

1 Samuel 8-10; 13; 15-18 Quotes and Notes

1 Samuel 4-7

1. The Philistines battle Israel, take the ark of the covenant from the tabernacle at Shiloh, and Eli's two sons Hophni and Phineas are slain. 98 year-old Eli, upon hearing of the death of his sons, dies. (1 Sam. 4.4, 10-11, 17-18).
2. The Philistines place the ark in their temple to Dagon, and are smitten with emerods (1 Sam. 5.6, 10-12).¹
 - a. The Philistines want to get rid of the ark, they send it to Ekron (1 Sam. 5.10), and are smitten again.
3. They decide to send the ark back to Israel (1 Sam. 6.1-3).
4. They send it back with mice and emerods (1 Sam. 6.4-11).²
5. The men of Bethshemesh look into the ark and are slaughtered by the Lord (1 Sam. 6.19).
6. The ark is taken not to Shiloh, but Kirjath-jearim (1 Sam. 6.21-7.2).³
7. Samuel exhorts the Israelites to be faithful, offers a burnt offering, and the Israelites attacked the Philistines (1 Sam. 7.3-4, 8-11).
8. Samuel judges Israel, and builds an altar to the Lord in Ramah (1 Sam. 7.15, 17).

1 Samuel 8-10

1. Samuel's sons do wickedly (1 Sam. 8.1-5).
2. The people ask Samuel for a king "like other nations" (1 Sam. 8.5).
 - a. The Lord says that the people have rejected Him (the Lord) and not Samuel (1 Sam. 8.7-9).
3. Samuel urges the Israelites to not choose a king (1 Sam. 8.10-18)
 - a. He will take your sons
 - b. He will have your children work his ground
 - c. He will take your daughters
 - d. He will take your fields

¹ *Hemorrhoids*: Cf. Ps. 78.66, where "He beat back his foes" is explained in the ancient Aramaic translation of Jonathan: "He beat his foes with hemorrhoids at their back." Some scholars, however, identify the disease as **bubonic plague**, since instead of hemorrhoids, the Heb "*ketiv*" ("what is written") reads "tumors," which are characteristic of bubonic plague, and Septuagint mentions mice, which are known to have spread it. In addition, hemorrhoids are neither fatal nor epidemic, whereas according to vv. 11-12 the disease in question was. Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, *The Jewish Study Bible*, Oxford University Press, 2014, p. 570. See: [Medical Dictionary, emerods](#). Accessed 4.20.2022.

1 Sam. 5.6 reads וַתִּכְבַּד יְדֵי־יְהוָה אֶל־הָאֲשֻׁדִים וַיִּשְׂמַם יְיָ אֶת־אֲשֻׁדֹד וְאֶת־גְּבוּלֶיהָ
 And the hand of Yahweh was heavy upon *those in Ashdod* and he ravaged them and scourged them **with tumors**, Ashdod and **all her borders**.

² The golden hemorrhoids (עפלים) and golden mice correspond to the nature of the plagues; they are a gift to honor the God of Israel and to appease Him. The mice that are ravaging the land by destroying the grain crops are a blow to Dagon, the god of grain (but see also 5.6 n.). Upon you, who are afflicted by disease, and your gods, who are deeply humiliated, and your land, which is ravaged by mice. *Jewish Study Bible*, p. 571.

³ It seems that perhaps the tabernacle had been destroyed by the Philistines when they attacked Shiloh. Robert Alter, *The Hebrew Bible: Translation with Commentary*, Vol. 2, The Prophets, p. 199. Alter notes that other sources also indicate that Shiloh was attacked at that time.

- e. He will take “a tenth of your seed” of your vineyards and a tenth of your sheep
- 4. The people cry out for a king (1 Sam. 8.19-20).
- 5. The Lord’s response, “Make them a king!” (1 Sam. 8.22).
- 6. Saul is chosen by one of two (or both) ways:
 - a. The “lost donkey story” (1 Sam. 9).
 - b. The “chosen by lot” story (1 Sam. 10.17-24).
 - i. Saul is taller than everyone else (1 Sam. 10.23).
 - ii. “God save the king!” (1 Sam. 10.24.⁴)
- 7. Saul is guilty of the warnings given in [D&C 121.37](#):
 - a. Do not “cover your sins”
 - b. “exercise control over others”
 - c. “compel” others
 - d. “have dominion or compulsion” upon the souls of men...

1 Samuel 11-12

- 1. Saul defeats Israel’s enemy the Ammonites, his kingship is renewed at Gilgal (1 Sam. 11.14).
- 2. Samuel exhorts the Israelites to be righteous now that they have a king (1 Sam. 12.10-25).
 - a. “If... not” statements (1 Sam. 12.14-15, 24-25).

1 Samuel 13

- 1. Saul was ... years old when he became king, and he reigned over Israel two years (1 Sam. 13.1).⁵
- 2. Israelite armies are far outnumbered by Philistine forces 36,000 to 3,000 (1 Sam. 13.2, 5).⁶
- 3. Saul offers a burnt offering, as he waits for Samuel to arrive (1 Sam. 13.8-9).
- 4. Samuel rebukes Saul (1 Sam. 13.13-14).
 - a. The justification for this rebuke is found in 1 Sam. 10.8, “thou shalt go to Gilgal, and I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt offerings... seven days thou shalt tarry, till I come to thee, and shew thee what thou shalt do.”
 - i. This is the justification for Samuel’s statement that Saul will be replaced (1 Sam. 13.13-14).
- 5. “There was no smith found in Israel,” so the Israelites had to “go down” to the cities of the Philistines to care for their tools (1 Sam. 13.19-20).
 - a. The charge for sharpening was a *pim*⁷ for plowshares, mattocks, three-pronged forks, and axes, and for setting the goads. Thus on the day of the battle, no sword or spear

⁴ The third person jussive of *hayah* in this instance could be translated “let it be,” or “let there be,” thus יהי המלך could be translated literally “let it be the king,” but the more poetic “long live the king,” or “may the king have life,” as well as the KJV rendering “God save the king” all roughly convey the same idea.

