israelite Army Spokesman

Eyewitnesses of the duel said the stone sank into Goliath's forehead and when the giant toppled over, he fell face down to the ground as if to pay homage to the Lord God Almighty.

Then the young shepherd unsheathed Goliath of Gath's heavy sword, held it high over his head and with all his might,

swooped down on Goliath's neck, decapitating the giant.

But the Philistines, so sure that their champion would win the duel as he did many times before, did not live up to the promise Goliath made of serving the Israelites should he lose.

Instead, the Israelite troops swarmed over them while the Philistines frantically retreated from the battle lines.

An Israelite Army spokesman, declaring total and absolute victory, briefed the press.

"With a loud shout we chased them to the entrance of Gath and Ekron," he said. "Their dead was strewn on the Shaaraim Road all the way toward those two cities."

Battlefield errand pits young David against Goliath of Gath

Shepherd warrior's fate with giant began with Father's simple request

When Jesse asked his son David to take some provisions to his three brothers at the war front, the Ephrathite from Bethlehem-judah didn't know that the request would pit the young shepherd against Goliath of Gath.

Jesse's oldest sons — Eliab, the firstborn, Abinadab, the second and Shammah the third — followed the mighty King Saul to fight against the Philistines.

"Take one bushel of roasted grain and

ten loaves to your brothers," Jesse asked his youngest son, David, who had shuttled between Bethlehem-judah and Gibeah for some time now, tending his father's sheep and serving as Saul's personal musician and armor-bearer at the King's court.

'Take one bushel of roasted grain and ten loaves to your brothers...' — Father Jesse

"And give these ten cheeses to the commander of their Unit," Jesse added, instructing the young shepherd to bring back news how his three sons were doing.

David said he loaded up the supplies

and left the next morning. He arrived just at the time the two armies were, in ritualistic manner, drawing up their lines facing each other to shout the war cry.

Excited at seeing the armies line up for battle, David left his supplies with an attendant and ran toward the front to

greet his brothers.

"Father Jesse asks about you," David told them. "He also sent me to bring you some grain and bread, and some cheese for your commanding officer."

Eliab, Abinadab and Shammah

thanked the younger brother for bringing the provisions. But they were irritated that he selected this time to tell them. So they told him to be quiet.

As David was milling around and talking to the other soldiers, Goliath of Gath stepped forward, shouted obscenities, insulted the Israelites and defiled the Lord God Almighty.

"Come out, line up for battle and fight me. Am I not a Philistine, and are you not the servants of Saul? You're supposed to be God's chosen people," Goliath said with arrogance, sarcasm and haughtiness. "If you are, surely you will prevail over me."

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Battlefield errand...

(Continued from Page 1, Column 4)

No one stepped forward, prompting Goliath to say they must not be God's chosen people. "You have neither the guts to face me nor the skills to kill me!"

Goliath said this is the deal: If an Israelite kills him, the Philistines would become their subjects. But if he overcame the Israelites' opponent, the Israelites would become the Philistines' subjects and serve them.

"This day I defy the ranks of Israel," he shouted. "If there is such a worthy opponent among Saul's brave men, send him to me now!"

David said he couldn't believe what he was hearing. He especially couldn't believe the reaction of the Israelites. When they saw Goliath, they turned in fear, ran the other way and took cover behind the rocks, bushes and ditches.

"Isn't it frightening to see how this monster man defies our God, King and country," a soldier told David, quickly running past him to take cover with the others.

Israelite women celebrate David's victory

Music and dancing creates fun, fanfare and frivolity throughout the land

Singing, dancing and instruments were heard throughout the land as Israel's mother's, women, maidens and young girls celebrated David's victory over Goliath of Gath and extolled the Army's exploits in the ensuing battle.

"Saul has slain his thousands and David his tens of thousands," the women sang. They danced to the rhythm of lutes and tambourines, as the Israelites returned from chasing the Philistines and plundering the enemies' camp.

There was fun, fanfare and frivolity in the land after the young shepherd warrior David killed the Philistines' champion so dramatically.

King Saul would have remembered the parade with fondness, but he was angered and appalled by the song's refrain of him just slaying "thousands" and David slaying ten times more.

"They have credited David with tens of thousands," a source who spoke on condition of anonymity, told *The Testament Spectator*.

"What more can he get but my Kingdom," Saul was overheard to have muttered sarcastically.

King Saul knew he was losing his popularity in Israel because the Lord rejected his Kingship when he refused to execute Amalekite King Agag (see *Testament Spectator Analysis* on page 3).

The national fanfare and frivolity throughout the land was reminiscent of Aaron's sister, Miriam, the prophetess of old. After the Lord brought the waters of the Red Sea over the pursuing Egyptians, she took a tambourine in her hand and led a group of women dancing and celebrating throughout the camp.

"Sing to the Lord, for He is highly exalted," they sang triumphantly. "The horse and its rider He has hurled into the sea."

David accepts King's challenge; Defeating Goliath not motivated by personal reward

King Saul lends David his armor; but shepherd warrior refuses to use it

The challenger who defeats Goliath of Gath was to receive great riches, be presented the King's daughter for marriage and the victor's father wouldn't have to pay taxes, decreed Saul.

Even though King Saul announced this decree to entice one of his brave soldiers to challenge Goliath of Gath, he believed that no one would actually want to face the 13-foot giant.

David was told about the King's reward, but it seemed to have gone in one ear and out the other.

"What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel," he asked, trying to allay the fear of the soldiers as they broke ranks and ran. David probably wondered whether anyone would back him up should he prevail.

After being told by the men many times what King Saul's reward would be, David said that he still wanted to fight Goliath, not because of receiving riches, marrying the King's daughter or Father Jesse being exempted from paying taxes, but because "this uncircumcised Philistine has defied the armies of the living God."

Eliab, David's oldest brother, was angry when he heard that David would be so arrogant to think that he could fight a seasoned soldier. But for David to brag that he could take on the infamous Goliath was simply an adolescent boast.

"Why have you come here and who is tending your sheep in the desert," Eliab asked his kid brother. "I know that you are sneaky, conceited and wicked little twerp. You have come here just to see a duel and witness the battle."

David, who looked up to his big brothers and was proud that they — Eliab, the firstborn, Abinadab, the

second and Shamamah the third — would be so courageous to fight for King Saul, asked Eliab what he had done wrong. David claimed that he wouldn't do anything that would dishonor his father nor portray his brothers in a negative light.

He just wanted to remove this blight from Israel by engaging and defeating Goliath of Gath for defiling his God, King, and people.

Hearing that his personal musician and armor-bearer had returned from Bethlehem-judah from tending his father's sheep and volunteered to take on Goliath of Gath, King Saul entertained David's request, even though he thought the shepherd was out of his league.

'You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a boy, and he has been a fighting man from his youth' — King Saul

"Don't let anyone lose his heart on account of this Philistine. Your servant will go and face him," David told the King with uncanny self-assurance.

"You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a boy, and he has been a fighting man from his youth," King Saul replied.

David, who didn't react to King Saul's opinion with adolescent emotion, respectfully disagreed.

He knew that his skill and prowess as a shepherd could outmaneuver Goliath. So he told a couple of stories to buttress his case.

"Your servant had been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth," David said. "When it turned on me, I seized it by its fur, struck it and killed it."

Relating in poetic rhetoric that Goliath

of Gath was a lion or bear, David said surely he is capable of taking him on.

"I see this uncircumcised Philistine as but a whipped lion or bear, because he has defied the armies of God," the shepherd musician said.

Young David, of a healthy ruddy complexion, was very composed and persuasive, according to sources assigned at King Saul's court.

"He knew that the King was aware that shepherds were quite adept in using a staff, sling and stone as weapons," an official from King Saul's court said. "David knew recounting his experiences of fighting a lion and bear would win him [the King] over."

King Saul acquiesced and offered to David the use of his tunic, coat of armor

and bronze helmet. But when David tried to walk around with Saul's battle gear, he found them to be cumbersome.

The tunic was too restrictive, the coat of armor weighed too much and the helmet, which was very, very hot, restricted his vision. "I cannot go with these, because I am not used to them," said David, while removing the heavy armor, not wanting to hurt the King's feelings.

David left King Saul's court at Gibeah to confront the giant everyone so feared.

Taking his staff in hand, the young shepherd meticulously selected five smooth stones from a nearby stream, stacked them in his shepherd's pouch, and with a sling, approached the battle lines to face and fight Goliath of Gath.

The soldiers were impressed with the courage David displayed. The question on everyone's mind was whether David could actually defeat Goliath.

Fearless shepherd boy faces the Philistines' towering giant

Armed with a sling and five smooth stones

Twice daily for 40 straight days, seasoned soldiers retreated in fear after seeing Goliath of Gath.

But young David, pulling double-duty as shepherd for his father at home and serving Saul as the King's personal musician and armor-bearer, wasn't intimidated by the towering giant.

After picking up stones from a nearby stream and placing them in his shepherd's pouch, David, son of Jesse from Bethlehem-judah, approached the giant with resolute poise and confidence, witnesses said.

"David was pretty smart," an unidentified soldier said. "He began talking to Goliath. No one ever talked to him because we were so afraid of him. I think during their conversation David was studying how Goliath moved."

"I didn't think about it until now, but David must have known that Goliath's bronze helmet, coat of mail, shiny armor,

bronze javelin and shaft of his spear meant that he was carrying a lot of weight," another soldier remarked to *The Testament Spectator*.

"David carried less weight, and I think that he used that to his advantage. As I reflect, speed and agility overcame a heavily armored giant," he said.

When the big Goliath of Gath saw the little David approach him, he looked at him with puzzlement and saw that the

'...I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, whom you have defied' — David

shepherd was only a handsome boy.

This made Goliath despise the mighty King Saul more for sending such a young lad to fight him.

"Am I a dog that you come at me with a rod," said Goliath, cursing at David, swearing at King Saul and defiling the Lord God Almighty.

"Come to me," he said sarcastically. "Let me get a good look at you before I

give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field."

David obliged him. He moved closer so the giant could hear him.

"You come against me with sword and spear and javelin," David told Goliath. "But I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied."

With his shield bearer in front of him, Goliath of Gath laughed in derision.

David spoke again: "This day the Lord will hand you over to me, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head."

"Today I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel."

"All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's and He will give all of you into our hands."

As Goliath of Gath moved closer to

(Continued on Page 3, Column 1)

David faces giant...

(Continued from Page 2, Column 4)

attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him.

Reaching into his bag and taking out one of the five stones he selected from the stream just moments before, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead.

Witnesses said the stone sank into his forehead, the mighty Goliath fell facedown to the ground, as if to pay homage to the Lord God Almighty.

With a sling and rock the size of a baseball, Goliath of Gath was slain, but David didn't stop there.

Unsheathing Goliath's heavy sword, David raised it high in the air and with all of his might and for all the two armies to see, swooped down on Goliath's neck, decapitating him.

David seemed to know that this bold, resolute act would demoralize the opposition, because the Philistines had put the trust of their gods in their champion.

Goliath of Gath said that if an Israelite opponent kills him, the Philistines would subjugate themselves to them.

But when the Philistines saw Goliath had been killed by the sling and rock of a shepherd boy — who then decapitated their champion with his own sword — they frantically retreated and ran in fear.

Who is this shepherd warrior David, anyway?

Youngest son of Jesse catches the eye of Prophet Samuel

Before the slaying of Goliath of Gath by a young shepherd boy named David, the youngest son of Jesse was previously anointed to replace King Saul, according to the Lord's Prophet Samuel.

Reluctant to talk to *The Testament Spectator* for fear that King Saul may be so jealous and outraged that he would order a death warrant on him, Prophet Samuel acknowledged that the Lord directed him to visit Jesse, the Ephraimite from Bethlehem-judah, for the purpose of anointing one of his sons to be the next King of Israel.

"The Lord told me to tell the elders of the town that I was there to sacrifice to Him as a cover," Prophet Samuel acknowledged.

"They wanted to know if I was coming in peace and when I assured

them that I had, I invited them to consecrate themselves and sacrifice with me," he said.

Before the feast, Prophet Samuel said he wanted to consecrate Jesse's sons.

"I said in my heart, 'Surely the Lord's anointed stands here before me. Surely He will choose one of these strong, fine young men to be our next King.'

"But the Lord chided me for thinking that," the Prophet acknowledged.

He recalled Saul's selection for King was made in part because he was "a head taller than any of the others."

"The Lord told me to look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature," Prophet Samuel said.

"Because I sometimes reject such men. I see not as man sees, for men look on the outward appearance, but I look in the heart," he added.

Not only did Prophet Samuel inspect Eliab, Abinadab and Shammah — three brave men who are now in King Saul's army — but he looked at Nethanel, Raddai, and Ozem, as well. But they

were not who the Lord was looking for, he said.

"Prophet Samuel asked me if these were all my sons," Jesse said. "I told him that my youngest was tending sheep, and he said we would not sit down to eat until my youngest arrived."

Frequently overlooked as many youngest children are, young David wasn't even invited to the feast.

An obedient, good-natured lad, he always did what Father Jesse told him and looked up and tried to emulate his big brothers. Prophet Samuel saw the lad, who was ruddy with a fine, handsome appearance.

"The Lord told me to rise and anoint him, for he is the one," the Prophet said, noticing that David seemed to have an inexplicable noble bearing about him.

Samuel said he took the horn of oil and anointed young David in the presence of his brothers.

From that day on, Prophet Samuel said, the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power.

Why the Lord God rejected Saul's Kingship

Perhaps shepherd David is the next 'Glory of Israel'

It is hard to imagine that warrior King Saul and the mighty men under his command would be so terrified at the sight and booming voice of Goliath of Gath that they refused to challenge the Philistine champion in a duel.

It took a shepherd boy, youngest son of Jesse the Ephraimite from Bethlehem-judah recently spotted at Saul's court in Gibeath, serving as the King's private musician and armor-bearer, to "come, line up for battle" and fight the giant.

The once mighty King Saul, Israel's first monarch chosen by the Lord God Almighty then anointed by Prophet Samuel, seems to have been reduced to a lonely man — subject to fits of rage, depression and melancholy, because the Lord rejected his kingship.

What amazing traits this shepherd boy exhibits. He's tough enough to prevail over Goliath of Gath in battle with only a sling and rock, yet tender enough to play the harp to soothe King Saul's demonic affliction and erratic mood swings.

David must know that he is next in line to be King of Israel, yet he appears to be an unassuming lad, loyal to his God, King and nation. Despite receiving a promotion then demotion, whatever task King Saul assigns David, he completes them successfully.

Initially, King Saul promoted the young David to a high rank over the men of war. David's elevation to the rank of general pleased the King's officers and the people.

Then inexplicably King Saul, probably fearful of David because the Lord God was with him, demoted the young man to be commander of just 1,000 men.

Testament Spectator Analysis

Still, the shepherd warrior led those troops under his command and was victorious in several military campaigns. David must know that he is being groomed for kingly leadership.

And even all of Israel and Judah loved him, David doesn't appear to be ambitious, actively seek, solicit advancement or aspire promotion by his own right.

As a matter of fact, David shuns the limelight. Yet favorable outcomes seem to come his way by some sort of Providential hand guiding his life.

Perhaps Samuel knows what's next in line for David. But the Prophet

"I have carried out the Lord's instruction," he declared proudly, referring to the attack and destruction of the Amalekites.

