

1 Samuel 17-18; 24-26; 2 Samuel 5-7 Podcast Quotes and Notes

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).¹
2. Saul gathered 200,000 footmen and 10,000 came from Judah (1 Sam. 15.4)²
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).³
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).⁴
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).⁵
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).

¹ 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.

² אֶלֶף *eleph*, translated as “thousand,” has some ambiguity here, thus **opening up the possibility for a much lower number.**

³ 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...”

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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.

10. Samuel makes an offering to the Lord in Bethlehem (1 Sam. 16.2-5).⁶
11. Look not on the outward appearance! (1 Sam. 16.7).⁷ David is chosen and anointed as king (1 Sam. 16.8-13).
12. An evil spirit troubles Saul (1 Sam. 16.14).⁸ 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 17.⁹
 - a. “The champion” = “The man between” (1 Sam. 17.4).¹⁰
 - b. Goliath of Gath: six cubits and a span (1 Sam. 17.4).¹¹
 - c. A helmet of brass, a coat of mail weighing 130 pounds¹², greaves of brass, a target of brass between his shoulders, a spear of iron weighing 15 pounds (1 Sam. 17.5-7).¹³

⁶ 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.

⁷ 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.

⁸ Note the JST change to verse 14, 15, and 16: “which was not of the Lord...”

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ **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 אֶת-הַיָּמִינִים “And there went out the man between” (1 Sam. 17.4). Goliath is *ha-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.”

¹¹ 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.

¹² 5,000 shekels = about 130 pounds. The Jewish Study Bible, p. 593.

¹³ 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

- d. Some scholars have argued that Goliath's gear demonstrates a later telling of the story,¹⁴ 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.¹⁵
- 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).¹⁶
 - iii. He smites off Goliath's head (1 Sam. 17.51), and brought it to Jerusalem (v. 54).¹⁷
- h. Saul asks, "who is this fella?" (1 Sam. 17.55-56).¹⁸

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.

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ 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 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.

¹⁸ **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

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 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

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).

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).¹⁹
2. Michal מִיכָל, Saul’s daughter, loved David (1 Sam. 18.20).²⁰
3. The jealousy of Saul (1 Sam. 18.6-30).²¹ 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.²²
 - a. Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands! (1 Sam. 18.8).

¹⁹ 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.

²⁰ 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.

²¹ 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.

²² *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 596.

- 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).²³
- 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).²⁴
- 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.**²⁵
3. David gets assistance from Ahimelech the priest (1 Sam. 21.1-15).²⁶
 - a. The sword of Goliath was kept at the sanctuary (at Nob²⁷) as a trophy (1 Sam. 21.9).²⁸
 - 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).²⁹
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.

²³ 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.

²⁴ 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.

²⁵ *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 599.

²⁶ Ahimelech was the great-grandson of Eli (see 14.3).

²⁷ 1 Samuel 22.9

²⁸ 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 articles of kingship paralleled in many ways the articles of the Ark of the Covenant in the Hebrew Bible. See: [The Nephite Ark](#).

²⁹ These priests are all killed by Doeg the Edomite, because Saul's Israelite servants would not obey this order (1 Sam. 22.17).

- 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).³⁰
 - e. Abigail's speech eloquently prevents much suffering (1 Sam. 25.24-31).³¹
 - 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).³²
 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).

³⁰ נָבָל Nabal means "fool."

³¹ 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.

³² 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**³³ for counsel on communing with the deceased prophet (1 Sam. 28.1-25).³⁴
- a. Saul asks, “what do you see?” She answers, “I saw gods ascending out of the earth” (1 Sam. 28.13). וַתֹּאמֶר הָאִשָּׁה אֶל-שָׂאוּל אֱלֹהִים רָאִיתִי עֹלִים מִן-הָאָרֶץ. “And the woman said to Saul, *elohim* I saw **ascending from the earth**.” (1 Sam. 28.13b, my translation).³⁵

³³ 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.”

³⁴ 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 אִשָּׁת בַּעֲלֵת-אֹב 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 אֹב 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.”