⁵ The Masoretic Text, notoriously defective at this point, says “Saul was a year old . . . and two years he reigned.” This whole sentence is absent from the Septuagint, leading one to suspect that the redactor here stitched into the narrative a textual fragment in which there were lacunae in the numbers that he did not presume to fill in. Robert Alter, Vol. 2, p. 222.

⁶ The inflated figure of 30,000 chariots is given a more modest number of 3,000 in the Septuagint.

⁷ *the price of the sharpening was a pim*. The italicized term occurs only here in the Bible, but the archaeologists have found stone weights marked *pim*, which is two-thirds of a shekel (here, evidently, a silver shekel). **The Philistines, then, not only deprive the Israelites of the technology for making weapons but also reap a profit from their smithless vassals for the maintenance of the agricultural tools they need for their livelihood.** Alter, p.

was to be found in the possession of any of the troops with Saul and Jonathan; only Saul and Jonathan had them (1 Sam. 13.21-22, JPS translation).

1 Samuel 14

1. Jonathan, Saul's son, climbs the precipice of a difficult site and surprises the Philistine outpost (1 Sam. 14.6-15).
 - a. "There was trembling in the host, in the field, and among all people" (1 Sam. 14.15). Lit: "the land trembled"⁸
2. Saul's scouts see the Philistines scattering, and, not wanting the Israelites to pause in their pursuit, instructs the soldiers not to eat, saying "cursed be the man that eateth any food until evening" (1 Sam. 14.24).
 - a. Jonathan, not having heard his father's instructions, eats some honey that the soldiers happen to find (1 Sam. 14.25-27).
 - b. He is told of his father's command (1 Sam. 14.28), and Jonathan's response is that the famished soldiers should eat (1 Sam. 14.29-30).
 - c. The soldiers defeat the Philistines (1 Sam. 14.31), and in their hungry state, fall upon the spoil, sheep and oxen, and "eat with the blood" (1 Sam. 14.32).⁹
3. Saul builds an altar to the Lord (1 Sam. 14.35).¹⁰
4. The priest tells Saul to approach God to inquire whether they should continue chasing the Philistine army, and so he does. The Lord does not respond to him (1 Sam. 14.36-37).
5. Jonathan and Saul have a standoff regarding Jonathan's eating against his father's orders, and the soldiers defend Jonathan, and he is saved (1 Sam. 14.41-46).
 - a. Saul then said to the Lord, the God of Israel, "Show Thammim!" Jonathan and Saul were indicated by lot, and the troops were cleared (1 Sam. 14.41 JPS translation).¹¹

226. The King James translation of *למחרשת פים להפצירה* reads, "they had a file for the mattocks." But it can also be translated as "And it was charged a **pim** for the mahārēšā (plowshare)."

⁸ "And there was **fear** in the camp, in the field, and among all the people" 1 Sam. 14.15a, my translation.

⁹ It was forbidden to eat meat with the blood, which was considered to be the life (Lev. 19.26; Deut. 12.23). Accordingly, for meat to be kosher, rabbinic law requires that all traces of blood be meticulously removed. By slaughtering on the ground the blood will not drain out properly and will mix with the meat, whereas by slaughtering on a stone the blood can drain out and flow down, leaving the meat fit for consumption. *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 587.

¹⁰ Remember that altars probably already exist at Shiloh, and probably Bethel. This could be considered a contradiction to the edict in Deuteronomy 12.

¹¹ This verse indicates that the men are cleared of any blame for Saul not having heard from the Lord regarding whether he should pursue the Philistine army that night. The issue is between him and Jonathan. The verse can also be read as follows: *LORD, God of Israel! Why did You not answer Your servant today? If there is guilt in me or in Jonathan my son . . . show Urim, and if it is in Your people Israel, show Thummim*. This version comes from the Septuagint. The Masoretic Text here has the short and cryptic *הבה תגמים* "Show Thammim" Saul's frustrated reference to his failure to receive an answer from the oracle makes a great deal of narrative sense... **The Septuagint version also makes intelligible the process of oracular lottery**. The Urim and Thummim were two divinatory objects attached to the ephod, probably in a special compartment. They may have been in the form of stones or tokens with lettering on them. They provided indication of binary oppositions: thus the question addressed to the oracle had to take the form of yes or no, x or y. The opposition may have been underscored by the fact that Urim and Thummim begin, respectively, with the first and last letter of the Hebrew alphabet. More

- b. The Israelite soldiers defend Jonathan, “as the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground...” (1 Sam. 14.45).
- 6. Saul secured his kingdom, making war against his enemies (1 Sam. 14.47).
 - a. There was sore war against the Philistines all the days of Saul: and when Saul saw any strong man or any valiant man, he took him” (1 Sam. 14.52). Note how this connects to Samuel’s warning to the Israelites in 1 Sam. 8.11.