"What is this bleating of sheep and lowing of cattle I hear," the Prophet asked sternly.

Blaming his soldiers, King Saul explained to the Prophet that the best livestock was saved to sacrifice to the Lord God Almighty.

"But we totally destroyed the rest," he said, thinking that by saving the best livestock to sacrifice to the Lord would justify his decision, pacify the Lord and please the Prophet.

"Stop," Prophet Samuel abruptly

'I am grieved that I have made Saul King, because he has turned away from Me and has not carried out My specific instructions' — The Lord God Almighty

hasn't been seen with Saul since the King disobeyed the Lord by refusing to execute Amalekite King Agag and destroy everything that belonged to him.

"I am grieved that I have made Saul King, because he has turned away from Me and has not carried out My specific instructions," said the Lord to Prophet Samuel one evening.

The Prophet was so troubled, he cried out to the Lord all night, because Samuel loves King Saul like he was his own son. The next morning the Prophet went to meet the King. Unknowing that Prophet Samuel wanted to see him, King Saul had gone to Mt. Carmel instead. King Saul just didn't get it, nor did he understand how serious it was for him.

"The Lord bless you," the King bestowed pretentiously to the Prophet when they finally met.

said. "The Lord told me when I cried to Him that you were once small in your eyes, yet He, in His infinite sovereignty, set you to be head over the tribes of Israel and anointed you King over all Israel. But you disobeyed Him when He specifically told you to wipe out the Amalekites," the Prophet said.

"Why did you plunder," he asked Saul. The King insisted that he did obey God by taking the best to sacrifice to the Lord at Gilgal.

"Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the Lord," the Prophet asked him.

"To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion is like the sin of divination and arrogance like the evil of idolatry."

The Prophet said since King Saul —

who then changed his mind and said he yielded to the will of the people for fear of them — rejected the will of the Lord, he would reject him.

Prophet Samuel turned from the King, who then grabbed his robe and tore it when he tried to restrain the Prophet from departing.

"The Lord has torn the Kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to one of your neighbors — to one better than you.

"He who is the 'Glory of Israel' does not lie or change his mind," Samuel said. "For he is not a man that he should change his mind," the prophet repeated.

Is the young shepherd David the "next Glory of Israel?" Time will tell.

King Saul didn't contest Goliath of Gath because he knew the special anointing and favor he enjoyed from the Lord had departed.

King Saul's fearful and defeated attitude must have trickled down the ranks, from Israelite Army Captain Abner, Son of Ner (who is Saul's uncle) and commander of the King's hosts, to the mighty men under his kingly command.

That's probably why every morning and evening for 40 days, King Saul, Captain Abner, the other officers and rank-in-file soldiers were so terrified and traumatized at the sight of Goliath of Gath that they remained reticent as the giant incessantly taunted, tempted and insulted them. Day after day, the Philistine champion must have been emboldened by their collective passivity.

Yet a young scrawny-looking shepherd, with a healthy, ruddy complexion, was not bothered nor intimidated by the seasoned, imposing embodiment of Goliath of Gath.

For the Spirit of the Lord is upon David, as it had once been on mighty King Saul.

Saul's heir decides not to seek kingship

Prince Jonathan endorses David as next ruler

King Saul's eldest son ceded the prospect of becoming next ruler of Israel to the popular shepherd warrior.

In an act and personal gesture to demonstrate who he believed should become the next King of Israel, Saul's firstborn son — and likely heir to the throne — removed his royal garments and gave the princely attire to the son of Jesse's youngest son.

Prince Jonathan sensed that David, initially promoted to general then summarily demoted by King Saul to command just 1,000 men, was God's choice to succeed his father as Israel's next King.

So in a selfless acknowledgment, symbolic acquiescence and royal endorsement of David's inevitable ascension to the Israelite throne, Jonathan also gave his sword, bow and girdle to the young man who slew Goliath of Gath.

Even though Jonathan hadn't defeated a champion of Goliath's renown stature and reputation, he was still significant in his own right when using his battle gear to fight the Philistines, those who knew the prince's war record say.

They reminded *The Testament Spectator* of Jonathan's heroic battlefield exploits. Before David's dramatic duel with Goliath, the brave prince was heralded as Israelite's hero.

For it was the valiant Jonathan who attacked the Philistines' Geba Garrison. And it was this same prince who also bravely killed 20 Philistines at a half-acre plot outside Gibeah, reported Jonathan's armor-bearer who fought right behind him that day.

So the significance of Jonathan giving his fighting gear to David for all of Israel to see cannot be understated, royal insiders confirmed.

Yet no one knows how Jonathan's family accepted him endorsing David.

King Saul's three other sons were Ish-bosheth, Melchishua and Abinadab. Even though a line of succession had not been planned or formally announced, these royal insiders assumed the princely trio were also in line to be King.

Moreover, if King Saul and his four sons unexpectedly died, it was possible — yet not quite probable — that one of King Saul's daughters, Merab or Michal, also could become queen and thus rule Israel, they theorized.

All everyone knew is that Jonathan loved David as a brother. The two men consummated that relationship when the prince stripped himself of the robe and gave the garments to David.

David was a humble Bethlehem-judah shepherd. Yet the young man behaved himself like royalty at King Saul's court. Exhibiting a stately, inexplicable noble bearing befitting that of a prince, David was accepted by King Saul's servants and all the people.

Jonathan loved David as a brother. He knew that David was a man after God's own heart — destined to rule.

King Saul plots David's death; Elaborate plan involves enticing him to marry his daughter

Shepherd warrior reluctantly accepts and then exceeds Kingly challenge

Afraid that the Lord was with David and departed King Saul, the Israelite ruler plotted to kill the shepherd warrior by requiring the young lad to slay a hundred enemy in exchange for marrying his daughter.

"If you bravely serve me and fight the Lord's battles against the Philistines, I'll let you marry Princess Merab, my eldest daughter," King Saul said in an enticing offer to David.

But there was an ulterior motive for King Saul's proposal, many Davidic supporters opine.

Jealous of their hero's success and popularity among the people, King Saul attempted to kill David, the shepherd warrior's fans allege.

On two occasions, the King tried to pin David against the wall with his spear but failed, several palace eyewitness attest.

Furthermore, suspicion that the King was plotting something was fueled by a comment an attendant overheard Saul say.

"The chances of David returning alive from this assignment is slim to none," this anonymous source heard King Saul state. "Let one of those 100 Philistine men be the one to kill him — then I won't have to."

David was to have already been married to the King's daughter for slaying the giant from Gath, many reminded *The Testament Spectator*.

They noted that David was also supposed to have received riches and Father Jesse received a tax exemption. No one seems to know if these rewards were ever conferred to David or his father, the Ephraimite from Bethlehem-judah.

Since David was never motivated to fight Goliath by personal reward, the shepherd warrior never claimed these prizes for defeating the giant and thus, seemed rather reluctant to accept King Saul's offer this time as well.

"Whom am I, and what is my family or my father's clan in Israel, that I should become the King's son-in-law," responded David, reluctant to marry Princess Merab.

So when the time came for David to wed the King's first daughter, she instead married Adriel from Meholah, an area located in the Jordan Valley.

But according to Michal's maidens, the princess had feelings for David.

When King Saul learned that his younger daughter fell in love with the shepherd warrior, he approved of a marital union — but again for ulterior reasons.

"I will use Princess Michal to get David," said Saul, using David's respect and esteem of marrying into the royal family as a ploy to manipulate him.

"Speak to David privately and tell him, 'The King is pleased with all you've done for him and the Kingdom. He wants to reward you by marrying into the family,'" an anonymous source leaked to *The Testament Spectator*.

After the attendants told David thus, he didn't consider himself worthy of marrying Princess Michal.

"Do you think it is a small thing to become the King's son-in-law," he asked King Saul's messenger. "I'm a lowly shepherd

who hails from a poor unknown family."

When Saul's emissary returned to the King and reported to him what David said, the ruler told them to tell David that he didn't want a dowry for the prince's bride.

"He can best serve me by exacting revenge on my enemies — the Philistines," insisted the King.

The messenger returned to David and reiterated to him that he could marry

Besides, how could David, loved by all Israel and Judah, refuse service to the King — even though Saul's challenge might have risked the shepherd warrior's life?

So David accepted King Saul's challenge and led his men on this killing 100 Philistines military campaign. But to everyone's surprise and amazement, David exceeded King Saul's directive.

Not only did Saul's David-dying-in-

'The King is pleased with all you've done for him and the Kingdom. He wants to reward you by marrying into the family' — King Saul's messenger to David

King Saul's daughter and become his son-in-law by slaying 100 Philistines.

David seemed unaware of Saul's true motives. If he suspected — many believe that he must have — the shepherd warrior was unaffected that the King wanted him to be killed by the Philistines.

Lured by duty to fight Israel's enemy, David's loyalty to the monarch and his subjects motivated the shepherd warrior.

Perhaps David was under the hopeful yet false illusion that Saul actually did want him to marry his daughter?

King Saul orders David's death

King Saul ordered David's execution, the King's attendants reported. Jonathan would not conspire with his father, but intervened to save the shepherd warrior.

Shockingly as it might sound, this wasn't the first time King Saul tried to kill David, inside sources confirmed to *The Testament Spectator*.

Saul's resentment of David began right after he slew Goliath. The King resented the women crediting David for slaying ten times more than he, someone heard him mutter after hearing their victory song celebrating Goliath's defeat.

Consequently, King Saul was afraid that David was after his throne, so he tried to pin David against the wall with his spear on two occasions. But David dodged the weapons that were thrown at him.

Then the Israelite ruler plotted to kill him by requiring that he slay 100 Philistines in exchange for marrying his daughter. That plot too failed and as a result of marrying into the royal family, David became Jonathan's brother-in-law.

David's father-in-law tries to kill him again

Numerous assassination attempts unsuccessful

King Saul tried to kill David yet again but failed, several sources from the royal household confirmed.

If it wasn't for David's quick reflexes and Princess Michal's cleverness, she would be making funeral arrangements for her husband right now, one source noted.

King Saul had ordered David's death a few days before. Then in an unexpected reversal of that decree, he assured Prince Jonathan that he would not try to kill

hazard-duty plot fail, but "the Goliath Slayer" killed twice as many. David slew 200 Philistines!

Honor-bound by his word to the shepherd warrior, King Saul gave Princess Michal to David, the son of Jesse of Bethlehem-judah.

King Saul realized that there was nothing he could do about David — for the Lord was with him.

Yet still, he was afraid of David's popularity. For everything David did, he was even more successful and became the most popular of Saul's officers.

So preventing Saul from carrying out his death warrant on David this time required the intervention of Prince Jonathan.

"My father plans to kill you," warned Jonathan to David. "Be on guard tomorrow morning. You better hide."

Jonathan told David that he would talk with his father and try to change his mind.

"Let not the King do wrong to his servant David. He has not wronged you, as a matter of fact, what he has done has benefitted you greatly," Jonathan reasoned with Saul.

Jonathan reminded the King that David risked his life to fight Goliath and was successful during many Philistine raids. After listening to his son, Saul swore not to hurt David.

"As surely as the Lord lives, David will not be put to death," the King said.

But rage, anger and jealousy of David for his good standing with the Lord, Samuel and the people, would soon cause Saul to break his promise.

David anymore. But the King broke the promise he made to his son.

Jealous of "the Goliath Slayer," Saul tried twice again to kill David, the shepherd warrior hero who the King appointed to be an army officer and then gave his daughter to him in marriage.

Upset for being rejected by the Lord, insecure as King and threatened by his own son-in-law, Saul had become an emotionally unpredictable and moody man, many observed.

Because the Philistine threat presented serious national security

(Continued on Page 3, Column 1)

King Saul tries to kill David seven times, but he fails...

(Continued from Page 4, Column 4)

concerns, King Saul had to put his negative feelings and personal conflict with David aside. The King needed his effective, respected and most popular military leader.

The shepherd warrior willingly obeyed King Saul's call, assumed command over the men, devised a battle plan, mustered the troops and lead the Israelite attack against the Philistines.

The army assault during the battle was so ferocious, the Philistines frantically retreated, just like they did at Shohoh battlefield after Goliath of Gath was defeated.

Returning from battle, David freshened up before presenting himself at King Saul's court in Gibeah, several royal watchers attested.

It had become a regular occurrence — David the shepherd warrior and court musician playing harp to assuage his King's demonic oppression.

But the soothing melodies emanating from David's instrument which had enveloped the dining room did not allay the agitated Saul.

The King sat in his large chair, quietly listening to David's music. The ruler seemed pensive.

Resting the long wooden shaft handle on the floor, Saul glared at David and seethed as he twirled the weapon continuously with both hands.

The sharp metallic blade glistened in the candle-lit, music-filled dining room, as he rotated the spearhead in one

direction, then in another, back and forth and back and forth again.

Then, as it happened twice before, King Saul suddenly attacked David without warning.

"King Saul abruptly stood up, took the spear in his right hand and threw the weapon right at him," one observer said.

But the shepherd warrior, alertly dropping his harp when the tall King arose to position himself in a spearman's

hair and draped a blanket around the image to make it appear as if David was lying in bed asleep.

King Saul's elite bodyguard reluctantly demanded access to David and Michal's bedroom. Apologizing to Michal for bothering her, they informed the princess they were operating under King Saul's direct order to arrest her husband.

"He is ill," said Michal, trying to buy time for David as he escaped into the night.

Her delay tactic worked. The elite bodyguard unit departed, returned to the King and reported to Saul what Michal told them. Unsatisfied with their report, the King sent them back.

"Bring him up to me in his bed if you have to then so that I may kill him," the King yelled irrationally as they hurriedly departed the throne room.

'I don't know what has gotten into my father, but if you don't run for your life tonight, you will be killed and I'll be a widow by sunrise' — Princes Michal to David

attack stance, dodged the projectile thrown at him.

The spear was hurled with such trajectory velocity that the leading edge of the sharp metallic blade pricked mortar from the palace wall.

David, who ran out of the dining room, again escaped certain death that night. Then later, Princes Michal foiled yet another attempt to assassinate her husband, *The Testament Spectator* learned.

A prince confidant quickly notified Michal of King Saul's spear-thrown-at-David incident.

She also learned her father sent men from his elite bodyguard to their house. The plan, Princes Michal learned, was to capture David in the morning and then kill him.

"I don't know what has gotten into my father, but if you don't run for your

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Supernatural intervention prevents messengers and King Saul from arresting elusive shepherd warrior

Smitten by Spirit of God, men and monarch prophesy with Samuel's prophets

Three group of messengers, dispatched by King Saul on three successive occasions, failed to apprehend David three times because they prophesied when the Spirit of God came upon them.

What the messengers declared while they were under God's divine power during these three prophetic episodes is unknown.

But what is known is that the King's men, who in their quest to find David at Naioth Ramah, had instead encountered prophets prophesying — and thus were supernaturally prevented from carrying out King Saul's order of arresting the shepherd warrior.

How is it that "the Goliath Slayer," heralded as Israelite hero, promoted to army officer and even married into the King's royal family, had been relegated to a common fugitive on the run?

The answer to that question is no secret, many attest.

They noted that insecurity, jealousy, anger, fear and demonic oppression now drives the Israelite monarch to kill David, his second son-in-law.