³⁵ *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.³⁶
 - 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.³⁷
 - ii. The woman conjured up a demon.³⁸
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)³⁹
 - ii. The princes of the Philistines object to David's presence in their attack (1 Sam. 29.3).⁴⁰
 - 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.

³⁶ 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.

³⁷ 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.

³⁸ 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.

³⁹ 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.

⁴⁰ 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).⁴¹
 - 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).⁴²
- 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.⁴³
 - 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).⁴⁴
 - 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).

2 Samuel

The two books of Samuel are actually one work. The reign of King David is the subject of 2 Samuel which is **composed of three parts**. The first part (1.1-8.18) tells of David's rise to power, the second (8.19-20.26) of his sin and the ensuing troubles in his family, and the third (chapters 21-24) is an appendix consisting of miscellaneous materials. Both the first and the second part end with a list of David's chief officials (8.16-18; 20.23-26). David is highly successful in his career. He conquers Jerusalem, makes it his administrative and religious center, liberates Israel definitively from Philistine domination, and even

⁴¹ 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.

⁴² 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.

⁴³ *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 618.

⁴⁴ 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.

creates an empire. In his personal life, however, he makes serious mistakes, and consequently has to undergo great sufferings.⁴⁵

2 Samuel 1-4: Civil War Between Israel and Judah

1. Message of Saul's death (2 Sam. 1.1-16). An Amalekite informs David that he finished off Saul at his request (2 Sam. 1.9).⁴⁶
2. David mourns the loss of Saul, and kills the Amalekite messenger who told him of Saul's death (2 Sam. 1.10-16).
3. David's funeral song (2 Sam. 1.17-27).
4. David is anointed king over the house of Judah (2 Sam. 2.1-11).
 - a. David "inquired of the Lord" (2 Sam. 2.1) probably means that he used the ephod, which contained the Urim and Thummim (1 Sam. 14.42; 23.6, 11).
 - b. David takes his two wives Abigail and Ahinoam up to Hebron (2 Sam. 2.1-2).
5. Ish-bosheth, son of Saul, is made king over all Israel (2 Sam. 2.8-9).
 - a. Ish-bosheth first reigns over Gilead, then gradually extends his rule to the west and the south, and in the last two years rules over all Israel (except Judah). Ashurites, probably Asherites (members of the tribe of Asher).
 - b. Civil war between David and Ish-bosheth's forces (2 Sam. 2.12-32).
 - i. "Let them play before us" = engage in single combat, 12 versus 12 (2 Sam. 2.14).
 - ii. Since not one person triumphed, a battle between forces ensues (2 Sam. 2.17).
 - iii. Abner, Ish-bosheth's military leader, is pursued by Joab (David's military leader) and his forces (2 Sam. 2.24-32).
 - iv. Asahel, killed by Abner, is buried (2 Sam. 2.32).⁴⁷
6. War between David and Saul's son Ish-bosheth continues (2 Sam. 3.1).
7. David's household increases, six wives are now mentioned, with the (probably) oldest sons from each marital union. Wives listed: Ahinoam, Abigail, Maacah, Haggith, Abital, Eglah (2 Sam. 3.2-5).
8. The story of Abner's death (2 Sam. 3.6-39). Abner, war chief of David's enemy, is killed.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, *The Jewish Study Bible*, Oxford University Press, 2014, p. 619.

⁴⁶ This narrative reports David's reaction to the message of Saul's death. The account of Saul's death here disagrees with the account in 1 Sam. 31. There it was told that Saul, after begging his arms-bearer to kill him, committed suicide by falling on his sword; here, that Saul, after requesting an unknown Amalekite to kill him, died by the hand of that Amalekite. Some scholars explain the discrepancy by assuming two different sources; others contend that the Amalekite lied (to find favor with David). It is quite possible, however, that the two accounts complement each other. The Amalekite does not say that he killed Saul, but that he finished him off (v. 10). Perhaps Saul, close to death after falling upon his sword, begged the Amalekite to finish him off (regarding the statement in 31.6 that Saul died, cf. 1 Sam. 17.50-51). According to this interpretation, Saul, who failed to kill all the Amalekites and particularly their king (1 Sam. 15), is now dispatched himself by an Amalekite. David, at any rate, believes the Amalekite, who brings Saul's crown and armband as evidence. **The Amalekite expects to be rewarded by David for liquidating his enemy, but David puts him to death, and mourns over Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam. 1.15).** *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 619.