1 Samuel 15-17

1. Samuel instructs Saul to smite the Amalekites, including “all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass” (1 Sam. 15.3).¹²
2. Saul gathered 200,000 footmen and 10,000 came from Judah (1 Sam. 15.4)¹³
3. Saul “smote the Amalekites” (1 Sam. 15.7).
 - a. He saved Agag, the king of the Amalekites and the “best of the sheep, and oxen” as well as other livestock (1 Sam. 15.8-9).
4. The Lord informs Samuel of Saul’s decision, saying “It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king” (1 Sam. 15.11).¹⁴
5. Saul is convinced he is obedient, saying: “I have performed the commandment of the Lord!” (1 Sam. 15.13).
 - a. “What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep and in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?” (1 Sam. 15.14).
 - b. Saul’s defense is that these are to be dedicated to the Lord, and that “they” have done this (1 Sam. 15.15).¹⁵

speculatively, Urim might be linked with *’aror*, “to curse,” and Thummim with the root *t-m-m*, whole or innocent. Alter, p. 232. The Greek text of 1 Samuel 14.41 reads as follows: καὶ εἶπεν Σαουλ κύριε ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραὴλ τί ὅτι οὐκ ἀπεκρίθης τῷ δούλῳ σου σήμερον εἰ ἐν ἐμοὶ ἢ ἐν Ἰωναθαν τῷ υἱῷ μου ἢ ἀδικία κύριε ὁ θεὸς Ἰσραὴλ **δοὺς δὴ λους** καὶ ἐὰν τάδε εἶπης ἐν τῷ λαῷ σου Ἰσραὴλ δοὺς δὴ ὀσιότητα καὶ **κληροῦται** Ἰωναθαν καὶ Σαουλ καὶ ὁ λαὸς ἐξῆλθεν. “And Saul said, ‘O Lord God of Israel, why is it that you do not answer *me your* servant this day, is *this due* to my unrighteous *actions*, or Jonathan my son? O Lord God of Israel, **give revelations!** And if of these things here that you might reveal indeed will blame your people Israel, make this manifest whether it is I, Saul, or Jonathan, or the people of Israel as to whose blame it is, and **make it manifest by lot.**” (My translation)

¹² The Amalekites were a nomadic people to the south of Israel. The Amalekites are regarded in the Bible as vicious adversaries of Israel; in later times the name Amalek came to signify “archenemy of the Jews.” *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 588. *Put under the ban everything that he has.* The verb here is in the plural, evidently including the troops together with Saul, though the subsequent verbs in this verse are in the singular. The “ban” (*herem*), one of the cruelest practices of ancient Near Eastern warfare, is an injunction of total destruction—of all living things—of the enemy. Amalek is, of course, the archetypal implacable enemy of Israel, but it should be said that here, as throughout the Samuel story, there is at least some margin of ambiguity as to whether the real source of this ferocious imperative is God or the prophet who claims to speak on His behalf. Alter, p. 234.

¹³ **𐤀𐤋𐤍** *eleph*, translated as “thousand,” has some ambiguity here, thus **opening up the possibility for a much lower number.**

¹⁴ The JST reads, “I have set up Saul to be a king, and he repenteth not that he hath sinned, for he is...” The Hebrew can also be read as “I regret that I made Saul king, for he has turned away from me...”

¹⁵ Saul shifts the blame for the violation of the proscription to the troops, but in the proscription’s execution he includes himself (we). He also contends that though the choicest animals were spared, this was done for a most worthy purpose. He possibly believes that he has in fact performed the Lord’s command. *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 589.

6. Samuel's response: you are stubborn, rebellious, and prideful (1 Sam. 15.17-23).
 - a. Saul, "I have sinned... I have transgressed... because I feared the people" (1 Sam. 15.24), he then asks for a pardon (1 Sam. 15.25).
7. "I will not return with thee... the Lord has rejected thee from being a king over Israel!" (1 Sam. 15.26)
 - a. To emphasize his point, Samuel hacks Agag to pieces "before the Lord in Gilgal" (1 Sam. 15.32-33).¹⁶
8. Samuel leaves, never again to see Saul (1 Sam. 15.35).
9. Samuel is led by the Lord to find a new king, "go, and I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite" (1 Sam. 16.1).
10. Samuel makes an offering to the Lord in Bethlehem (1 Sam. 16.2-5).¹⁷
11. Look not on the outward appearance! (1 Sam. 16.7).¹⁸ David is chosen and anointed as king (1 Sam. 16.8-13).
12. An evil spirit troubles Saul (1 Sam. 16.14).¹⁹ Due to his distress, he calls for a musician to comfort him. David is summoned to Saul, who "loved him greatly," and David plays the harp, thus relieving Saul of his depressed spiritual state (1 Sam. 16.14-23).
13. David versus Goliath: 1 Samuel 17.²⁰
 - a. "The champion" = "The man between" (1 Sam. 17.4).²¹

¹⁶ Samuel said: "As your sword has bereaved women, so shall your mother be bereaved among women." And Samuel cut Agag down before the Lord at Gilgal (1 Sam. 15.33). Samuel's poetic lines justify Agag's punishment by stressing its correspondence with his sins. *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 590.

¹⁷ In order for him to make this sacrifice to the Lord, it is likely that Samuel built an altar to the Lord here in Bethlehem. Remember that altars probably already exist at Shiloh, and Bethel. This puts us at three altars so far in the narrative: Shiloh, Bethel, and Bethlehem, not counting the altar that Saul built in 1 Sam. 14.35. This could be considered a contradiction to the edict in Deuteronomy 12.

¹⁸ Think for a moment how different it would be if people took on that physical appearance which would reflect distinctly how well they are doing spiritually. How would some of today's so-called beautiful people really look? A highly publicized movie star, if her life were fully represented in her appearance, might be ugly, perhaps with a hunched back, a prune face, and a withered arm. In contrast, think of Quasimodo, the Hunchback of Notre Dame, whose beauty was not seen by the multitude. Under such telling circumstances—when the outer person reflected the inner person—whom would we applaud? And who would really deserve our pity? Elder Neal A. Maxwell, *All These Things Shall Give Thee Experience*, Deseret Book, 1979, 61.

¹⁹ Note the JST change to verse 14, 15, and 16: "which was not of the Lord..."