Most acknowledge that Saul, anointed "Captain over the Lord's people" when Samuel poured a vial of oil on his head and consecrated him King years earlier, is just simply out of control.

In recent days Saul plotted and planned David's demise. But those four attempts failed.

The ruler even threw a spear at David

thrice, prompting his son-in-law to flee — with the help of his wife, Princes Michal — in the middle of the night after the last spear throwing incident.

"An evil spirit from the Lord came upon King Saul that evening," Samuel explained to David when the Prophet learned of the latest spearing incident and that King Saul tried to kill his protegee six previous times.

Meanwhile, Saul's spies reported the elusive shepherd warrior's whereabouts to the King at Gibeah.

"David is in Naioth at Ramah," they said of the place where Samuel taught

own hands and kill his nemesis David, King Saul journeyed to Naioth at Ramah.

"Where is Samuel and David," the King asked those at the Sechu Well, a large reservoir where people from the entire region draw water.

"They're at Naioth in Ramah," one man assured his King.

While King Saul was en route there, the Spirit of God even fell on him just as the Spirit of the Lord enveloped the ruler's three group of messengers that had preceded him.

Upon arriving at Naioth in Ramah, the ruler stripped his clothes, prophesied

*'What is this that has happened to the son of Kish...
...Is [King] Saul also among the prophets?'
— People asking one another*

Holy Men about the prophetic ministry at the School of the Prophets.

King Saul dispatched the first group of messengers to take David.

These men saw a company of Holy Men prophesying, under the tutelage of Prophet Samuel.

All of a sudden, the Spirit of God came upon Saul's messengers and they prophesied.

When this report reached the King's ears, he sent a second group of messengers to arrest David.

Once they arrived in Naioth at Ramah, the Spirit of God fell upon these men and they like the first group, also prophesied.

The King sent a third group of messengers to nab David in Naioth at Ramah and the same thing happened to them.

Determined to take matters into his

Using her body as a shield, Michal tried to prevent the men from entering the bedroom this second time. Aware that she was the King's daughter, they respectfully pulled her away from the doorway, walked into the room, went to the bed and lifted the covers back.

David was not lying their ill. To their surprise, the men saw the idol with goats hair on it.

The men returned to the King and told him what happened, but they didn't go alone. They brought the princess with them so Saul would direct his anger at Michal.

"Why did you lie and deceive me like this," the enraged King asked the princess, targeting his rage at Michal and ignoring the soldiers who had brought her.

"You helped my enemy escape! You helped my enemy escape! You helped my enemy escape," he said repeatedly loud enough for those in the palace to hear.

Meanwhile, David fled from Gibeah, arrived at Ramah — Prophet Samuel's hometown — and told his spiritual mentor that King Saul tried to kill him seven times. But Samuel didn't seem to be surprised about the threats Saul made on David's life.

"An evil spirit from the Lord came upon King Saul that evening," Samuel remarked in his holy, perceptive and prophetic style.

Aware that King Saul would send men to try to capture them at Ramah, they went to Naioth.

horns would precede these Holy Men, Prophet Samuel predicted.

"The Spirit of the Lord will envelope you in power and you will prophesy with the prophets," Samuel foretold to Saul, described as "a choice and goodly young man" by those who knew the son of Kish years earlier.

"You will be changed into a different person," Prophet Samuel told Saul then. "Once these signs are fulfilled, it shall be that whatever you do — you will succeed because the Lord God is with you."

As Samuel instructed, Saul waited for the prophet at Gilgal for seven days, a period which the prophet would also offer burnt and fellowship sacrifices.

When Saul left Samuel, the Lord changed the son of Kish's heart. And the signs which the prophet foresaw did come to pass.

The prophetic procession met him and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him in power and he joined in their prophesying.

When all of those who knew Saul and saw him prophesying with the prophets, they knew he was out of character.

"What is this that has happened to the son of Kish," they asked one another. "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

Just as Israel's subjects knew their ruler had attempted to kill David many times before the shepherd warrior could become Israelite King, they knew the King was out of character yet again.

That's why the people believed that "King Saul was among the prophets" when they saw their monarch prophesying under the Spirit of God at Naioth of Ramah.

Worshippers strumming lyres, beating tambourines, blowing flutes and playing

Jonathan refuses to believe Saul wants David dead

Princely pair concoct plan to test the King's resolve

Even though King Saul tried to kill Prince David 12 times, it was difficult for Prince Jonathan to believe that his father really wanted his best friend and brother-in-law dead.

So in a plan concocted by the princely pair to test the King's resolve, David suggested to Jonathan that he not eat with the ruler during the New Moon Festival.

If King Saul became angered at David's absence, then Jonathan would certainly know his father is indeed determined to harm him.

But if Saul accepted Jonathan's explanation that David was absent from

dining with the King to sacrifice with his family in Bethlehem, then the two would certainly know the ruler didn't want to harm the shepherd warrior after all.

On the eve of the New Moon Festival, an exasperated David asked Jonathan what had he done, how had he wronged King Saul and what sin had he committed to warrant death, sources

'I've heard my father tried to kill you several times. I just didn't want to believe it' — Prince Jonathan

close to both men related to *The Testament Spectator*.

"You're not going to die," insisted Jonathan, refusing to believe, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary,

Enraged Saul nearly kills Jonathan

Prince almost impaled when King throws his spear at him

If Prince Jonathan doubted King Saul wouldn't kill his best friend David, he certainly knows now.

When initially ordering David's execution then immediately reversing that death warrant, King Saul personally swore to Jonathan that he would not hurt the shepherd warrior.

But as everyone is certainly aware — by the King's many reported murderous attempts on his life — Saul has broken that promise again and again.

Enraged that Jonathan endorsed David as next ruler — over himself and his three brothers — plus furious that he's shielded the shepherd warrior, Saul threw a spear at the prince.

By almost impaling Jonathan, Saul threatened the very dynasty he so recklessly and ruthlessly tried to establish.

If it wasn't for his quick reflexes developed by military training and battlefield experience, Jonathan, the King's preferred heir to his own throne, could have been killed that evening, many noted.

This fourth Saul spear-throwing incident — three hurled at David and now one thrown at Jonathan — happened on the second evening of the New Moon Festival.

Last seen publicly with Prophet Samuel at Naioth of Ramah where Saul dispatched three groups of messengers to arrest David, the son of Jesse returned to Gibeon at the beginning of the celebration and was sighted hiding in a field.

Even though the King tried to kill David on numerous occasions, the shepherd warrior was surprisingly still scheduled to dine with Saul on the Festival's first evening.

Prince Jonathan and Israelite Army Captain Abner also were to eat dinner with the King that evening, confirmed palace attendants.

Because of the repeated attempts on David's life, everyone in Saul's household doubted if the shepherd warrior would ever sup at the King's table again. But apparently not His Eminence.

King Saul still speculated why David

was absent from the festival feast that had been lavishly prepared, according to palace attendants who knew the ruler's state of mind.

"Saul thought David was ceremonially unclean, but no one spoke about his absence during dinner," a servant remarked.

So when David didn't appear on the New Moon Festival's second evening, King Saul finally asked Jonathan for information.

"Why didn't the son of Jesse come to dinner yesterday and why hasn't he dined with us today," King Saul said.

"David asked permission to go to Bethlehem, because his family is celebrating the New Moon Festival and his father asked him to join them," answered Jonathan.

The King, who had tried to kill David more than a dozen times already, sensed that his son was protecting David yet again, palace attendants opined, based on what they next heard.

"You son of a perverse and rebellious woman," King Saul yelled to Jonathan. "Don't I know that you have sided with the son of Jesse — much to your own shame and to the shame of your mother who carried you?"

Then King Saul made a loud, chilling and resolute declaration.

"As long as the son of Jesse lives, breathes and walks on God's green earth, neither you nor your kingdom will ever be established," he said.

"Now go and bring him to me. For he must die!"

Jonathan asked what did David do, how had he wronged King Saul and what sin had he committed to warrant death? But before he could remind his father yet again that David was an asset to the Kingdom, Saul stood and in one fluid motion, reached for his spear with his right hand and threw it at him.

Quickly dodging the sharp-bladed projectile whizzing by him, Jonathan left King Saul's table "angry," "grieved," and "ashamed of his father," several eyewitnesses said.

Even though Saul almost killed his firstborn son that night, everyone knows — especially Prince Jonathan — David was the figurative target.

Now Jonathan knows King Saul is serious about killing David and would not stop until he succeeded.

his father had it in for David.

"My father doesn't do anything without confiding in me first," he said. "If he's really plotting your demise, why would he hide this important matter from me? It can't be so! It's simply not so!"

David told Jonathan that King Saul knew they loved each other like brothers, according to their private conversation.

"That's why he won't tell you that he's trying to kill me," David said. "Because he knows you will disapprove and be saddened if he succeeds."

To accentuate his point, David said "as surely as the Lord God Almighty lives" there's only one step between him and death.

"I tell you my dear friend Jonathan, your father wants to kill me," David declared.

"Okay, okay, okay," Prince Jonathan acknowledged.

"I've heard my father tried to kill you several times. I just didn't want to believe it. Whatever you want me to do to help you — I'll do it," he said.

Reminding Jonathan about the

upcoming holiday, David said he could go to his hometown Bethlehem and participate in the annual New Moon Festival sacrifice with his family.

Even though David fled for his life to Naioth at Ramah and avoided being arrested by King Saul and his messengers there, he still wanted to return to court and carry out his official duties.

"I'm supposed to have dinner with the King," David said. "I'll hide in the field instead until the evening of the day after tomorrow. If your father misses me at all, tell him. David asked my permission to sacrifice the annual New Moon Festival Sacrifice with my family."

"If he says, 'very well,' then you will know it is safe. But if he loses his temper like he has many times before, then you can be assured he's determined to kill me," he said.

Because of their closeness, David told Jonathan that he would rather be killed by his best friend than by King Saul.

"I would never betray or kill you," Jonathan said. "If I knew my father was determined to harm you, wouldn't I tell you?"

The two were last seen talking in the field.

The fugitive David seeks help at Nob

He receives food, weapons and advice from High Priest Ahimelech

The King's fugitive son-in-law, on the run from Saul and his men for the past three days, sought and received assistance from Israel's ranking priest, *The Testament Spectator* learned.

David asked for food, weapons and advice from High Priest Ahimelech, confirmed witnesses who saw the shepherd warrior in Nob that day.

But Ahimelech became suspicious why David visited him at Nob, a small Levitical community located about five miles north from the shepherd warrior's Bethlehem-judah home.

Ahimelech, the late great Aaron's tenth Levitical priestly successor, feared talking to David, several bystanders confirmed. But the son of Ahitub did so anyway.

"Why do you come by yourself and where are your men," asked Ahimelech.

"My Lord Saul sent me on a secret mission," answered David.

But anyone who was aware of current events would know that was untrue.

Attempting to add more credibility to his false story, David told Ahimelech that his men were nearby.

"I'll rendezvous with them later," he said.

David requested five loaves of bread, but Ahimelech said he didn't have any.

"I do have some consecrated bread that we use for the Lord's ceremonies," he explained. "I'll give some to you — that is if you can assure me that neither you or your men haven't had relations with women lately."

David said since they've been on duty for 72 hours, neither he nor his men haven't had the time.

"Whenever I and my men are on a

mission for the King or deployed into battle, we stay away from women," explained David. "So because we're on a secret mission, we've been celibate."

Ahimelech gave David the consecrated bread. Since there was no bread — except the bread of the Presence that had been removed from before the Lord and replaced with other bread that day — it was taken away.

Meanwhile on what could have been an unrelated — yet still related — development, Doeg, the Edomite who was the King's head shepherd, voluntarily detained himself before the Lord at Nob that day.

But no one knew why. Perhaps the penitent Doeg had sinned and sought atonement, several priests surmised.

Conversely, maybe he — and not David — was the actual one on a secret mission for the King, others opine.

Detaining himself before the Lord at Nob during the same time David was there is rather coincidental. Maybe he could have been spying for Saul, David's loyalists assert.

However the secretive Doeg kept the reason for his detainment private. David was aware that one of Saul's servants was in Nob that day.

Suspicious of Doeg, David felt vulnerable that he, or other secret spies, were watching him. Because David felt defenseless, he asked Ahimelech for weapons.

"I know this is a religious town, but don't you have a spear or a sword around here," he asked. "The King's secret mission was so urgent, I didn't even have time to bring any weapons with me."

The High Priest considered it strange for King Saul's army commander to be on duty yet not armed.

Ahimelech said that Goliath's sword

(Continued on Page 7, Column 1)

'Mighty Men' of Israel join Prince David's rebellion; Four hundred defect from Kingdom

The "rag tag" group are outlaws, a King spokesman says

A "rag tag" group of 400 outlaws joined the fugitive David to rebel against Israel and the monarch, announced a spokesman for Israelite King Saul.

"It saddens King Saul to report that his beloved son-in-law and Prince Jonathan's best friend has committed high treason," said the spokesman, explaining why the King was reluctantly compelled yet duty-bound to order David's execution.

"David has turned on his God, his nation, the King and his people," the spokesman added. "The once high ranking army commander is nothing more than a commander of knaves, thieves and criminals."

These 400 distressed, indebted and disoriented men weren't a "rag tag" treasonous group at all, according to those who knew their military reputation.

Having proven themselves time and

time again in battle with David during many Philistines campaigns, these warriors were considered by many to be the strongest and mightiest Israelites, they reminded The Testament Spectator.

King Saul's psychological affliction and the many — and some would assert unwarranted — murderous attempts on David's life must have been reasons for their defection, they opine.

Certainly David's loyalists could not blame him for finally fleeing Saul's court

'David... is a pirate who commands a collection of thieves and criminals' — King Saul's spokesman

nor could they criticize the shepherd warrior's men for following him.

Last seen with Jonathan by the Ezel Stone, a majority of people didn't know David's whereabouts — that is until the King's spokesman publicly released a classified reconnaissance report.

The report revealed the shepherd warrior David left Gath (hometown of the slain Goliath) and escaped to Adullam Cave, located about 12 miles

southwest of Bethlehem.

David's family must have been agitated and angry to learn that King Saul tried to kill their brother on several occasions, sources from the shepherd warrior's camp surmised.

Especially since Eliab, Abinadab, Shammah were three brave men who recently fought in King Saul's army against the Philistines.

So when David's six brothers and Father Jesse's entire household heard

first monarch, who just assumed rule over Israel, battled the Ammonites, Edomites, the Kings of Zobah and Philistia.

David must have also felt comfortable seeking sanctuary in Moab because his Great-grandmother Ruth was a Moabitess woman, those who knew David's family tree theorized.

"Please allow my Father Jesse and Mother Nahash to stay with you until I learn what God will do for me," the Moab King's scribe recorded David asking him.

Moab's King complied with David's request.

The shepherd warrior left them there and they stayed with him while David hid in the tabletop mountain fortress referred by many in the region as "The Stronghold."

But Gad, David's Seer, told the shepherd warrior otherwise.

"Do not stay in 'The Stronghold,'" the Seer warned David. "Go into the land of Judah.

So David left and hid in Hareth Forest.