⁴⁷ Lying unburied on the battlefield and being a prey to the wild animals was the greatest horror that a warrior could face (cf. 1 Sam. 17-44, 46). Especially great value was attached to burial in one's father's tomb. *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 622. See also: Homer, *The Iliad, Book 1, lines 1-16*.

⁴⁸ The first part of the narrative deals with Abner's efforts to transfer rule over Israel from Ish-bosheth to David; the second part is concerned with Abner's death. Thus **Both parts aim at proving that Abner's murder was not by**

- a. David demands Michal back, as she is his wife, and he paid the bride-price for her (2 Sam. 3.14).
 - i. David receives Michal back (2 Sam. 3.15) from Phaltiel, who was given her by Saul in 1 Sam.25.44.
 - b. Abner and David have a feast, make an agreement, and David promises Abner safety. Unbeknownst to David, Joab, David's military leader, kills Abner (2 Sam. 3.17-27).
 - c. David declares that Joab is responsible for the death of Abner, they rend their clothing, wear sackcloth, and mourn the loss of Abner (2 Sam. 28-39).
9. Ish-bosheth is slain (2 Sam. 4.1-12).
- a. Similar to Abner's death, David is exonerated from any wrongdoing here in the case of the death of Ish-bosheth. The way is now clear for David's ascendancy to the throne as leader of all of Israel. Some scholars see these deaths as part of a court history that was constructed at the time of David, to clear him from any wrong doing. These scholars assert that it is more likely that David commanded his underlings to commit these murders to open the way for his ascendancy to the throne.⁴⁹
 - b. David kills and mutilates the dead bodies of the two men who assassinated his rival, and then honors the dead body of his rival with a proper burial (2 Sam. 4.9-12).

2 Samuel 5-7: David's Kingship

1. All Israel assembles at Hebron to celebrate David's authority as king (2 Sam. 5.1-5).
 - a. He is 30 when he is made king (2 Sam. 5.4), and reigned "forty years."
2. King David takes Jerusalem from the Jebusites (2 Sam. 5.6-10).
 - a. David occupied the stronghold and renamed it the City of David. Here David makes Jerusalem his capital, probably because of its central location between Judah and Israel, and because it was a neutral territory.⁵⁰
3. David increases his household, Hiram of Tyre sends cedars to "build David a house," and the Philistines spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim (2 Sam. 5.11-19).

the king's will (v. 37). the first part stresses (three times) that Abner, after being honorably received by David, went away unharmed; the second part, that David intensely mourned Abner's death. Abner's death was disadvantageous to David, because Abner was in the course of making him king over all Israel, whereas it benefitted Joab, who feared that Abner might take his place. *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 623.

⁴⁹ Joel Baden, *The Historical David*, HarperOne, 2013, p. 136-137. Baruch Halpern, *David's Secret Demons*, Eerdmans, 2001, 26-31. Halpern writes, "Again, here David is the beneficiary of an assassination, of his chief rival, and again by killers who assume that he will reward their action. Instead, he rejects the tactic of regicide, and avenges and mourns his foe... Once in the case of Saul, twice in the civil war, his allies or subordinates act on his behalf, outside the law. He remains inactive in the case of his subordinates, who were, as he himself, was, in the wilderness." Halpern, p. 31.