²⁰ The story of David and Goliath demonstrates the triumph of faith over physical strength. The detailed description of Goliath's weapons and the rejection of Saul's armor by David serve, together with David's speech before the battle (vv. 45-47), to underscore this idea. Fairy-tale motifs have been incorporated in the narrative: A giant terrifies the community; riches and the king's daughter are promised to him who slays the giant; three elder brothers are unable to do so; and only the youngest and least esteemed brother achieves success by the use of clever, unconventional means. Several details in the narrative are inconsistent with the preceding chapter: David and his family are introduced as new characters (vv. 12-14); David is with his family in Bethlehem and not with Saul (vv. 17-20); and Saul does not know David (vv. 55-58). These discrepancies do not occur in the much shorter Septuagint version (which lacks 17.12-31, 55-58 and 18.1-5). The Masoretic version is most probably a combination of two narratives—one identical with the Septuagint version, the other independent and unaware of the foregoing narratives.

²¹ **The literal meaning of the Hebrew is "the man between"**—that is, the man who goes out between the opposed battle lines to fight a counterpart. That particular Hebrew term thus reinforces the spatial definition of the story. Alter, p. 243. וַיֵּצֵא אִישׁ-הַבֵּינַיִם "And there went out the man between" (1 Sam. 17.4). Goliath is *ha-*

- b. Goliath of Gath: six cubits and a span (1 Sam. 17.4).²²
- c. A helmet of brass, a coat of mail weighing 130 pounds²³, greaves of brass, a target of brass between his shoulders, a spear of iron weighing 15 pounds (1 Sam. 17.5-7).²⁴
- d. Some scholars have argued that Goliath's gear demonstrates a later telling of the story,²⁵ with 7th century armor, portraying Goliath wearing 7th century hoplite armor, a fabricated memory of the 7th century Deuteronomistic historian. Other scholars disagree, stating that while the text may have been edited later during the 7th century, that Goliath's armor does still fit in an ancient Near Eastern context.²⁶
- e. Goliath "presented himself forty days" (1 Sam. 17.16).
- f. David offers to take on Goliath: "Is there not a cause?" (1 Sam. 17.29), "The Lord has delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, and he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine" (1 Sam. 17.37).
- g. The battle (1 Sam. 17.40-49).
 - i. David hits Goliath in the forehead with a stone from his sling (1 Sam. 17.49).
 - ii. David runs toward Goliath (1 Sam. 17.48).²⁷
 - iii. He smites off Goliath's head (1 Sam. 17.51), and brought it to Jerusalem (v. 54).²⁸

benayim "the between" fella. The KJV calls him a champion, which is a good translation, but the "man in between" gives us further insight into Goliath, and also David, as a symbol for Christ, the true "man in between."

²² Just over 9 feet tall. The **Septuagint version of the story puts Goliath at a much more modest height**, reading thus: ὄψος αὐτοῦ τεσσάρων πήχεων καὶ σπιθαμῆς "The height of him was four cubits and a span." This would put Goliath at **around 6'4" tall**, still a rather tall individual, but also much more believable height. The tallest man recorded in history is Robert Wadlow, who was 8'11" who died at the age of 22. See: [Guinness World Records, Robert Wadlow](#), accessed 5.14.2022.

²³ 5,000 shekels = about 130 pounds. The Jewish Study Bible, p. 593.

²⁴ Goliath's scale hauberk of 5,000 shekels of bronze weighs about 56.7 kg. Thus Goliath is credited with wearing armor somewhat over twice the weight of the heaviest Nuzi and Kamid el-Loz reconstructions. In the second millennium, such armor could be made entirely of bronze, as credited to Goliath. The cost of the materials and labor involved in fabricating such a bronze scale hauberk, however, meant that it was only used by elite chariot warriors at Nuzi; and similar use by only the most important or elite chariot warriors probably was the rule across the ancient Near East at this time. Zorn, p. 6. The text specially emphasizes how the armor is both like fish scales and is completely fashioned from bronze, and this may indicate an early date. Zorn, p. 8.

²⁵ Finkelstein, The Philistines in the Bible: A Late-Monarchic Perspective, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, 27: 131-167. Yadin, Goliath's Armor and Israelite Collective Memory, *Vetus Testamentum*, 2004, 54:373-395.

²⁶ When one looks at the constellation of words used for his gear, often found only in this passage and/or exotic in origin, and certain other descriptive elements related to him, it makes a great deal of sense to view Goliath as a Canaanized Philistine chariot warrior equipped with just the sort of panoply that one might well expect in this region in this era. **His equipment shows that he was not some common soldier dragooned from the ranks for this combat. Clearly he was an elite warrior, perhaps one of the most well equipped in the Philistine army** (fitting, indeed, for the army's champion in a ritual duel), and the elite warriors of this era came from the *maryannu* chariot warrior class. Jeffrey R. Zorn, Reconsidering Goliath: An Iron Age I Philistine Warrior, *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, Nov. 2010, No. 360, p. 17.

²⁷ This last gesture would encourage the Philistine to think David was rushing up for the awaited hand-to-hand combat. In fact, David is darting in close enough to get a good shot with his sling. To do this (verse 49), he will break his charge, stop, and let fly with the sling.

²⁸ We have a problem here, as Jerusalem doesn't yet exist. Robert Alter explains, "This notation is problematic because Jerusalem at this point is still a Jebusite city. The report is either proleptic or simply out of place

h. Saul asks, “who is this fella?” (1 Sam. 17.55-56).²⁹

Lessons from 1 Samuel 17

Byrce’s 6 Things

1. Compare your trial to God and his greatness.
2. Do not listen to the naysayers (1 Sam. 17.33).
3. Remember your past successes (1 Sam. 17.37).
4. Don’t use Saul’s armor (1 Sam. 17.38-39).
5. Trust the Lord and his ability to save.
6. Run towards the fight, not away (1 Sam. 17.48).

We must stand against those who mock us

David’s reply is one of the great expressions of faith and courage in all our literature. It thrilled me as a boy, and it still thrills me. (quotes 1 Sam. 17:45–47.) You all know what happened next. David stunned the Philistine with a sling-stone and cut off his head with his own sword. Frightened by the fall of their champion, the Philistines fled. Shouting in triumph, the armies of Israel pursued them and won a great victory.