Israelite King Saul orders 85 Nob Priests executed

Doeg, the Edomite, kills Holy Men, their families and even livestock

Accusing High Priest Ahimelech for granting David sanctuary and conspiring against the monarch, King Saul ordered the guards to execute the 85 priests and people of Nob.

"Kill the Priests of the Lord, because they have taken David's side," one guard heard the King say. "The Priests and their families knew he was fleeing from me and they knew his whereabouts, yet they did not report it to me."

One guard, who spoke anonymously, said he, his comrades and the King's other royal officials refused to carry out the execution order.

"Although we're loyal to King Saul,

David seeks priestly help...

(Continued from Page 6, Column 4)

was wrapped in a cloth and stored behind the ephod, a gold, blue, purple and scarlet colored apronlike vestment worn around the High Priest's torso during religious rituals.

"If you want the sword, take it," Ahimelech said of the sword which technically belonged to David anyway because he defeated the giant from Gath.

"This is a holy community, High Priest Ahimelech said. There is no need for it here."

"There is none like that weapon," said David, probably recalling the moment when he decapitated Goliath with his own sword.

"Give the sword to me," David said. Ahimelech and David were last seen entering the building where Goliath's sword had been stored.

After entering the building, the High Priest privately prayed for David and gave him religious counsel, several priests confirmed.

we weren't going to kill the Priests of the Lord," the guard said emphatically.

"No way! No way," another guard muttered in agreement. "I didn't join King Saul's elite bodyguard unit to slaughter Holy Men — especially Priests of the Lord!"

The guards fearfully acknowledged they didn't want to incur God's wrath on them or their families.

'I didn't join King Saul's elite bodyguard unit to slaughter Holy Men, especially Priests of the Lord' — a security guard

"That's why I didn't raise my sword against them," another guard remarked.

Surrounded by his royal officials while presiding over a hastily called meeting under a tamarisk tree on Gibeah Hill, King Saul attempted to ascertain who was still loyal to him. He asked them to divulge any intelligence about his nemesis, David.

Yet no one offered any information to Israel's ruler as to the elusive shepherd warrior's whereabouts.

But Doeg, the Edomite who serves as King Saul's head shepherd, said he saw the son of Jesse speaking to the High Priest at Nob, a small Levitical community located about five miles north of David's Bethelchem-Judah home.

"Ahimelech sought the Lord for him, gave your son-in-law provisions and gave him Goliath's sword," Doeg revealed.

Upon hearing this, King Saul sent a guard detail to Nob to apprehend Ahimelech — the son of Ahitub — and his entire family.

"Why have you conspired against me," the King asked Ahimelech after he and his family were brought before him under the tamarisk tree on Gibeah Hill that afternoon.

"Why did you give him bread, Goliath's sword and pray for him," he asked the holy man angrily.

Confused why King Saul was so angry at him and his loved ones, Ahimelech said that David explained to the High Priest that he was at Nob to do

the King's business.

"Who is as loyal as David," asked Ahimelech, oblivious to the politics and machinations at King Saul's court.

"He's your son-in-law, a commander in the army and highly respected in your household. Protocol necessitate that I pray for him and give him religious counsel," Ahimelech explained to the mighty ruler of Israel.

Anger at the holy man caused King Saul to lose his composure.

"You will surely die, Ahimelech — you and your father's entire family," decreed the King, ordering the High Priests' immediate execution.

When no one moved or complied with the order, King Saul looked around in rage and spotted Doeg near him. He then directed the Edomite to carry out the dastardly deed.

"You," commanded King Saul, pointing his finger at his head shepherd.

'David must die,' King Saul declares to the Benjamites

"David must die because he has betrayed God. He had betrayed me and he has betrayed my subjects," declared King Saul to the Tribe of Benjamin.

In a speech delivered to those gathered on Gibeah Hill just before ordering Nob's 85 priests and their families executed, King Saul made his case. "My fellow Benjamites, I appeal to you this day. Hear me," he said.

"Will David, of Judah, give you all, from the Tribe of Benjamin, more land and vineyards," asked King Saul, attempting to create intertribal distrust.

"Will the son of Jesse promote some of you to be field commanders over thousands and appoint others captains of hundreds," he questioned them while sitting under a tamarisk tree twirling his spear.

"Did you all conspire against me

because he has promised if he were to become king he would give you property, crops, position and power," he asked.

Even though he was their King chosen by God and anointed by Prophet Samuel, Saul said he has been disrespected.

"You have been disloyal and insensitive toward me," he said to the Benjamites and officials who were standing around him.

King Saul said no one told him that his son made a covenant with David. "No one is concerned about my feelings nor informs me that Prince Jonathan incited David, my servant, to lie in wait for me, as he does this day."

For turning on God, betraying the King and going against his own people, "David must die," King Saul said.

'David's Defectors' save Keilah from Philistines

Stolen cattle reclaimed by shepherd warrior and his men

With the approval and help of the Lord God Almighty, David and his men fought the Philistines at Keilah, inflicted heavy losses on the enemy there and spared the city's inhabitants from future pillaging attacks.

Aware what was going on at the royal court, a Keilah farmer knew those who saved them weren't from King Saul's army.

Thus the appreciative farmer affectionately characterized David's 600 men as "David's Defectors."

But the devout farmer was quick to credit God for delivering the Philistines into their hands, as the Lord delivered Israel from her foes so many times before.

"Praise be to God! Praise be to God,"

the farmer said. "And praise be to 'David's Defectors' for stopping the Philistines from looting the wheat of our threshingfloors!"

On the run from King Saul for several days, "David's Defectors" put their own safety aside after Keilah's residents asked them for help.

'Praise be to God and praise be to 'David's Defectors' for stopping the Philistines from looting the wheat of our threshingfloors' — a Keilah farmer

As a result of their quick and decisive victory, "David's Defectors" reclaimed all the stolen cattle from the Philistines.

"Now our children's stomachs won't go empty," the farmer said, "And we can tithe the yield of our threshingfloors to the Lord as He so commanded."

With no military force to stop them, it was easy for the Philistines to cross the Israelite border and rob the villagers

of their produce and livestock. For Philistia was close to Keilah, a village located about 15 miles southwest of Jerusalem.

So Keilah's village elders approached David.

"The Philistines are looting the threshingfloors at Keilah," the elders

the Lord said to attack and tried to recruit them to help, they refused to fight the Philistines.

"We are afraid here in Judah," they said referring to Keilah, a valley village given to their tribe years earlier by the Lord through Joshua son of Nun.

"We certainly can't go to Keilah against the Philistine forces," they said, refusing to help the Keilahites or "David's Defectors."

Wanting to be assured that it was truly the Lord authorizing him to attack the Philistines, David asked the Lord yet a second time. The Lord was patient with him.

"Go down to Keilah, for I will deliver the Philistines into your hand," the Lord assured David.

So rather than rely on the men of Judah, David and his men trusted in God and saved the inhabitants of Keilah on their own.

Keilahites's betrayal of David averted; Shepherd warrior and his 'Defectors' escape to Ziph Desert

The Lord forewarns David of plot before it's too late

David knew that even though he and his men defeated the Philistines and reclaimed all the Keilahites' stolen cattle, village elders will still turn them over to King Saul.

But intuition confirmed by inquiring of God is how David was certain that if given the opportunity, the people who he just saved would betray him.

David's victories always came at a high price. The fast-moving, offensive tactics which "David's Defectors" employed against the Philistines in this skirmish had fatigued them. They were now vulnerable, spies apprised King Saul.

The battle completed, spoils of war reclaimed and security perimeter established to be ready for a possible Philistine counterattack, "David's Defectors" rested.

Recuperating in a defensive posture, David and his men were ensconced

behind Keilah's protective walls. This would be the best time to attack them, King Saul's spies advised their ruler.

"God has handed him over to me," King Saul responded with glee upon hearing David's predicament. "David has imprisoned himself in a town that has no gates, no bars and no way for him

'Will Keilah's citizens surrender me to him? Will Saul come down, as your servant has heard? O Lord, God of Israel, tell your servant' — David

to escape me."

Mobilizing his forces, King Saul prepared to march on Keilah, besiege David there and then once the elusive shepherd warrior had been finally cornered, kill his nemesis and slaughter his 600 traitors.

But somehow the survivor David learned of King Saul's plot against him. He asked Abiathar, the only surviving son of the murdered High Priest Ahimelech, for divine direction.

"Bring the ephod," said David, referring to the holy vestment which

High Priest Ahimelech — and Israel's other High Priests before him — wore during religious ceremonies.

Fortunately for David, when Abiathar fled the Nob massacre, he brought the ornate gold, blue, purple and scarlet colored ephod with him.

It was believed that David had already

asked Abiathar, who was also a priest, to use the ephod while inquiring the Lord whether to fight the Philistines at Keilah, some in the shepherd warrior's camp speculate.

This time David wanted to know if King Saul would attack them at Keilah and ascertain if village elders would betray him.

"O Lord, God of Israel, your humble servant has heard that Saul is planning to march on Keilah and destroy this town because of me," David stated in his prayer to his God.

"Will Keilah's citizens surrender me to him? Will Saul come down, as your servant has heard? O Lord, God of Israel, tell your servant," David implored, seeking answers to his three questions.

The Lord confirmed that King would besiege Keilah and in an attempt to save themselves, the Keilahites would surrender him and his men to Saul.

Rather than chide the Keilahites for their prophesied betrayal, David and his 600 men peacefully and quietly left Keilah without incident.

So "David's Defectors," the name an appreciative Keilah farmer affectionately called the shepherd warrior and his 600 men, escaped an impending King Saul attack and hid in desert caves.

When Saul was told that David had escaped, the King changed his plans and decided not to put his troops through the 15-mile Jerusalem-to-Keilah march.

Meanwhile, David stayed in the Ziph Desert Hills.

Daily, Saul searched for David and came close to taking his life several times, but God protected him.

King Saul's disgruntled son meets fugitive friend

Jonathan encourages David during Ziph Forest meeting

The King's disgruntled son and his fugitive friend met secretly in Ziph Forest, sources close to both men confirmed.

It is rather interesting that Jonathan, estranged from Saul because he disagreed with his father's repeated assassination attempts on David, found the fugitive and not the King's men.

But that's what happened, *The Testament Spectator* learned.

No one knew exactly when or specifically where the two men met, but the meeting did take place, according to those close to Jonathan and David.

It seems that King Saul and his men didn't ask Prince Jonathan where he met David. If they had, the elusive shepherd warrior would have been captured by now, many noted.

Even though he was probably disgusted, embarrassed and ashamed of his Father's conduct, Prince Jonathan stayed out of King Saul's way.

Jonathan did not take part in the Nob slaughter nor did he publicly criticize the atrocity.

When the King mobilized his troops to attack David and his men at Keilah,

'Even though my Father may not like it, he knows you will be Israel's next ruler of Israel' — Prince Jonathan to David

Jonathan remained sequestered at home, the prince's servants confirmed.

Because Jonathan stayed out of the limelight, it was easy for him to leave unnoticed and meet with David, last seen departing the city he just liberated because the Lord warned him that the Keilahites would betray he and his 600 men.

So during this secret meeting, Jonathan and David renewed their

covenant and expressed brotherly love for the other.

Encouraging David to seek God's strength during this trying time, Prince Jonathan also predicted that it was God's will that David — and not one of King Saul's descendant — become King.

Jonathan said he would support David as Israel's next King.

It seemed impossible that a fugitive could become the next King of Israel, David probably asked Jonathan, his brother and dear friend.

No one knew the answer to that question, but during the interim, Jonathan encouraged David to trust God.

"Don't be afraid," said Jonathan to David during the meeting in the woods.

"King Saul will not lay a hand on you. You will be King over Israel, and I will

be second to you in a Davidic Kingdom."

Jonathan had already expressed his confidence in David. For shortly after the shepherd warrior defeated Goliath of Gath, the son of Saul gave the son of Jesse his royal garments, sword, bow and girdle.

But this selfless acknowledgment, symbolic acquiescence and royal endorsement of young David's inevitable ascension to the Israelite throne displeased King Saul back then. This was when Saul's fear, distrust and jealousy of the nation's hero first began.

"Even though my Father may not like it, he knows you will be next ruler of Israel," Jonathan said.

Before departing and going their separate ways, Jonathan and David reaffirmed their covenant before the Lord.

The prince went back home, but David remained in the forest.

Ziphites offer to assist King Saul

Finding, apprehending and handing David to Israelite ruler would be difficult

A group of Ziphites, who met King Saul at Gibeah, offered to find, apprehend and hand David over to the Israelite ruler.

The Ziphite delegation confirmed that David is hiding where they live in the caves of Horesh, on the hill of Hakilah, south of Jeshimon.

"We beseech you, great King of Israel, come to Ziph and we will hand the man who is your enemy to you," a Ziphite delegate boasted during the meeting.

Appreciative of their offer, King Saul accepted their assistance, invoked the Lord's blessing on them and asked the Ziphites to spy on David for him.

"They tell me he is very careful and shrewd," King Saul cautioned them. "It's not going to be easy. But he's only human and he does make mistakes. Find out who he sees and where he hides."

The Israelite ruler requested they go in advance and obtain intelligence on David.

"Then report back to me," he said. "After that, I will go with you. If he is in the area, I will track him down throughout Judah's territory and search for him among my people."

What motivated the Ziphites to spy on David for King Saul is unknown. Were they mercenaries? Did the Ziphites owe King Saul a favor? Was there a feud between them and David, his family or tribe? No one knows.

Nevertheless, the delegation returned to Ziph ahead of Saul, as he so requested.

A Ziph surveillance team was set up. They watched David around-the-clock and regularly sent dispatches to King Saul, apprising him of David's every move.

When King Saul felt he had enough intelligence to know where to proceed and when to apprehend David, he journeyed to Ziph.

At the time King Saul and his men began searching for him, David and his 600 "Defectors" were in the Desert of Maon — which is again, south of Jeshimon.

Informed that King Saul's men were nearby, David descended the rock and stayed in the Maon Desert.

King Saul pursued David but again, the Lord protected him. Saul was on one side of the mountain and David plus his men were fleeing hurriedly on the other side.

As Saul's men were closing in on David to capture he and his "Defectors" there, an unexpected emergency message alerted the King of an external threat.

"Come quickly," a messenger said to King Saul. "The Philistines are invading us."

Duty-bound to protect his territory and people, Saul broke off pursuing David and went to engage the Philistines. David stayed in the area and lived in the En Gedi caves.

Shepherd warrior refuses to kill Israel's King; Shows him mercy

Stumbling upon Saul in a cave, David regrets cutting robe of 'the Lord's anointed'

David refused to slay the man who had tried to kill him 20 times!

Israel's acclaimed hero, respected commander, honored prince and now fugitive, dodged spears, avoided capture, alluded spies and escaped many assassination attempts.

Any royal subject in any kingdom and in any realm would have felt justified retaliating against the king who plotted and planned their murder.

Not the faithful and respectful David. Israel's deposed prince could have stabbed King Saul or hacked him to pieces while the ruler was in a cave relieving himself!

But the son of Jesse, the Ephrathite of Bethlehem-judah, spared the son of Kish's life.

Some of David's distressed, indebted and discontented men, who defected from the Kingdom because they disagreed with King Saul and his policies, criticized their leader.

Upon learning later of his merciful restraint, other Davidic loyalists also opined David should have slain Saul to restore order throughout the Kingdom.