⁵⁰ *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 627. James Kugel writes, "**In every respect this was a brilliant move.** To begin with, Jerusalem, while not altogether a natural fortress, nevertheless offered a number of strategic advantages. The terrain around it was rugged and not easy for an enemy to negotiate. **Armies attacking from below had a steep climb in front of them; defenders of the city could shoot down on them with ease.** What is more, Jerusalem had its own water supply gushing within the city walls—an important advantage in the case of a prolonged siege... But the **biggest advantage Jerusalem offered David was its location.** Not far from his hometown of Bethlehem, it was nonetheless perched on the border between Judah and the northern tribes. **Making it his capital was thus a clear statement: this town, and my whole administration, belong neither to the north or the south, but to both.** Kugel, *How to Read the Bible*, p. 748-9/1366 electronic version.

- a. The Philistines, coming from the Pentapolis, or the five city-states of Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron, Gath, and Gaza, spread out in the valley west of Jerusalem and east of Gezer.
4. David pushes the Philistines back (2 Sam. 5.20-25).
5. David takes the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6.1-23).
 - a. Uzzah “steadies the ark” (2 Sam. 6.6-8).⁵¹
 - i. “The threshing-floor of Nacon” (2 Sam. 6.6).⁵²

⁵¹ Much has been said on this topic. I (Mike Day) see this as a scribal insertion, working to explain authority, the power of God, and as a polemic against those who the scribal author sees as enemies or threats to authority of his day. Brigham Young said this about the text: Let the Kingdom alone, the Lord steadies the ark; and if it does jostle, and appear to need steadying, if the way is a little sideling sometimes, and to all appearance threatens its overthrow, be careful how you stretch forth your hand to steady it; let us not be too officious in meddling with that which does not concern us; let it alone, it is the Lord’s work. Brigham Young, *Discourses of Brigham Young*, p.66. For more on this topic, see: Mike Day, [2 Samuel 6: Steadying the Ark](#).

⁵² Much of this idea, of the threshingfloor, is tied to the “foundation stone” mentioned in several places in the scriptures. One place where this is discussed is in Isaiah 28. We read that the Lord will “lay in Zion” a “foundation stone, a tried stone, (*eben bohan*) a precious corner stone (*pinnat yiqrat*), a sure foundation (*musad mussad*)” (Isaiah 28.16). I see this as a reference to many things: **Christ, the sure foundation**, the tried and perfect corner stone (see Helaman 5.12, Ps. 71.3, Matt 7.24-27). It can also refer to **the rock of revelation**, the stone, the **foundation stone in the in Holy of Holies**, our approaching towards God to receive light and truth. This stone is also connected with the temple and the holy of holies. Because of corrupt leadership amongst those that were the guardians of the tradition of the temple, God will place a stone among them, a reference to an established restoration that is sure, like unto a sure foundation (see D&C 1). **This stone is found in many sources**. For example, According to tradition, this is the *Even Shetiya* the foundation or stone of creation. The Zohar states “The world was not created until God took a stone called *Even haShetiya* and threw it into the depths where it was fixed from above till below, and from it the world expanded. It is the centre point of the world and on this spot stood the Holy of Holies” (Vayechi 1:231). The Talmud also considers this *Even HaShetiya* to be the rock from which the world was created, itself being the first part of the Earth to come into existence ([Tractate Yoma 54b](#) – note the connection to the sacred embrace). **The Talmud goes on to claim that this rock is also where God gathered the earth that was formed into Adam**, and that Adam, Cain, Abel, Noah and King David were to offer sacrifices to God. It is traditionally the rock upon which Abraham bound and sacrificed his son Isaac, and is considered by Muslim tradition to be the rock upon which the Prophet Mohammed’s horse’s hoof trod as he leapt towards the heavens. This was therefore to become the third holiest site for Islam, and is now housed in the Dome of the Rock. This was also the original direction Jews and Muslims prayed until the Muslims later faced Mecca. During the First Temple period, this was the rock upon which the Ark of the Covenant was placed within the holy of holies (Zohar Vayechi 1:231; Midrash Tanchuma AchareiCh.3; Maimonides, Beit HaBechirah 4:1). During the Second Temple period when the Ark of the Covenant was not present, the stone was used by the High Priest who offered up the incense and sprinkled the blood of the sacrifices on it during the Yom Kippur service.