Countless young people have been inspired by this marvelous instruction in righteousness. At times all of us must stand against those who mock and revile. Some of us, sometime, will face some earthly power as mighty as Goliath. When that happens, we should emulate the courage of David, who was mighty because he had faith and he went forth in a righteous cause in the name of the Lord of Hosts. (Elder Dallin H. Oaks, “[Bible Stories and Personal Protection](#),” Ensign, Nov. 1992.)

Modern Day Goliaths are All Around Us

There are Goliaths all around you, hulking giants with evil intent to destroy you. These are not nine-foot-tall men, but they are **men and institutions that control attractive but evil things** that may challenge and weaken and destroy you. Included in these are beer and other liquors and tobacco. Those

chronologically. David’s bringing the sword into his tent may also be questionable because, as someone who has not been a member of the army, he would have no tent. Some scholars, influenced by the fact that Goliath’s sword later appears in the sanctuary at Nob, have proposed reading here “in the tent of the LORD.” Alter, p. 250.

²⁹ **It is at this point that the evident contradiction between the two stories of David’s debut is most striking.** If David had been attending Saul in court as his personal music therapist, with Saul having explicitly sent a communication to Jesse regarding David’s entering his service, how could he, and Abner as well, now be ignorant of David’s identity? Efforts to harmonize the two stories in terms of the logic of later conventions of realism seem unconvincing (for example, amnesia has been proposed as a symptom of Saul’s mental illness, and Abner pretends not to recognize David in deference to the ailing king). **The prevalent scholarly view that chapters 16 and 17 represent two different traditions about David’s beginnings is persuasive.** (To complicate matters, most scholars detect two different strands in chapter 17.) What we need to ask, however, is why the redactor set these two stories in immediate sequence, despite the contradictions that must have been as evident to him as to us. A reasonable conclusion is that for the ancient audience, and for the redactor, these contradictions would have been inconsequential in comparison with the advantage gained in providing a double perspective on David. In the Greek tradition, there were competing versions of the same myths, but never in a single text. Modern Western narrative generally insists on verisimilar consistency. In the Bible, however, the variants of a single story are sometimes placed in a kind of implicit dialogue with one another (compare the two accounts of creation at the beginning of Genesis).

who market these products would **like to enslave you into their use**. There are **drugs** of various kinds which, I am told, are relatively easy to obtain in many high schools. For those who peddle them, this is a multimillion-dollar industry, a giant web of evil. There is **pornography**, seductive and interesting and inviting. It has become a giant industry, producing magazines, films, and other materials designed to take your money and lead you toward activities that would destroy you.

The giants who are behind these efforts are formidable and skillful. They have gained vast experience in the war they are carrying on. They would like to ensnare you.

It is almost impossible to entirely avoid exposure to their products. You see these materials on all sides. But you need not fear if you have the slingshot of truth in your hands. You have been counseled and taught and advised. You have the stones of virtue and honor and integrity to use against these enemies who would like to conquer you. Insofar as you are concerned, you can hit them “between the eyes,” to use a figurative expression. You can triumph over them by disciplining yourselves to avoid them. You can say to the whole lot of them as David said to Goliath, “Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.”

Victory will be yours. There is not a boy within the sound of my voice who needs to succumb to any of these forces. You hold the priesthood of God. **You are a son of God.** You have His power within you to sustain you. **You have the right to ministering angels about you to protect you.** Do not let Goliath frighten you. Stand your ground and hold your place, and you will be triumphant. As the years pass, you will look back with satisfaction upon the battles you have won in your individual lives. When temptation comes your way, name that boastful, deceitful giant “Goliath!” and do with him as David did to the Philistine of Gath. God bless each of you, I humbly pray. (Gordon B. Hinckley, “[Overpowering the Goliaths in Our Lives](#),” *Ensign*, May 1983.)

1 Samuel 18

1. Jonathan, the son of Saul, loved David (1 Sam. 18:1-4).³⁰
2. Michal מִיכָל, Saul’s daughter, loved David (1 Sam. 18:20).³¹

³⁰ Aristotle said once that friendship is a single soul dwelling in two bodies. No definition of friendship could better describe the relationship of David and Jonathan in the Old Testament. Jonathan, the son of King Saul, was a valiant soldier in his own right and a worthy young prince in Israel. But when David came onto the scene fresh from his mighty victory over Goliath, having already been anointed by the prophet Samuel, it was he, not Jonathan, who would be successor to the increasingly disobedient Saul. To a lesser man—or a lesser friend—than Jonathan, David would have been a terrible threat, a natural rival. But he wasn’t. We don’t know that Jonathan expected to succeed his father as king, but he certainly could have foreseen that possibility. What we do know is that “the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul” (1 Sam. 18:1). So great was their devotion to one another that they “made a covenant” of loyalty. As a symbolic token of his devotion to the newly anointed king, Jonathan stripped himself of the princely robe he wore “and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle” (1 Sam. 18:4). Jeffrey R. Holland, “[Real Friendship](#),” *New Era*, June 1998.

³¹ Michal is the only woman in all biblical narrative of whom it is said that she loves a man (see also 1 Sam. 18:28). *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 597.

3. The jealousy of Saul (1 Sam. 18.6-30).³² David, who after his victory over Goliath is successful in all his undertakings and loved by everyone, including the king's son and daughter, arouses the jealousy and enmity of Saul, who schemes to get rid of his (supposed) rival, but his attempts all fail. Three times the narrative states that David is successful (verses 5, 14, 30), and three times that Saul fears David because the LORD is with him (verses 12, 14-15, 28-29). The narrative makes Saul completely transparent by repeatedly and explicitly disclosing his feelings and motives.³³
 - a. Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands! (1 Sam. 18.8).
 - b. When given the opportunity to marry the king's daughter, David says "Who am I? And what is my life... that I should be son in law to the king?" (1 Sam. 18.18).³⁴
4. Saul tells David he can have Michal for wife if he kills 100 Philistines and brings back proof of death (1 Sam. 18.21-25).³⁵
5. David kills 200 Philistines, thus doubling the bride price - and marries Michal (1 Sam. 18.27-29), thus becoming the son-in-law of King Saul, who is jealously trying to find ways to kill David, who just won't die.