Because in King Saul's quest of trying to murder the nation's most popular subject, he manipulated Israel's enemies, killed Israel's priests, slaughtered innocent families and would have besieged Keilah — committing more atrocities in the process — if the shepherd warrior and his "Defectors" hadn't fled to the desert.

Acknowledging that Israel's King is God's anointed, David refused this notion, expressed remorse for cutting a piece of the ruler's clothes and rebuked his men for urging him to slay Saul.

David vows never to harm King Saul

Although King Saul tried to kill David many times, the shepherd warrior vowed not to harm the Israelite ruler.

Moments after Saul emerged from one of the En Gedi caves, David arose from behind the rock and showed himself to the King, according to several soldiers from both camps.

"My Lord the King," declared David. Turning around, King Saul was startled and shocked at seeing David, the man who he had pursued persistently for so long.

In a gesture of humbleness and respect, the hunted bowed and prostrated himself to the ground before the hunter.

The two had not spoken to each other since the evening King Saul tried to impale David with his spear, several reminded *The Testament Spectator*.

This third spear-throw-at-David incident prompted the shepherd warrior to flee Gibeah during the middle of the night, they recalled.

A fugitive on the run since then, David appealed to the King of Israel that day outside an En Gedi cave.

"Why do you listen when men say, 'David intends to harm you,'" asked David, revealing he could have easily killed King Saul, but he did not touch him.

"As the old saying goes, 'From

Despite being accompanied by Israel's best men, how did King Saul become so vulnerable? How was the ruler so exposed in a most humbling and defenseless posture? There must have been a breakdown in Saul's protection.

Nevertheless, this is how David cut a piece of Saul's robe, *The Testament Spectator* learned.

Returning from pursuing the Philistines, King Saul recruited 3,000 of Israel's best men. They searched for David in En Gedi's many caverns.

The shepherd warrior and his 600 "Defectors" hid in the very same "Rocks of the Wild Goats" cave where King Saul took his break.

"It didn't seem right stabbing the mighty King of Israel in the back while he was going to the bathroom! — David

"This must be the day which the Lord spoke to you about," one of David's men ran to him and told him gleefully.

"What are you talking about," David asked inquisitively.

"Didn't the Lord say 'I will deliver your enemy to you to deal with as you wish,'" the unidentified warrior reminded David.

"Sure, yes, but what do mean," David inquired.

"Well, we saw King Saul in the back of this very cave," the man said, "and he's squatting — about ready to..."

Somehow sensing what he was going to say, David interrupted the warrior out of respect for King Saul.

He just didn't believe it. Out of all of these days King Saul pursued him and his men, it was quite ironic that he could slay Israel's mighty King while the ruler was defecating?

Ordering the majority of his men to

stay back, David asked the unidentified man to take him and a squad to King Saul.

When they arrived at the cave's location where the Israelite ruler was spotted squatting, the group quietly kneeled behind a large rock.

Lo and behold, not too far away, David saw the tall man.

David told them all to stay behind and moved closer with drawn sword in hand.

He had not been this close to his master since King Saul tried to pin him against the wall with his spear, prompting the shepherd warrior to flee Gibeah.

David crept closer with his sword raised. He thought of slaying Saul right there on the spot, but he just couldn't bring himself to kill him.

"It didn't seem right stabbing the mighty King of Israel in the back while he was going to the bathroom," David remarked later to *The Testament Spectator*.

A portion of King Saul's robe was on a rock nearest him. David carefully and quietly sliced a corner of his robe with his sharp sword and snuck back to the others.

Immediately, David's conscience pricked him for slicing a corner of his King's robe.

"The Lord God forbid that I should do such a thing to my master," David was quoted as whispering to his men.

"King Saul is the Lord's anointed," said David. "I shouldn't have lifted my hand against him, because he belongs to the Lord."

Quietly reprimanding his men who were with him, David ordered them not to attack King Saul.

The ruler would have remained unaware how close to death he was if, while departing the cave, David hadn't approached King Saul.

will not lay a hand on you," David vowed.

Some of "David's Defectors" were feeling rather uncomfortable, because while David was talking to King Saul, more of the ruler's men gathered around. Now they were outnumbered.

After David declared his passionate vow, Saul asked if it was truly David's voice he heard and whether it was really him.

Pricked by his conscience, King Saul wept, as if he was having an emotional breakdown, several men noted.

"My son, you are indeed a righteous man," he acknowledged. "You have treated me better than I would have treated you if I were in your position."

It would be foolish and unwise for a man-of-war to find his enemy in a defenseless posture yet refuses to take advantage of it, King Saul admitted.

"May the Lord reward you greatly for the way you have treated me today," the King said.

"I know that you will surely be king and that the Kingdom of Israel will be established in your hands. Promise by Almighty God that you will not kill my descendants," he asked.

After David gave his oath to Saul, the King returned home. But David and his men went up to the strongholds.

"Hear me, mighty King of Israel, I

Prophet Samuel — Israel's last Judge and holy Priest, dies in his 90s; Buried at Ramah

Twelve Tribes Beholden to the Lord God United Under King Saul During Samuel's Judgeship

Prophet Samuel, Israel's last judge who reluctantly yet masterfully converted the nation's theocracy to a monarchy, died.

Suspected to be in his 90s, Prophet Samuel's precise age was unknown.

Even before birth, Samuel was dedicated to serve as a Priest of the Lord.

His mother Hannah, unable to become pregnant, went to Shiloh — Israel's religious capital located in the Tribe of Ephraim's territory — to pray. Hannah vowed that if the Lord gave her a son, she would give him to the Lord and no razor would shave his head. Seeing her pray, Eli, the Priest was impressed with Hannah's brokenness, sincerity and faith.

"May the God of Israel answer your prayer," he said.

Hannah became pregnant, delivered a son and called him Samuel, because she "asked the Lord for him."

After Samuel was weaned, Hannah and Elkanah (Samuel's father) lent him to God. They took him to Shiloh to be raised by Eli, the Priest. There, young Samuel ministered unto the Lord and as he matured, he was approved by God and men.

Prophecy On Eli

Hophni and Phinehas, Eli's two sons who served as Priests of the Lord, were corrupt and knew not the Lord. They disrespected the Lord's offering, fornicating with women who served as Shiloh's Tabernacle attendants and enticed the people to sin.

An unidentified man of God warned Eli that because of their wickedness, his two sons would die on the same day. But despite that dire warning, Hophni and Phinehas did not repent while their father, looking the other way, refused to denounce or defrock them.

Like the unidentified man of God before him, Samuel also prophesied judgment on Eli and his two sons.

"For I have told him that I will judge his house forever because of the iniquity which he knows about," the Lord God told Samuel to relate to Eli. "His sons are corrupt and he has not corrected them."

Since Eli did not improve his sons, the Lord God said sin in his family would not be cleansed by sacrifice.

It must have been difficult for the adopted son of Eli to prophesy against his adopted family, because the young man loved the Priest. But despite his love for Eli, the obedient Samuel loved Almighty God even more.

In process of time, the unidentified man of God and Samuel's judgemental prediction would tragically come true for Eli, as well as his entire family.

About 4,000 men had been killed in a Philistine battle and Israel's Elders believed the Ark of the Covenant would give them victory in the war. The people transported the Ark, which symbolized the presence of God, from Shiloh to the battlefield. But the Philistines captured the Ark in the second battle.

Distraught upon learning this from a messenger and grieved that Hophni

plus Phinehas were among 30,000 Israelite soldiers slain in the second battle, the 98-year-old Eli — a blind and overweight man — accidentally fell backward from his chair, broke his neck and died.

The same day, Phinehas' pregnant wife was in labor. When she heard the Ark had been taken and the men in her family died, she travailed while delivering a baby, several midwives confirmed. Just before dying she named her son "Ichabod," because "the glory is departed from Israel" and that Phinehas and Eli were dead.

Samuel mourned the loss of 30,000 men, grieved Eli's accident, lamented Hophni and Phinehas' death and was saddened that baby Ichabod was orphaned.

"Whether priest or parishioner, anyone who willfully sins against Almighty God cannot escape the Lord's judgement," he remarked later to *The Testament Spectator*.

"Tragically, that judgment spills over and affects a lot of people," he said.

Even before Eli's death, all Israel — from the Tribe of Dan in the north to Beersheba City in the south — knew he was a Prophet of the Lord. Every prophecy Samuel spoke came true.

So after Eli's passing, the Lord promoted Samuel undisputed Judge, Priest and Prophet of Israel.

The Ark Captured

The succeeding seven months after the Philistines took the Ark, it was transported from Ashdod to Gaza, Askalon, Gath and then finally to Ekron. Because during that period, the Lord God inflicted the inhabitants of those five cities with disease and each community didn't want the Ark in their boundaries.

Finally, the Philistine Lord's transported the Ark — along with a trespass offering — from Philistia to Beth-shemesh.

Some men were curious about the acacia-wooden, golden-faced, chest-shaped Ark. They ill-advisably touched the two Angelic bowed-extended-winged Cherubims, lifted the mercy seat and peeked inside. As a result, more than 50,000 men were killed by plague. Beth-shemesh health officials reported.

"The Philistine Lords brought the Ark of the Lord to us, you guys come and get it," an urgent Beth-shemesh message stated to Kirjathjearim's city fathers.

Eleazar, the son of Abinadab, had been sanctified to keep the Ark, so for the next 20 years it stayed in his house. But the Ark was still in Kirjathjearim, located about eight miles northeast of Beth-shemesh. The house of Israel bemoaned that the Ark was still in Philistine territory. They wanted God to do something about it.

Probably remembering Phinehas' wife, Samuel wanted "the glory returned to Israel" again. But as Priest, Prophet and Judge, he knew the people needed to return to God. So the strict interpreter of Mosaic Law led the Israelites toward Almighty God. Samuel exhorted the people to put away strange gods, prepare their hearts and serve Him.

"When you do all that He requires, He will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines," the Prophet said.

The Israelites listened and destroyed Baalim and Ashtaroth idols. Samuel called a fast, convened the Israelites at Mizpeh and in his ritualistic, ceremonial manner, drew water and poured it before the Lord. He confessed the people's sins before the Lord. Seeking God's forgiveness, Samuel presented a burnt offering.

Meanwhile, Philistine army officers positioned their troops to attack the Israelites. But "the Lord thundered against the Philistines" and Israel's militia pursued and defeated them. As a result of Samuel's prophetic and priestly anointing, the Philistines did not invade the coasts of Israel again. God's hand was against Israel's enemy.

Wicked Sons

Like Eli's sons before them, Samuel's sons also were wicked. The Prophet's elder son, Joel, and youngest son, Abiah, served as Beersheba City's judges. But they did not adhere to their father's devout ways. Joel and Abiah were dishonest, accepted bribes and perverted justice.

But unlike Eli, Samuel must have reproved them, because the Lord God did not punish Prophet Samuel as He did Eli.

Ruler Wanted

Tired of corrupt Judges and wanting to have a visible central authority figure like other nations, the Elders of Israel pleaded Prophet Samuel for a king.

But the ardent believer in and religious practitioner of the "I am the Lord your God" first of Ten Mosaic Commandments, vehemently protested the people's preference of a king over God.

Yet Israel's last Judge, who viewed a ruler rivaling the Lord God as an affront to Almighty God, finally yet reluctantly acquiesced to the people's wishes.

King Chosen

Prophet Samuel was led to the Tribe of Benjamin and discovered Saul, a good man described as "a head taller" than others. After getting to know him, Samuel anointed Saul, son of Kish and grandson of Abiel, as Israel's first King. But an odd thing happened on the day Saul was chosen King.

When Prophet Samuel convened Israel's tribes at Mizpeh and instructed the people to go through a formal selection process, the son of Kish could not be found because he was hiding among the baggage, the Lord told Prophet Samuel and the people.

But despite fear of being crowned Israel's first King, Saul was God's anointed. As Israel's new King, most of the people proudly acknowledged their new ruler, swore him fealty and consented to his divine right authority.

'Obey His Voice'

Describing himself as "old and grayheaded" in a farewell speech delivered to the congregation of Israel, Prophet Samuel recited his exemplary

record and recounted what the Lord had done for them.

"When your fathers in Egypt cried to the Lord for deliverance, the Lord sent Moses and Aaron and they brought your fathers out of Egypt and made them dwell in this place," said Samuel, recounting the many other times the Lord God had delivered them.

"If you would fear the Lord, serve Him, obey His voice and not rebel against the Lord's commandments, the Lord will be for you and your King," he said. "But if you do not obey His voice, then the Lord will be against you, as He was against your fathers."

Still seething over the people's choice, Samuel dramatically demonstrated his displeasure over the their preference of King Saul to the Lord God.

He asked the Lord to send a thunderstorm on a day which it was dry that they would see they were wrong to ask for a king. The Lord did.

King Saul Rejected

During King Saul's early reign — when the Israelite ruler consolidated his power among the Twelve Tribes and protected the Kingdom from her enemies — Prophet Samuel provided him spiritual guidance.

But in the second year of his reign, King Saul usurped his role of "King" to that of "Priest." He then refused to execute Amalekite King Agag and destroy his belongings. Therefore Prophet Samuel rejected Saul's kingship and refused to advise him.

David Anointed

Again, operating under the authorization and direction of the Lord, Prophet Samuel was guided to the Tribe of Judah where he discovered another kingly candidate among Jesse's sons.

Eliab, Abinadab, Shammah, Nathanel, Raddai and Ozem were all inspected by Prophet Samuel — but they weren't the ones the Lord God wanted.

Upon inquiring if Jesse had any more sons, a young shepherd boy was presented before Prophet Samuel.

Not looking on the outside as he did with Saul, but at the heart, Prophet Samuel selected David, the seventh son of Jesse and grandson of Obed.

Thus, David was secretly anointed to succeed King Saul.

Prophet Samuel served as David's spiritual advisor — especially during recent times when the shepherd warrior was pursued by King Saul.

Other than his two corrupt sons, not much is known whether Prophet Samuel had any other survivors. But he probably was a grandfather as well as an uncle — since he had three brothers and two sisters.

When Prophet Samuel died, the Israelites mourned together. It's not sure if David attended his funeral.

So Samuel, Israel's Priest, Prophet and final Judge credited for converting the nation from a theocracy to a monarchy, was buried at Ramah, his hometown.

Nabal disrespects Davidic delegation; Abigail gives food to fugitive prince, averts massacre

Ten young men sent by David to ask Nabal for food are berated and insulted

A wealthy rancher's wife dissuaded David from killing her husband after he insulted the shepherd warrior and his men.

Abigail, a beautiful woman, gave food to David after her husband Nabal, an impolite, crude and mean man, disrespected Israel's fugitive prince.

After Prophet Samuel's death and funeral, David and his 600 "Defectors" evaded King Saul by traveling outside the Kingdom. They journeyed south from Israelite territory and hid deep in the Paran wilderness.

Running low on food and supplies, David sent a delegation of ten young men to Nabal, a rich Maon rancher who owned 3,000 sheep, 1,000 goats and conducted business in Carmel.

The Davidic delegation were instructed to respectfully ask the wealthy man for help.

"Greet him in my name," David charged them beforehand, probably surmising that Nabal, a Calebite who hailed from the Tribe of Judah, heard of him and wouldn't object helping them.