1 Samuel 19-31

1. Saul tells his servants and Jonathan to kill David (1 Sam. 19.1). Multiple times, David's life is threatened by Saul and David escapes (1 Sam. 19.1-24).
2. Jonathan's friendship for David. (1 Sam. 20.1-42). The story demonstrates Jonathan's profound friendship for David, in spite of his knowledge that David's success will be at his expense. The narrative consists of four parts. The first part, in Jonathan's house, and the second part, in the open, deal with planning; the third part, in Saul's house, and the fourth, in the open again, tell of the execution of the plans. Like the previous narrative, **it shows Saul being deceived by a member of his own family.**³⁶
3. David gets assistance from Ahimelech the priest (1 Sam. 21.1-15).³⁷
 - a. The sword of Goliath was kept at the sanctuary (at Nob³⁸) as a trophy (1 Sam. 21.9).³⁹

³² Saul became an enemy to David through pride. He was jealous because the crowds of Israelite women were singing that "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." (1 Sam. 18:6-8.) The proud stand more in fear of men's judgment than of God's judgment. (See D&C 3:6-7; D&C 30:1-2; D&C 60:2.) "What will men think of me?" weighs heavier than "What will God think of me?" President Ezra Taft Benson, "[Beware of Pride](#)," *Ensign*, May 1989.

³³ *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 596.

³⁴ David's protestation of unworthiness recalls Saul's when Samuel hinted he was going to confer the kingship on him. Perhaps these words are dictated by court etiquette, the commoner obliged to profess unworthiness when offered the honor of a royal connection. Perhaps the young David may actually feel unworthy of the honor. But it is also clearly in his interest to conceal from the jealous king any desire he may harbor to marry the king's daughter, for such an alliance could be converted into an implicit claim to be successor to the throne. Alter, p. 254.

³⁵ Beyond this story, there is no indication that the Israelites had a custom of collecting the foreskins of the uncircumcised Philistines like scalps. Alter, p. 255.

³⁶ *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 599.

³⁷ Ahimelech was the great-grandson of Eli (see 14.3).

³⁸ 1 Samuel 22.9

³⁹ This has a connection to the sword of Laban as part of the items passed down among the Nephite kings, along with the urim and Thummim, the Liahona, the plate of brass and other records, and the breastplate. The Nephite

- b. Escaping from Saul's henchmen, David disguises himself, feigning madness (1 Sam. 21.13-15).
4. Saul kills the priests who helped David escape, as well as the inhabitants of Nob (1 Sam. 22.9-19).⁴⁰
5. David has opportunity to kill Saul in the cave, but does not (1 Sam. 24.1-22).
6. Samuel dies, David clashes with foolish Nabal, but Nabal is saved by his wife Abigail (1 Sam. 25.1-44).
 - a. David's servants ask Nabal for assistance (1 Sam. 25.8).
 - b. Nabal says "Who is David?" (1 Sam. 25.10). This reply expresses contempt for David.
 - c. David is determined to kill Nabal, with girding his sword, mentioned three times in 1 Sam. 25.13.
 - d. Abigail saves Nabal's life, bringing food and drink to David's men, and expressing the fact that Nabal is a fool, "for as his name is, so is he" (1 Sam. 25.18-25).⁴¹
 - e. Abigail's speech eloquently prevents much suffering (1 Sam. 25.24-31).⁴²
 - f. David blesses Abigail (v. 22-24), a feast is held in Nabal's house, whereby Abigail tells Nabal that she helped David (v. 37), and Nabal dies (v. 38). After Nabal's death, David proposes marriage to Abigail, and the two are wedded (1 Sam. 25.39-42).
7. David has another opportunity to kill Saul but does not (1 Sam. 26.1-25).⁴³
8. David comes again to the Philistine king (1 Sam. 27.1-12). He stays with Achish at Gath as his vassal (1 Sam. 27.3).

articles of kingship paralleled in many ways the articles of the Ark of the Covenant in the Hebrew Bible. See: [The Nephite Ark](#).

⁴⁰ These priests are all killed by Doeg the Edomite, because Saul's Israelite servants would not obey this order (1 Sam. 22.17).

⁴¹ נָבָל Nabal means "fool."

⁴² Abigail alights from her donkey and prostrates herself before David. In her long, eloquent speech (vv. 24–31)—repeatedly addressing David as "lord" and herself as "maidservant"—she appeals to him to shed no blood. She promises that, if he restrains himself from bloodguilt, then God will dispatch David's enemies (v. 29), alluding to the death of Nabal, and perhaps to Saul's as well. She further portends that God will establish a "sure house" for David (v. 28), foreshadowing Nathan's prophecy of an everlasting dynasty for the king (2 Samuel 7). She ends her speech with a hint: "when the LORD has dealt well with my lord, then remember your handmaid" (2 Sam 25:31). David then praises her good sense and expresses gratitude that she restrained him from bloodshed, uttering an oath to counter the prior violent one (v. 34). As in the encounters with King Saul that frame this story (chs. 24 and 26), David's restraint from slaying his rival demonstrates his worthiness of kingship. Yet it also anticipates his darker side, when David does not restrain himself from adultery and murder in the story of Bathsheba and Uriah (2 Samuel 11–12). His folly there does become the "cause of grief and pangs of conscience for having shed blood without cause" (v. 31). Based on her prescience, the Talmud identifies Abigail as one of the seven female prophets in the Hebrew Bible (b. Megillah 15a). In the late Midrash Abigail is listed among the twenty-three truly upright and righteous women who came forth from Israel (*Midrash Tadshe, Ozar ha-Midrashim* [Eisenstein], p. 474). More likely, she is keenly perceptive about the shifting tides of history. [Jewish Women's Archive, Abigail](#). Accessed 5.10.2022.

⁴³ The present story is similar to the one in chapter 24. In both, David has the opportunity to kill Saul, but though urged by his men to do so, he refuses to harm the LORD's anointed. Instead, he takes one object from him to prove that he could have killed him, and when Saul sees this, he expresses regret at having persecuted David. In addition, there are verbal similarities (e.g., the simile in 24.15 and 26.20, and the question in 24.17 and 26.17). It seems that two variants of the same story have been included in the book—probably because of the differences between them. *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 611.

9. Saul seeks Samuel, and to do so, he goes to the **Witch of Endor**⁴⁴ for counsel on communing with the deceased prophet (1 Sam. 28.1-25).⁴⁵
- a. Saul asks, “what do you see?” She answers, “I saw gods ascending out of the earth” (1 Sam. 28.13). ותאמר האשה אל-שאול אלהים ראיתי עליהם מן-הארץ. “And the woman said to Saul, *elohim* I saw **ascending from the earth**.” (1 Sam. 28.13b, my translation).⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Joseph Smith gave a discourse of the importance of discerning spirits. Part of his discourse read as follows: “Recent occurrences that have transpired amongst us render it **an imperative duty** devolving upon me to say something in relation to the spirits by which men are actuated. It is evident from the Apostles' writings, that **many false spirits existed in their day**, and had “gone forth into the world,” and that it needed intelligence which God alone could impart to detect false spirits, and to prove what spirits were of God. The world in general have been grossly ignorant in regard to this one thing, and why should they be otherwise—“for no man knows the things of God, but by the Spirit of God.” The Egyptians were not able to discover the difference between the miracles of Moses and those of the magicians until they came to be tested together; and if Moses had not appeared in their midst, they would unquestionably have thought that the miracles of the magicians were performed through the mighty power of God, for they were great miracles that were performed by them—a supernatural agency was developed, and great power manifested. The witch of Endor is a no less singular personage; clothed with a powerful agency she raised the Prophet Samuel from his grave, and he appeared before the astonished king, and revealed unto him his future destiny. Who is to tell whether this woman is of God, and a righteous woman—or whether the power she possessed was of the devil, and she a witch as represented by the Bible? It is easy for us to say now, but if we had lived in her day, which of us could have unravelled the mystery? It would have been equally as difficult for us to tell by what spirit the Apostles prophesied, or by what power the Apostles spoke and worked miracles. Who could have told whether the power of Simon, the sorcerer, was of God, or of the devil?... As we have noticed before, **the great difficulty lies in the ignorance of the nature of spirits**, of the laws by which they are governed, and the signs by which they may be known; if **it requires the Spirit of God to know the things of God**; and the spirit of the devil can only be unmasked through that medium, then it follows as a natural consequence that unless some person or persons have a communication, or revelation from God, unfolding to them the operation of the spirit, they must eternally remain ignorant of these principles; for **I contend that if one man cannot understand these things but by the Spirit of God, ten thousand men cannot**; it is alike out of the reach of the wisdom of the learned, the tongue of the eloquent, the power of the mighty. Joseph Smith, *Discourses of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, Deseret Book, 1977, chapter 8, “Some Manifestations of Evil Spirits.”

⁴⁵ Footnote 14a states, “This cannot be a bona fide vision from God, brought about by a spiritualist medium. See verse 15. Its effect was to destroy all hope. See verse 20; 31.1-4. Robert Alter translates אשת בעלת-אוב as “a ghostwife,” while JPS translates it as “a woman who consults ghosts” (1 Sam. 28.7). *Ba-ala-ov* seems to relate to the idea of a mistress who babbles the father’s name, or as from the sound of a wine-skin. Other scholars see this word as related to the Hittite expression *api*, which means “both the one buried and enclosed in the earth,” while others see אוב as a “conjuring pit,” while other scholars see this word as related to *ab*, meaning “father or ancestor” (Kent, p. 144). This “ghostwife” is likely related to Canaanite practices that existed at this time, and is connected to Canaanite ritual. See: Grenville J. R. Kent, [“Call up Samuel: Who appeared to the Witch at En-dor? \(1 Samuel 28.3-25\)” Andrews University Seminary Studies, Vol. 52, No. 2, 141-160](#). Kent argues, “En-Dor probably still had a Canaanite population in Saul’s time. Manasseh took En-Dor during the occupation, but failed to drive out the inhabitants of the land (Josh 17:11-12), and Hutter argues that the place name En-Dor came from *enna durenna*, the Hittite term for the gods. Collins notes, “The Hittites maintained an active line of communication with the deities who lived beneath the earth in order to retain their goodwill.” She compares the En-Dor story to a Hittite ritual where the “ritual specialist” makes figurines of the underworld gods, opens a pit in the ground into which honey, wine and other libations are poured and money is thrown, and conjures the spirit. Such rituals typically included sacrificing an animal over the pit as well.”