It's not sure if Nabal knew David's identity. Yet known by all — except David — to be a selfish, stubborn and rude man, Nabal cheated people in business, those who knew him allege.

If David knew Nabal's character, he might have handled the situation differently, some surmise.

Nevertheless, David rehearsed with the young men how to address Nabal.

"Say to him, 'Long life to you! Good health to you and your household! And good health to all that is yours,'" David said.

David told his delegation to remind Nabal that his shepherds were not mistreated when they were with them.

"And during the time they were at Carmel, nothing of his was missing," David said. "Ask your own servants and they will tell you. Therefore, please grant whatever supplies you can find for them."

But Nabal, busy shearing sheep at Carmel, berated the ten young men and insulted David, according to servants who overheard the conversation.

"Who is this David," Nabal asked sarcastically. "Who is this son of Jesse? Many servants are running away from their masters these days so what makes this David so special?"

Asking why should he give his bread, water and meat to homeless desert vagabonds coming from who knows where, Nabal cussed at them and dismissed the men rudely.

Feeling rejected, humiliated and dishonored, the ten young men returned to David's camp empty-handed and reported to him what happened.

Enraged how he and his men were treated, David commanded 400 men to arms. The remainder 200 men stayed behind to watch over the camp.

Meanwhile, a servant ran to Abigail — described by those who know her as a gracious, generous and cultured woman — and reported to her what transpired.

"David sent messengers from the desert to greet our master," Abigail's

servant told her. "Even though those men were very good to us, our lord Nabal still insulted them."

In recounting to Abigail what happened, the servant confirmed that David's men didn't mistreat or steal from them.

"Day and night they were a wall around us all the time we were herding our sheep near them," he said. "Because of their presence, no one bothered us."

Advising Abigail that she needed to intervene to avert conflict between the

Because an attack from "David's Defectors" was imminent, Abigail didn't rely on emissaries to reason with David.

The situation required she meet David personally to diffuse the situation. So she quickly freshened up, mounted her donkey and rode after them.

Meanwhile, the servants who Abigail sent ahead of her met David, but the shepherd warrior's anger was not assuaged by the food she sent.

"It's been useless to watch over Nabal's property," David was reported

bowed herself to the ground.

"Oh please forgive my foolish husband for offending you," she pleaded.

Abigail accepted responsibility for Nabal's actions, asked David to ignore the words of a wicked man, stated she did not see the young men who her husband sent so rudely away and implied that if they had only approached this wise lady and not her foolish lord, his delegation would have received food.

"Consider this food for you and your men as a peace offering," said Abigail of the 200 loaves of bread, 200 cakes, 100 cluster of raisins, approximately 70 pounds of wheat, five sheep and two bottles of wine.

"The Lord God of Israel has kept me from harming you because if you had not come quickly to meet me, not one male belonging to Nabal would have been alive by daybreak," David reiterated to her what he already said to her servants.

Rather than relying on her servants, Abigail was wise to go to David.

His anger was only cooled when Abigail met, apologized and reasoned with him.

David invited her to go home in peace. "I have heard your words and granted your request," he said.

Not only did Abigail's gesture save the guilty Nabal from immediate death and spared the lives of the innocent men who worked for him, she also predicted — during her appeal to the shepherd warrior — that in the future, a "Davidic Dynasty" would one day rule Israel.

'You better think of something quickly, because disaster is hanging over our master and his entire household and he doesn't even know it' — a servant warned Abigail

two camps, the servant said David's men were seasoned soldiers but they were inexperienced.

"How could servants and ranch hands armed with staves, rakes and other farm tools defend against the renown 'Goliath Slayer' and his men," asked the servant.

"You better think of something quickly, because disaster is hanging over our master and his entire household and he doesn't even know it," the servant warned. "Nabal is such a wicked man. No one can talk to or reason with him."

Abigail knew her servant was right. She didn't take the time to reason with Nabal either, according to several servants who at her direction, hurriedly prepared food, secretly loaded the groceries on several donkeys and sent the provisions to David.

to have told them. "Nothing of his was missing, yet he insulted me and my men and has repaid me evil for good."

When Abigail came to a mountain ravine, she saw David, the shepherd warrior acclaimed for slaying Goliath of Gath, descending from a hill coming toward her.

Abigail saw many men-of-war accompanying David — no doubt en route to attack Nabal. She could see her husband wouldn't have a fighting chance against them. She was just in the nick of time.

Because of his anger, it was a miracle David didn't kill the servants which she sent before her, she later noted.

Dismounting her donkey, Abigail ran to David and fell on her face before him. Then out of respect, she arose and again

Nabal spared by Abigail, but the Lord God Almighty still strikes him dead

Nabal's sudden death puzzles doctors, but David praises God for vindicating him

The wealthy rancher spared from David's sword suffered a heart attack, became paralyzed and then died ten days later, a local physician reported.

Nabal, who endangered his own household when he disrespected David yet escaped certain death after Abigail intervened and gave the shepherd warrior food, was stricken by a stroke, this physician revealed.

The morning after Nabal threw a sheep-shearing-completed party, his wife Abigail went to him when his hangover wore off. She informed Nabal that insulting David and not sharing food with the shepherd warrior's troops nearly cost them their lives.

Abigail told him that she gave them food.

It was fortuitous for him that his beautiful, cultured and wise wife resolved the feud that had erupted between him and David, Nabal could now see.

After learning that Abigail's quick action averted a massacre of he and his male servants, Nabal's "heart died within him" and he became paralyzed, their physician noted.

A thorough examination of Nabal during his 10-day paralysis yielded no other medical or physiological explanation how a vibrant man exhibiting no signs of health problems

contracted a coronary the day after a shearing sheep party.

It must have been payback, local people opine, for all of the bad things Nabal did.

They asserted that Nabal, known for cheating them in business, was punished for insulting the next ruler of Israel and was killed by none other than Almighty God.

Rather than berating the ten young men and insulting David who sent them, Nabal had plenty of food and supplies to share, his hired hands say.

The 200 loaves of bread, 200 cakes, 100 cluster of raisins, approximately 70 pounds of wheat, five sheep and two bottles of wine which Abigail gave to

talk to and perhaps even befriend David, he would have learned that both of them belonged to Israel's Tribe of Judah, those who knew the family history of both men revealed.

Because of Nabal's tribal kinship to David, he could have been more hospitable — especially since the wealthy man also descended from Caleb, Israel's late great warrior.

For it was Caleb, son of Jephunneh, in addition to the renown Joshua son of Nun, whom after spying the territory God promised them many years earlier, guaranteed to Moses, the servant of the Lord, that the Israelites could invade and occupy the land.

But Nabal — known by all except

'The Lord God has kept me from doing wrong and has brought Nabal's sin on his own head' — David

David represented just a small fraction of Nabal's wealth.

For the clothing, carpets, meat, milk and cheese which Nabal's 3,000 sheep produced annually is astronomical, Nabal's servants insisted.

Dairy products, leather, rugs and robes were also produced and manufactured from the 1,000 goats which Nabal owns, they added.

Abigail recognized David's anointing and greatness but unfortunately her husband did not. For it was ironic that Nabal and David were tribesmen, The Testament Spectator learned.

If Nabal had only taken the time to

David to be greedy, obstinate and discourteous — didn't inherit Caleb's visionary, courageous, noble and Godly qualities. So when David heard that Nabal was dead, he praised God for vindicating him.

"The Lord God has kept me from doing wrong and has brought Nabal's sin on his own head," David remarked.

Things could have turned out better for Nabal if he wasn't selfish and inhospitable, observers noted. But as a result of his shortsightedness, Nabal was judged by Almighty God and as a result, he paid the price of not recognizing David's greatness.

Abigail becomes fugitive prince's third wife

Women, children — entire families with David live on-the-run, nomadic lifestyle

Abigail received a formal marriage proposal from David's servants and immediately agreed to marry the fugitive prince.

David sent servants to Carmel to propose and arrange a nuptial arrangement with Nabal's widow, confirmed the shepherd warrior's emissaries.

The most well-spoken member of the Davidic delegation greeted Abigail in David's name and conveyed their condolences.

"Despite the death of your husband, may you, lady Abigail of Carmel, live a long, healthy and prosperous life," one of David's servants said.

Wanting to be respectful of Abigail and her mourning, the servant then delicately popped the question.

"David inquires if, in process of time, you would be amenable in eventually becoming his wife," asked the servant, careful not to upset or offend her.

Honored and humbled by David's marriage proposal, as spoken through his loyal servant, she instantly arose, bowed to the ground and presented herself as a maidservant — ready to serve.

'I am eagerly prepared to wash the feet of my master's servants at any time' — Abigail to David's emissary

"I am eagerly prepared to wash the feet of my master's servants at any time," said Abigail to David's emissary, immediately accepting his offer.

Abigail arose, walked to her stable and mounted her donkey. Requesting five maids to accompany her, Abigail went with David's messengers to become his wife.

Meanwhile Princess Michal, David's first wife who married him while he was still at King Saul's court, was separated

from her husband since her husband had been on the run from his father-in-law.

As a result of David's absence, Princess Michal was given a new husband, it was announced at the Israelite royal court in Gibeah.

"...Because David has committed treason, lead an Israelite rebellion, abrogated his duties and relinquished the

King Saul's wife, insiders noted. (The name Abigail — David's third wife — happened to have the same name. David's other sister's name was Zeruah.)

There are unconfirmed yet reliable reports that David's men also had their wives, girlfriends and families with them, those with firsthand knowledge of the shepherd warrior's camp say.

Presumably this is true. Because if David's six brothers and Father Jesse's entire household sought sanctuary from King Saul and thus joined the shepherd warrior, so would his men's dependents.

Because of what happened at the Nob massacre, it was dangerous for David's family and his men's dependents to remain at home.

So women and children belonging to David's 600 "Defectors" — the name an appreciative Keilah farmer affectionately called the shepherd warrior and his men — adjusted to their on-the-run, nomadic life-style.

David spares King's life yet again; Takes spear and water jug lying near Saul's head

Army Captain Abner chided for sleeping on the job

In yet another brazen gesture to prove how easily he could have killed Saul, David and his nephew took two items near the King's head while the Israelite ruler and a host of men with him were all sound asleep.

Unbelievable as it might sound, David and Abishai tiptoed into Saul's camp, extricated the spear which was imbedded in the ground, grabbed the water jug lying near the King's pillow and even talked while the Israelite ruler and 3,000 men snored.

Because of their deep sleep that evening neither Saul, Army Captain Abner lying next to him or the select troops chosen to capture the fugitive prince detected David's presence, sensed their intrusion, nor heard Abishai ask if he could kill the King.

If David hadn't revealed that he was the one who took the King's things, Saul would have thought he or one of his aides misplaced his spear and water jug that night.

Several weeks before, David demonstrated he could have easily stabbed or slashed King Saul with his sword.

But viewing his King as "the Lord's anointed," David spared Saul's life.

To prove that he was there yet exercised merciful restraint, David cut a piece of King Saul's robe while the ruler was relieving himself.

However his conscience was pricked by his bold act.

Neither King Saul — or his men nearby — never even knew danger was that close to him.

In disclosing what he could have done back then, the shepherd warrior, fraught with guilt for doing "such a thing to my master," vowed never to harm the Israelite ruler, men from both camps so heard David declare.

Seeking to avoid being captured, killed, or again tempted to harm the man who had tried to repeatedly harm him,

David left Israelite territory, journeyed south and hid in the Paran wilderness.

During this period, David met, proposed to and then married Abigail, a Carmelitess widow whose husband, Nabal, was killed by Almighty God for insulting the shepherd warrior and not providing he and his men food.

Shortly after marrying Abigail, David returned to Ziph.

"David and his forces are hiding south of Jeshimon on Hakilah Hill," reported the Ziphite's, who several weeks before offered to find, apprehend and hand the shepherd warrior to King Saul.

When the Ziphite spies alerted Saul that David was back in their territory, the

many men, they quietly snuck down the hill and tiptoed to the center of camp where the King lay.

"Look, there's Saul," Abishai whispered to David.

"God has delivered your enemy into your hands. Let me pin King Saul with my spear," David's nephew said with youthful zeal. "I won't miss — it will only take one poke to pin him to the ground."

Recalling his vow outside an En Gedi cave that day not to kill King Saul even though the Israelite ruler tried to kill him more than 20 times, David asked Abishai how could he or anyone else touch the Lord's anointed and still be guiltless.

'Why weren't you more vigilant in guarding your lord and King? You're not doing a good job. Someone could have killed your King tonight!' — David to Israelite Army Captain Abner

King mobilized 3,000 men and searched for him, but they were unsuccessful.

Frustrated and fatigued of not finding the elusive shepherd warrior, King Saul's forces encamped on Hakilah Hill.

Apparently King Saul didn't know David was in the desert, otherwise the Israelite commander-in-chief would have searched for him there.

So from his desert camp, David led a reconnaissance mission to in turn, spy on King Saul.

It was night when David and his squad came to Hakilah Hill and saw King Saul's forces.

Familiar with the Israelite Army encampment procedure, it wasn't difficult to spot King Saul lying down asleep in the center, and Abner, son of Ner, next to him.

"Will you go down with me to the camp," David asked Ahimelech.

But before the loyal Hittite serving David answered, Abishai, the son of his sister Zeruah, volunteered to accompany his uncle.

David said he could come so he and Abishai carefully entered King Saul's camp.

Amid the campfires' flickering glow and among the audible snoring of so

voice piercing the darkness and penetrating his dream, Abner awoke.

"Abner! Abner," David yelled again. "Wake up! Captain Abner! Aren't you going to answer me, Abner?"

Either ignoring or not even hearing that David was calling him, and not Saul, Abner asked, in his nocturnal stupor, who was calling the King.

"You're a mighty military man aren't you," David asked. "Who is like you in all of Israel? Why weren't you more vigilant in guarding your lord and King? You're not doing a good job. Someone could have killed your king tonight."

David told Abner that he and his men deserve to die because they failed to protect King Saul.

"Look around you," David said. "Where are the King's spear and water jug that were near his head?"

Abner looked around, and saw that King Saul's spear and water jug weren't there, as David so said.

By then the other soldiers in the camp awoke from their slumbering stupor.

Clumsily grabbing their weapons, several men, awkwardly assuming their attack stance, dutifully encircled King Saul to protect him.

But they were more like drunken soldiers than crack troops.

Recovering from his deep sleep like his men, King Saul recognized David's voice and asked if he were really him.

"Yes it is, my lord the King," David replied.

Just as he stated at En Gedi, David asked King Saul why was he pursuing him, what wrong had he done, why didn't the ruler listen to him before when he declared his innocence.

David remarked that if the Lord had caused bad blood between them, maybe they could atone for that and present God an offering.

"If, however, men have made you and I enemies, may they be cursed before the Lord," David said.

Bemoaning that he was forced to live outside Israel, away from his extended

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Israelite ruler blesses David, then returns home...

(Continued from Page 12, Column 4)
family and apart from God's presence in a land where their enemies worship pagan gods, David reiterated to King Saul that he wasn't a threat to the Kingdom.

"The King of Israel has come out to look for a flea on a dog," said David. King Saul acknowledged he had

sinned and asked David to return to Gibeah, "because you considered my life precious today.