⁴⁶ *A god do I see rising up from the earth*. The Hebrew balances **precariously on a linguistic ambiguity** that has no happy English equivalent. The word for “god” here is *’elohim*, which when treated grammatically as a singular (it has a plural ending) usually means God. In the plural, it often refers to “gods” in the polytheistic sense. It also occasionally means “angel” or “divine being,” and some have argued, unconvincingly, that it sometimes means “judge.” A further complication here is that the ghostwife uses *’elohim* with a plural participle (and hence the King

- b. Samuel's ghost arrives, and Saul asks "what does he look like?" (1 Sam. 28.14). Apparently the women could see the ghost of Samuel, whereas Saul could only hear him.⁴⁷
 - c. "Why have you disturbed me, and brought me up?" asks Samuel (1 Sam. 28.15).
 - d. Samuel tells Saul that the kingdom will be taken from him and given to David (1 Sam. 28.17).
 - e. He tells him "The Lord will also deliver Israel in the hand of the Philistines" (1 Sam. 28.19).
 - f. How to view this passage?
 - i. A clash of worldviews.⁴⁸
 - ii. The woman conjured up a demon.⁴⁹
10. Saul heads off to war, to his death (1 Sam. 29-31).
- a. The Philistine princes dismiss David from service in their war against Israel (1 Sam. 29).
 - i. The Philistines camp at Aphek (1 Sam. 29.1)⁵⁰
 - ii. The princes of the Philistines object to David's presence in their attack (1 Sam. 29.3).⁵¹
 - b. The Sacking and recovery of Ziklag, David's temporary home among the Philistines (1 Sam. 30).
 - i. David, far from the battlefield where Saul will die, comes to Ziklag, a town that King Achish had given to David as a base for his operations. When he arrives in his town, he finds that the Amalekites had overrun it in his absence, sacked it, taken many prisoners, including David's wives Abigail and Ahinoam (1 Sam. 30.1-5).

James Version renders it as "gods"). It seems likely that the grammatical crossover we have just reviewed **encouraged a fluidity of usage** in which the plural might sometimes be employed with a singular sense, even when the referent was not the one God. In the immediately following question and response between Saul and the woman, it is presupposed that she has seen only one male figure, and the narrator has already told us she has seen Samuel. When she says she sees *'elohim* rising up, she probably means an imposing figure like unto a god or an angel, or perhaps she is using it as a term for "spirit." Alter, p. 295.

⁴⁷ The appearance of Samuel's ghost is considered to be real-not trickery by the woman or imagination of Saul. The Bible believes in the possibility of sorcery, soothsaying and necromancy, but prohibits them as heathen practices (Deut. 18.9-14). *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 614.

⁴⁸ This scene depicts a clash of worldviews—that of orthodox Yahwism and of the Canaanite paradigm of life after death. The woman should not be expected to express an "Old Testament" or "biblical" worldview, or to speak for the writer of Samuel. Kent, p. 145.

⁴⁹ One group of interpreters saw the figure as a demonic impersonator giving a false prophecy calculated to deceive and destroy Saul. For example, Tertullian thought the apparition was a demon, applying the apostolic warning about Satan masquerading as an angel of light and his servants as servants of righteousness (2 Cor 11:14-15). Many commentators in this group argued that it was "impossible for a holy prophet to be disturbed and raised from the dead by necromantic rituals. Kent, p. 142.

⁵⁰ Aphek is roughly forty miles south of Jezreel, not far from Philistine territory, and would have served as a [general staging ground](#). The Philistine army then advances northward to camp at Shunem (28:4), just opposite Saul's forces at the spring of Jezreel and near Mount Gilboa.

⁵¹ These are the military commanders, *sarim*, and they should not be thought of as synonymous with the overlords (*seranim*) of the five Philistine cities. It is the military men who, understandably, fear a serious security risk in the presence of a Hebrew contingent in their ranks. Alter, p. 298.

- ii. Many of the troops of the Philistines with David were also considering killing David (1 Sam. 30.6).
 - iii. David takes the ephod, and inquires whether he should pursue his foes and retrieve his people (1 Sam. 30.8).⁵²
 - iv. David finds an Egyptian boy, a servant of the armies of Amalek. The young boy takes David's forces to where the Amalekites are, reveling in their spoils of military victory. David defeats them and rescues the prisoners taken from Ziklag (1 Sam. 30.9-20). He then even shares in the spoils with the elders of Judah as well as the men who did not accompany him on his raid of the Amalekites (1 Sam. 30.21-31).⁵³
- c. The death of Saul (1 Sam. 31).
- i. Saul, who was anointed king in order to liberate Israel from the Philistines (9.16), dies while being defeated by the Philistines. Not only did he fail in liberating Israel, but at his death the Philistines gained domination over most of the country. Saul's career began with the rescue of Jabesh-gilead (chapter 11), and it ended with the men of Jabesh-gilead rescuing his dead body.⁵⁴
 - ii. The Philistines slew Jonathan and two more of Saul's sons in [Mount Gilboah](#) (1 Sam. 31.2).
 - iii. Saul, hit by an archer's arrow, requests one of his men to kill him with a sword (1 Sam. 31.2-6).
 - iv. Saul's dead body is desecrated by the Philistines (1 Sam. 31.9).⁵⁵
 - v. Men of Jabesh-gilead, perhaps as a repayment for Saul's rescue of their village in the past, come and recover Saul's desecrated body and give him funeral rites (1 Sam. 31.9-13).

⁵² In contrast to Saul (28.6), the Lord answers David, telling him that he will surely overtake and rescue (these verbs are emphasized in the Hebrew). *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 616.

⁵³ David sends parts of the spoil to the elders of Judah, to express his gratitude for their help when he roamed through their territory, and to gain their support in the future. All places mentioned were situated in the area of Hebron and Beer-sheba. *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 617.

⁵⁴ *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 618.

⁵⁵ Saul's successor, David, had marked his entry on the scene by cutting off the head of a Philistine; now they cut off Saul's head. The stripping of the armor—and the all-purpose Hebrew *kelim* could also include his clothing—is the final divestment of Saul, who is stripped before the prophets, stripped of his royal garments at Ein-Dor, and now lies naked on the battlefield in ultimate defeat... Throughout the ancient Mediterranean world, there was a horror about leaving a corpse unburied (compare, for example, the potency of this question in Sophocles' *Antigone*). Saul's corpse, moreover, is disfigured through decapitation. Beth-Shan (or, Beth-She'an) is a town about eleven miles to the southwest of Mount Gilboa, near the Jordan. Alter, p. 305-306.