"I will not try to harm you again," the Israelite ruler promised. "Surely I have acted like a fool and have made a big mistake leading 3,000 men to pursue you."

Inviting one of the King's young men

to retrieve the spear and water jug that he and Abishai had taken, David said even though the Lord delivered Saul into his hands yet a second time, he still refused to touch the Lord's anointed.

"As surely as I valued your life today, so may the Lord value my life and deliver me from all trouble," David said. "May you be blessed, my son David,"

King Saul replied. "You will do great things in your life and surely triumph in whatever enemy you face."

So David, the fugitive prince who had exercised merciful restraint yet a second time when refusing to kill the King that evening and dissuaded his nephew from doing so, went on his way and the Israelite ruler returned home.

Fearing King Saul would eventually kill him, David, his men and their families flee to Philistia. King Achish of Gath said they could live in Ziklag. For the next 16 months, David's Defectors raided the Geshurites, Gezrites and Amalekites. They killed everyone and took their livestock and clothes. Telling Achish that they plundered Israelite cities, David eventually won his trust. Thus, Achish believed David would fight against Israel one day.

'Hebrews' expelled from Philistine army; Davidic fight against Israel at Gilboa averted

Distrustful of David, they 'send the Hebrews' to Ziklag

"David's Defectors" are deserters and since they cannot be trusted, the Hebrews cannot fight with us against Israelite King Saul, Philistine lords commanded King Achish of Gath during a military parade.

Prior to their stunning victory over Israel at the Battle of Mount Gilboa, Philistia's lords paraded their army units at Aphek, a city located in the Tribe of Issachar's territory which was under Philistine occupation.

Columns of 100 soldiers and troops of thousands representing Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron, and Gaza, marched in ritualistic cadence to the beat of war drums.

Brandishing their respective cities' colors, Philistine warriors were clad in full battle gear. They marched past the Philistine commanders review stand.

A small contingent of men, wearing different colors than the Philistines, marched at the end of the procession under King Achish of Gath's banner. These 600 men stood out from the rest of the army.

Just as the last row of men in this small unit paraded beyond the decorated review stand, the four Philistine lords recognized the foreigners.

"Who are these Hebrew fighters and why are they here," they asked of King Achish, enraged at seeing 600 Israelites, known by friend and foe as "David's Defectors," in their ranks.

Unbeknownst to the four Philistine lords, King Achish promised David that "you and your men shall go with me to war against Israel," a challenge which David enthusiastically accepted.

"Don't you know about the famous shepherd warrior David," King Achish said. "He was the King of Israel's best officer. But since King Saul tried to kill him — his own son-in-law many, many times, he's now on our side."

Believing what David had already told him, King Achish related to the Philistine lords that during the time the shepherd warrior has served him, he and his men plundered Israelite cities.

(Actually, David raided the Geshurites, Gezrites and Amalekites. To hide this fact, the shepherd warrior left neither man or woman alive on these

raids, *The Testament Spectator* learned.)

Furthermore, King Achish said, because of these raids which occurred over the last 16 months, the Hebrews were just as or perhaps even more battle experienced than their Philistine counterparts.

Scoffing at King Achish's comment, the Philistine lords reminded him how David became so infamous.

"He was the one who killed our champion, Goliath of Gath — your hometown hero who underestimated that little shepherd kid and his sling shot," one of them said sarcastically.

"But that was ancient history," King Achish retorted. "From day one, when

'...Isn't this the same David who killed 200 Philistine brothers just to fulfill a wedding vow ...and slew our citizens who were just trying to get food at Keilah?' — a Philistine lord asked Achish

he left Saul until now, David has been loyal to no one else but me."

Because of that loyalty, the shepherd warrior's reputation and his men's battlefield exploits, King Achish assigned Saul's exiled officer to be head of his permanent bodyguard unit.

Still, the Philistine lords weren't convinced of David's loyalty and their mission — which was to finally defeat their nemesis, King Saul.

"Send the Hebrew men back to

Ziklag," one said of the city which King Achish gave David more than a year earlier.

"Even though he has a beef against King Saul, David must not go with us into battle — for we fear he will just turn against us during the fighting," another said.

"David could be a spy," a third Philistine lord theorized.

They said how better could David regain King Saul's favor than by taking their heads, as he did when decapitating their champion giant.

"Isn't this the same David who after slaying Goliath and routing us at Shochoh, their women danced and sang,

but to comply.

Returning to David and his men, King Achish apprised him what the four Philistine lords said.

The King of Gath acknowledged David's loyalty and admitted he would be an asset in battle. But since David has killed so many countrymen, the Philistine rulers didn't approve of him.

"Turn back and go in peace," said Achish, fearing a skirmish might erupt between David's men and their troops.

"Do nothing to displease or anger the Philistine rulers," Achish said.

"But what have I done," asked David. "What have you found against your servant from the day I came to you until now? Why can't I go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king," David asked Achish.

"I know that you haven't done me wrong and you've been like God's angel — but the Philistine lords' word is final," Achish said.

King Achish told David to get a good night's rest, awake early and return to Ziklag. David and his men complied. Meanwhile, the Philistine host went up to Jezreel.

If the Hebrews had not been dismissed by the Philistines, they would have faced conflicted loyalties at the Battle of Mount Gilboa, observers on both sides noted.

David and his 400 men rescue families from Amalekites; Recover more spoils than was taken

Egyptian escapee provides invaluable intel in exchange for freedom

The Amalekites swooped from the south and pounced on the town of Ziklag, burned the city to the ground and kidnapped the families of David's men who were all living there.

But in their patented, fast-moving, counter-offensive-tactical fighting style, David's men pursued the Amalekites, rescued their abducted families, recovered all that was stolen from them and enriched themselves with yet even more booty.

Three days after Philistine commanders expelled the Hebrews

from their army — sparing them from fighting their countrymen in the Mount Gilboa battle — David's and his 600 men arrived at Ziklag, discovered their loved ones abducted and city burned.

So emotionally distraught over the kidnapping of their wives, sons and daughters, some of David's men threatened to stone their leader, several informed *The Testament Spectator*.

But the devout shepherd warrior David found strength in no one else but the Lord his God.

Buoyed by his faith in God, David summoned Abiathar, the son of the late High Priest Ahimelech, who, along with Nob's 85 priests — plus their families and livestock — was killed by King Saul.

"Bring me the ephod," said David, referring to the ornate gold, blue, purple and scarlet holy vest which the High Priest wore during religious ceremonies.

"Shall I pursue this raiding party," David inquired of the Lord in prayer. "Will I overtake them?"

David said the answer from Almighty God was immediate.

"Pursue them," the Lord said. "You will certainly overtake them and succeed rescuing your loved ones."

Already fatigued by their three-day march from Aphek, plus emotionally drained after discovering their families abducted and Ziklag burned, David and

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Families were rescued, spoils recovered...

(Continued from Page 13, Column 4)

his 600 men pursued the enemy.

But when they arrived at Besor Brook, 200 men were just too tired to proceed. Consequently, they remained behind.

A scouting party traveling ahead of David's main force found a man in a field. The sickly and emaciated fellow, who appeared to be a slave, was brought to David.

To revive him, they gave him bread, water, a slice of fig cake and two raisin clusters.

"Who is your master and where do you come from," David asked the escapee, who after eating had regained his strength.

"I am an Egyptian, the slave of an Amalekite," he said. "My master abandoned me when I became ill three days ago. We had just raided the Kerethites, territory belonging to Judah and Caleb. We also burned Ziklag."

"Ziklag," David said with keen interest.

He asked the Egyptian if he could lead them right to the Amalekite raiding party.

"Sure I will, but swear to me before God that you will not kill me or hand me over to my master," the man said, "and I will take you down to them."

The Egyptian escapee provided David and his men with invaluable intelligence. He took them to the hill overlooking the Amalekite encampment.

There in the valley below, the Amalekites ate, drank, danced and partied — celebrating the great spoil they had taken from the Philistines, Israelites and their surrounding neighbors.

Taking the enemy by surprise, David and his 400 men swiftly attacked.

They fought the Amalekites from dusk to the evening of the next day.

All were killed in battle except for 400 camel-riding young men, reports one of David's men.

Not only did David rescue his two wives (Abigail and Ahinoam) and the families of his men, he also recovered all — plus a whole lot more flocks and herds — the Amalekites had initially taken from them.

David solves dissent in camp; All are to share in spoils of war

Some of the 400 men who rescued their families from the Amalekite raiders wanted to deny the other 200 men who remained at Besor Brook the spoils of war.

Could it be that the men following David all of this time had become weary of their constantly being on-the-run, nomadic, fighting life-style?

Before embarking on the daring, lightning-quick Amalekite raid, there was talk of stoning David.

Now some troublemakers — perhaps the same who discussed killing their leader — wanted to deny others the spoils of war.

"There's definitely dissent in David's camp," one of David's men remarked to *The Testament Spectator*.

"Because they were not with us, we will not give the 200 who stayed behind the spoils of war," the ring leader said.

"We'll only give them back their wives and children — nothing more, that's it."

"No, my brothers," David retorted. "You must not do that with what the Lord has given us."

David reminded them that the Lord, who provided him counsel and was thus given authorization to pursue the Amalekite raiders, protected them during the long and exhausting battle.

"The Lord gave us victory over the forces that came against us," said David, noting that all would share in the spoils of war.

David ruled that the share of the man who stayed with the supplies at Besor Brook is to be the same as that of him who went down to fight.

"All will share equally," insisted David, instituting a new Israelite statute that was codified into law.

In a diplomatic gesture that would improve relations with the neighbors, David also sent some Amalekite plunder to the leaders of several surrounding towns and villages, one of David's aides confirmed.

Israel routed at Mount Gilboa battle

King Saul, three sons slain

The Philistines routed Israel's army at the Battle of Mount Gilboa, killing King Saul, his three sons, the ruler's elite bodyguard unit plus thousands of other Israelite troops.

Hundreds of Israelites retreated. Those who weren't fast enough to outrun the enemy were killed by arrows or hacked to pieces by Philistine swordsmen.

"We saw hundreds of Hebrew troops scrambling like scared dogs all over the Gilboa mountain range," one Philistine officer boasted. "What a glorious victory!"

Critically wounded by Philistine archers, King Saul and his armor bearer committed suicide, several retreating soldiers report.

Prince Jonathan, his two brothers Abinadab and Malchishua, died valiantly in battle, many eyewitnesses said.

When the men of Israel, who were on the other side of the valley, saw the defeat, they ran for their lives — leaving their homes for the Philistines.

Some enemy troops, who had come to strip the dead, found King Saul's body and beheaded him. Finding his dead sons, the Philistines pirated their corpse's to Beth-shean, affixed the four bodies and their armor to Ashtaroth Temple's walls to be exhibited as trophies of war.

Meanwhile, when the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead heard what the Philistines had done to King Saul and his three sons, they decided to retrieve and bury them.

The brave men journeyed all night about 20 miles northwest to Beth-shean. They extricated the four bodies that were hideously ornamenting the wall while the Philistines were drunk.

They returned to Jabesh-gilead, cremated the four bodies, buried the bones and fasted seven days.

Tragically, Saul, anointed 40 years earlier to defend Israel from the Philistines, failed as Israel's first King.

King Saul seeks, receives advice from Witch of Endor on eve of Gilboa defeat

Familiar spirit impersonates Prophet Samuel, tells Israelite ruler bad news

Afraid of the Philistine forces arrayed against his army, King Saul asked the Lord for advice. Yet when God refused to answer the Israelite ruler, he used a witch to consult Prophet Samuel.

But the witch of Endor who claimed to have spoken to the dead prophet conveyed bad news to the King, confirmed two men who accompanied the Israelite ruler to Endor on the eve of Saul's defeat at the Battle of Mount Gilboa.

The men heard the witch predict that because of his continued disobedience, the Lord would deliver Saul to the Philistines.

A familiar spirit said through the witch that he and his sons "will be with me," referring to an after life in the underworld.

Yet most, particularly from Israel's religious community, doubt whether the witch of Endor actually communicated to Prophet Samuel on behalf of Saul the evening before his suicide.

"The witch of Endor performed a seance and while she was in a deep trance uttering incantations, a familiar spirit impersonating Samuel must have spoken to her," opined a man from Israel's School of the Prophets, a religious society where the late Samuel taught the prophetic ministry at Naioth at Ramah.

"Lest there be any doubt, it is impossible to speak to the dead," the Holy Man insisted. "Therefore the witch of Endor could not have spoken to Samuel!"

But King Saul tried to convince himself otherwise. He believed the Endorian witch spoke to Prophet Samuel when in actuality he knew she hadn't. For the distraught King was so afraid to hear her bad news, he prostrated himself on the ground and refused to eat.

"What shall I do? What shall I do," said a sobbing Saul, a man who had lost his anointing, lost his kingdom and as a result, would ultimately lose his life by

falling on his sword.

It took some effort, but they finally convinced the King to eat steak and bread that night, according to the witch of Endor, the woman who prepared Saul's last meal.

Earlier that day, the Philistine lords of Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron, Gath and Gaza, mobilized their troops. Amassed in the plain of Jezreel at Shunem, they prepared to attack the Israelites.

Responding to Philistia's military threat, King Saul encamped Israel's forces at Mount Gilboa, a mountain range east of Jezreel.

As the Philistines and Israelites had done many times before during King Saul's 40-year reign, the two armies were

who were never completely expelled from the land as the Lord so commanded, the witch — plus Israel's other enemies who practiced witchcraft — felt at home living there.

The three men arrived at the witch of Endor's dark hut. Dimly lit candles cast strange gyrating shadows on the walls. The smell of incense permeated her home. Idols and witchcraft paraphernalia was visible everywhere.

Posing as three customers needing spiritual counsel that night, Saul asked the witch of Endor to summon a familiar spirit for him.

In a precautionary gesture to determine whether they were spies, the witch of Endor reminded him that

'Because of your disobedience, the Lord will deliver you to the Philistines tomorrow' — the familiar spirit said to King Saul

yet again poised to fight.

Terrified of the impending battle, King Saul enquired of God through priests, prophets and dreams.

But since the Israelite ruler had fallen out of favor with the Lord, God refused to answer his inquiries, the Holy Man confirmed with *The Testament Spectator*.

In accordance with Mosaic Law and Prophet Samuel's blessing, King Saul banished magicians, sorcerers, warlocks, witches and wizards from Israel.

Yet in his desperation, the Israelite ruler went against God, Mosaic Law and his own royal edict.

"Find me a woman who can talk to the dead, I need to speak to Prophet Samuel," King Saul said of his spiritual mentor who died and was buried at Ramah more than two years earlier.

King Saul's servants said there was a witch at Endor, a village located about 12 miles east of Mount Gilboa. He hurriedly prepared himself for the journey.

Disrobing his kingly attire and dressing like a commoner, the disguised Saul secretly traveled to Endor, confirmed two men who accompanied the Israelite ruler there.

Since Endor, located in Manassehite territory, was inhabited by Caananites

Prophet Samuel had ejected her, plus those who were conversant in black magic, from Israel.

"You're trying to entrap me, aren't you," she asked suspiciously.

"Of course not," Saul said. "As the Lord lives, you shall not be executed for helping me."

The woman began her seance. While deep in a trance, Saul asked her to summon Samuel.

The witch of Endor claimed to have seen Prophet Samuel, according to Saul's two men. But the familiar spirit revealed to her the King's real identity.

"Why have you deceived me," she told Saul, recognizing him as Israel's ruler.

Trying to allay her fear that she wouldn't be executed for practicing sorcery, King Saul asked her to continue the seance and questioned her what she saw.

"I see god's coming out of the earth," she responded.

"What does he look like," said Saul, hoping one of the dead men would be the late Samuel.

"There's an old man dressed up in a robe," she said.

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King Saul defended Israel during 40-year reign; Disobedience to God, distrust of David, destroys him

Critically Wounded, Ruler Commits Suicide at Mount Gilboa Defeat; His Life Recounted Here

Israelite King Saul, soundly defeated by the Philistines at the Battle of Mount Gilboa and critically wounded while retreating from enemy archers there, fell on his own sword and died.

He was 70.

Chosen by the Lord as Israel's first ruler and anointed "Captain over His inheritance," King Saul was commissioned to save his people from the Philistines.

But tragically for him and his subjects, King Saul failed at the Lord's mandate, a recount of his life here will now reveal.

Saul 'A Good Man'

King Saul, son of Kish and grandson of Abiel, hailed from the Tribe of Benjamin.

Not much is known about his childhood and young adult life. But the first official record of Saul characterized him as "a good, fine and impressive young man."

His height was "a head taller" than other men, described those who knew him.

Hunts 'Man of God'

One day, Father Kish sent Saul to find his lost donkeys. Saul and a servant searched for the missing livestock everywhere. Suggested by Saul on the third day to return home so Father Kish wouldn't be worried about them, the family servant urged him to seek "a man of God."

It seemed the Lord caused the donkeys to stray, so Saul would search for them three days and thus — at his loyal servant's suggestion — meet Prophet Samuel. That plan worked to perfection. Because the day before, the Lord apprised Prophet Samuel that He would send a Benjamite across his path.

"You shall anoint him to be Captain over my people Israel, that he may reign and save them from the Philistines," said the Lord, noting to Samuel He would give Israel their

King Saul seeks, receives advice...

(Continued from Page 14, Column 4)

Believing the Endorian witch had seen Prophet Samuel, King Saul bowed in homage and pressed his face to the ground.

The familiar spirit impersonating Samuel chided the King for disturbing him. He also told Saul what the ruler had already feared — that God had departed and that's why the Lord hadn't answered any of his inquiries.

Since he refused to execute Amalekite King Agag and had committed other monumental misdeeds, the Lord had departed from him, the familiar spirit reminded King Saul.

"He has taken the Kingdom from king Saul and has given it to David," the familiar spirit said. "Because of your disobedience, the Lord will deliver you to the Philistines tomorrow."

And that's what happened at the Battle of Mount Gilboa.

much wanted King.

Concerned they had nothing to give the "man of God" — it was customary to present a prophet a gift for enquiring the Lord — the servant told Saul he had a quarter shekel of silver. Even though it wasn't a lot of money, the two were satisfied they could give him something.

Led to Samuel

They went to the city to find him, asked "is the seer here" to young maidens drawing water at the well and were directed to the prophet.

Meanwhile Samuel, on his way to bless people at a sacrifice, ran into them.

"Tell me, I pray you, where is the seer's house," Saul asked this unidentified man, unknowing Samuel's identity but sensing he would know where to find him.

Instantly discerning that Saul was the Benjamite which the Lord so foretold, Samuel verified to him he was the prophet, invited the son of Kish to dinner and said he would "read his heart..."

"As for the missing donkeys that strayed from you three days ago, don't worry about them," Samuel said to Saul with an assurance that must have eased him. "They are found. You need to be mindful of more important things, for Israel's destiny is now intertwined with you and your family."

Uncomfortable at being put on a pedestal and viewing himself humbly, Saul told Prophet Samuel he was from Israel's smallest tribe and the least of Benjamin's families.

"Why do you speak to me in such a grandiose way," Saul said to Samuel, who must have been impressed with his modesty.

Anointed King

Prophet Samuel took the pair to a hall — adjacent where the sacrifices were being held — and seated them at the head table. About 30 people were there and ate with them.

After spending the next day with Saul, Samuel anointed the son of Kish and prophesied that he would meet prophets descending from Gilgal, the high worship place.

Prophet Samuel predicted worshippers strumming lyres, beating tambourines, blowing flutes and playing harps would precede these Holy Men.

"The Spirit of the Lord will envelope you in power and you will prophesy with the prophets," Samuel foretold to Saul. "You will be changed into a different person."

Prophet Samuel said when these signs are fulfilled, everything he did would be successful because the Lord God was with him.

As Samuel instructed, Saul waited for the prophet at Gilgal seven days, a period which the prophet offered burnt and fellowship sacrifices.

After Saul left Samuel, the Lord changed the son of Kish's heart. The signs which the prophet foresaw did come to pass. The prophetic procession met him. The Spirit of the Lord came upon him in power and he joined them

prophesying.

When all of those who knew Saul and saw him prophesying with the prophets, they knew he was out of character.

"What is this that has happened to the son of Kish," they asked one another. "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

That six-word question: "Is Saul also among the prophets," became a popular slogan back then.

Kingly Needs

Even though the Lord warned the people a king would recruit their sons as soldiers, organize an army, manufacture weapons, create a bureaucracy and to fund his kingdom, levy taxes on the people, the Israelites still desired a ruler.

Contrary to God's perfect will and Samuel's priestly preference, Israel's 12-tribe confederate citizenry wanted a king like other nations.

Thus, Israel's governmental structure was converted from a theocracy (rule by God) to a monarchy (rule by men).

Crowned Ruler

But an odd thing happened on the day Saul was chosen King, several remembered.

When Prophet Samuel convened Israel's tribes at Mizpeh and instructed them to go through a formal selection process — narrowing the kingly choice from tribe (Benjamin) to clan; and family (Matri) to individual — the son of Kish could not be found.

"He is hiding among the baggage," the Lord told Prophet Samuel and the people, after they enquired God of his whereabouts.

So despite his modesty, hesitation and perhaps even fear of becoming Israel's King, Saul was God's anointed.

So at the seasoned age of 30, Saul, the son of Kish, family of Matri of the Tribe of Benjamin, was crowned Israel's first King.

New King Defied

Initially, most Israelites proudly acknowledged their new King and consented to his divine right authority. However, some refused to render the Benjamite fealty.

"How shall this man save us," asked one dissenter, representing a group of men who despised the newly-crowned Saul and as a result, brought the King no coronation gifts.

To his credit, Saul acted kingly, exercised merciful restraint and remained silent.

Although some opposed King Saul, one incident galvanized the people to follow him.

King's First War

Nahash the Ammonite mobilized his troops and encamped against Jabesh Gilead, a town located east of the Jordan River in the Tribe of Manasseh's territory. Offering themselves as servants in exchange for peace, the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead tried to negotiate a treaty with Nahash. But the Ammonite rejected their terms.

"I will only make a peace treaty with you if I can gouge out the right

eye of all your men," Nahash said. "Then they will be disgraced in all of Israel."

Requesting a seven-day reprieve from Nahash, Jabesh Gilead leaders dispatched messengers to inform King Saul about the Ammonites' threat. When the messengers arrived at Gibeath, they told people the news.

At the time, King Saul was herding his oxen from the field. When he saw everyone crying and learned about the Nahash threat, he became angry. The Spirit of God came upon him.

In a symbolic act to motivate men to fight the Ammonites, King Saul cut two of his oxen in pieces and gave those pieces to several messengers.

Dispatching the messengers to go throughout Israel, King Saul instructed them to proclaim: "This will be done to anyone's oxen who does not follow Saul and Samuel."

As a result of King Saul's fearless symbolic act, the fear of God fell on the people. About 300,000 Israelites, plus another 35,000 men from the Tribe of Judah, enlisted.

Defeats Ammonites

Once King Saul mobilized an army and marched on the Ammonites, he showed his skills as a daring and brilliant military strategist.

Deploying his force offensively rather than using them defensively, King Saul divided his 335,000 troops into three companies and charged the Ammonites from three directions, Israelite veterans of the Ammonite battle recall.

This strategy worked so impeccably in King Saul's first military campaign that he scattered Nahash's forces in all directions. There were not found two Ammonite soldiers together on the battlefield that day, these veterans say.

After King Saul's stunning victory, all the people were impressed with him.

"Who is he that said, 'Shall Saul reign over us?' Bring those men, that we may execute them," some said.

But again to his credit, King Saul exercised merciful restraint. "No man shall be put to death, for the Lord saved Israel today," he said.

King Reaffirmed

Riding the momentum of the victory, Prophet Samuel suggested to the people that they reaffirm Saul as Israel's first King.

"Come and let us go to Gilgal and renew the King there," he said of the city where Samuel told Saul to wait seven days before crowning him.

The people sacrificed and offered peace offerings to the Lord in Gilgal, the site where the late Joshua, son of Nun, led their forefathers across a dry Jordan River many years earlier.

King Saul and everyone rejoiced greatly during his reaffirmation.

Acted Foolishly

But in the second year of King Saul's reign, the Israelite ruler acted foolishly.

Prince Jonathan, the King's eldest son who was Israel's most valiant

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King Saul's life recounted here...

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soldier before David defeated Goliath, attacked and destroyed Philistia's Geba Garrison.

Anticipating a Philistine counterattack, King Saul called Israelite men to war.

Seeking revenge for Prince Jonathan's victory, the Philistines mobilized 30,000 chariots, mustered 6,000 cavalry, and marshaled so many infantry their men numbered as sand on a Mediterranean beach, recall many who saw their camp at Michmash that day.

Outnumbered, disorganized and under equipped, the fearful Israelites hid inside caves. Men were camouflaged behind trees, while some concealed themselves under boulders, above cliffs and crouched in ditches.

Prophet Samuel told King Saul to wait seven days for him at Gilgal, but when many more troops deserted him, the Israelite ruler became impatient.

"Bring me some livestock to prepare a burnt and a peace offering and I can seek God what to do," said King Saul.

Just as King Saul illegally conducted then concluded the religious Levitical ritual, Prophet Samuel arrived.

"What have you done," he asked angrily.

"The people deserted me and I had to do something before the Philistines attacked," he explained. "I made supplications to the Lord so He would tell me what to do."

Prophet Samuel said he had acted foolishly. "You have not kept the commandment of the Lord, thy God," he said.

Samuel added: "Because you were foolish, your dynasty will not continue forever, because the Lord will seek a man after His own Heart to rule Israel."

When King Saul illegally burned an offering, he usurped his kingly office. The Lord God Almighty was angered

the Benjamite tried to minister as a Levite, Israel's tribe assigned to administer the burnt, grain, fellowship, sin and guilt offering rituals.

Saul Disobeys God

Shortly after that incident, King Saul then disobeyed God. The Lord ordered "His Captain" to execute the Amalekites to punish them for preying on Israel's seniors, children and sick people when they exited Egypt.

"I remembered what the Amalekites did to Israel," the Lord told King Saul of what happened more than 500 years earlier. "Destroy all they have and kill everyone."

Even though King Saul vanquished the Amalekites with 200,000 Israelite infantry plus another 10,000 men from the Tribe of Judah, he ignored God's command. For some unknown reason, King Saul did not execute Agag nor did he destroy, as God so commanded, everything that belonged to the Amalekite King.

"I am grieved that I have made Saul King, because he has turned away from Me and has not carried out My specific instructions," the Lord said to Prophet Samuel of King Saul's disobedience.

Angered at Saul, the Lord told Samuel to tell the King that He has torn the Kingdom of Israel from him "and has given it to one of your neighbors — to one better than you."

It would take several years for that prophecy to come to pass, but King Saul's days were now numbered.

Diminished King

Saul's stature as warrior and failed King diminished him, many observers noted.

This fact was illustrated when neither he, nor the valiant men under his command, challenged Goliath of Gath in a duel.

For 40 days, Goliath insulted the Lord God, King Saul and the Israelites. But no one did anything about it — except a young shepherd from Bethlehem-judah, who accepted the challenge and defeated the giant.

After this dramatic duel, King Saul's stately stature was then relegated even more.

"Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands," the women sang back then, exalting young David, the son of Jesse, over the aging Saul, the son of Kish.

Threatened King

From that point on, David was a threat to Saul and his dynasty.

This fact became more apparent when in a selfless acknowledgment, symbolic acquiescence and royal endorsement of David's inevitable ascension to the Israelite throne, King Saul learned that Prince Jonathan gave his sword, bow and girdle to the shepherd warrior.

Consequently, the once proud King Saul became a lonely, depressed, moody and melancholy man — tormented by demonic oppression.

Murderous King

During the latter years of his reign, King Saul tried to murder David many times. He required the young lad to slay 100 Philistines in exchange for marrying Michal, his youngest daughter. That didn't work. David not only survived that attempt, but he killed 200 Philistines!

Then King Saul tried to kill his son-in-law. He threw a spear at David three times, but the shepherd warrior's reflexes were just too quick.

King Saul was frustrated when others helped David. Michal aided his escape through their bedroom window and then delayed guards from seizing him. Trying to shield David from King Saul, Jonathan also intervened for his best friend.

King Saul's most murderous act was ordering Doeg, the Edomite, to kill 85 Priests because they didn't tell him David had been at Nob. Doeg slaughtered the priests' families and even their livestock.

In sum, King Saul tried to kill David 21 times! But neither tricks, entrapments, assassination attempts, Ziphite spies nor military campaigns succeeded. God protected him.

In contrast, David could have easily slain King Saul twice. But he refused to stab or slash "the Lord's anointed" in an En Gedi Cave or at King Saul's

Hakilah Hill camp site.

In the end King Saul's judgmental demise, foretold the evening before by a familiar spirit impersonating the late Prophet Samuel who was conjured up by the witch of Endor, occurred on the battlefield alone and separated from his God.

Probably aware the Philistines slew three sons — Jonathan, Abinadab and Malchisua — during the Battle of Mount Gilboa, King Saul lay critically wounded by enemy archers.

"Draw thy sword, and thrust me through, less these uncircumcised Philistine pigs torture me before killing me," King Saul reportedly said while his troops all around him ran for their lives.

But King Saul's loyal bodyguard, sworn to protect Israel's first ruler, could not kill him. Unsuccessful in trying to convince his own bodyguard to die honorably, King Saul committed suicide. Seeing his King dead, the bodyguard too committed suicide.

Men of Jabesh-Gilead, grateful for King Saul saving them from the Ammonites 40 years earlier, retrieved his beheaded body from the Philistines, as well as the bodies of his three sons. Cremating them, they buried their bones and fasted seven days.

King Saul is survived by his wife, Ahinoam; son, Ish-bosheth; and two daughters, Merab and Michal; his uncle, Army Captain Abner, plus other relatives.

Failed King

During his 40-year reign, King Saul defended Israel against the Amalekites, Ammonites, Edomites, Moabites, Philistine and Syrians. But the Israelite ruler did not enjoy the Lord's favor and thus, failed to establish peace throughout his Kingdom.

King Saul's disobedience to God and distrust of David ultimately destroyed him. A tragic end to King Saul's reign, an Israelite era which began with so much promise but ended in his death.

"Oh how the mighty have fallen," lamented David after learning of King Saul's and Prince Jonathan's death.

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