The Roman-Era [Midrash Tanchuma](#) sums up the centrality of and holiness of this site in Judaism:

As the navel is set in the centre of the human body,
so is the land of Israel the navel of the world...

situated in the centre of the world,

and Jerusalem in the centre of the land of Israel,

and the sanctuary in the centre of Jerusalem,

and the holy place in the centre of the sanctuary,

and the ark in the centre of the holy place,

and the Foundation Stone before the holy place,

because from it the world was founded [[Midrash Tanchuma, Kedoshim](#) Ch.10.]

- b. David diverts the Ark to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite for 3 months (2 Sam. 6.9-11).
 - c. David proceeds with the Ark to Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6.12).⁵³ David offers sacrifices (v. 13)⁵⁴, wears the ephod, and “danced before the Lord” (2 Sam. 6.14).
 - d. Michal rebukes David (2 Sam. 6.16-23).⁵⁵
 - i. The text mentions that David “had no child unto the day of her death” (2 Sam. 6.23).⁵⁶
6. David offers to build the temple, Nathan prophesies regarding David’s house (2 Sam. 7).
- a. Nathan tells David, “From the day that I brought the people of Israel out of Egypt to this day I have not dwelt in a house, but have moved about in Tent and Tabernacle” (2 Sam. 7.6).
 - b. King David is given a promised of continued kingship, that his house will be established “forever” (2 Sam.7.12-16). This is part of a collection of ideas that made Israelites assume that Jerusalem would be invulnerable and that the House of David would go on forever.⁵⁷
 - c. David offers to build a house for the Lord (2 Sam. 7.27). We learn in other places why David does not build the temple, for he tells Solomon that he “shed blood abundantly” (1 Chron. 22.8). David, will, however, purchase the threshing-floor of Araunah for 50 shekels of silver, and this will be where the temple will be established (2 Sam. 24.19-25).

⁵³ The moving of the ark to Jerusalem was also a highly symbolic gesture. Although, according to scholars, the idea of a single, exclusive shrine in Jerusalem was still centuries away, moving the ark to Jerusalem certainly put that city on the sacred map, so to speak: **it became a “temple city”—an old idea in the ancient Near East**—a political capital and central shrine. What is more, scholars point out that Gilgal, Bethel, and Shiloh were all within the territory of the powerful northern tribe of Ephraim; this suggests that the ark had been particularly associated with the north, perhaps even serving as a unifying symbol during Saul’s reign. **Moving it to Jerusalem was thus another way for David to assert his intention to be equally a king of all the tribes.** Kugel, *How to Read the Bible*, p. 751/1366 electronic version.

⁵⁴ Note how in this text the king’s sacrifice is allowed, but in the text with Saul’s offering, it was prohibited. See 1 Sam. 13.7-12).

⁵⁵ Tension exists in the story as it is told regarding Michal and David. Honor in Michal’s view consists of external dignified behavior; in David’s view, of devotion to lofty ideas. But Michal’s sarcasm springs from pent-up pain and bitterness. In the past she loved David, helped him to escape, and even deceived her father for his sake (1 Sam. 18.20, 28; 19.11-17). Then Saul gave her to Paltiel, who fervently loved her (2 Sam. 3.15-16). After many years David demanded her back, for utilitarian reasons (see 3-13, 16 n.), and she found herself one of his many wives. There is no hint that David ever loved her. *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 630.

⁵⁶ Due to this breach between the two, there is no possibility of uniting the houses of David and Saul through a child of David and Michal.

⁵⁷ The Nathan oracle (2 Sam. 7.11-17) has been reinterpreted over the course of Israelite history. John Hayes, *The Tradition of Zion’s Inviolability*, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Dec. 1963, Vol. 82, No. 4, p. 420. Kugel writes, “**What Nathan’s oracle essentially promised was that a single dynasty, the house of David, would rule over Israel forever.** Forever is a long time, of course, and things did not turn out that way; but as we shall see, the house of David did rule in Judah for some four centuries, certainly an impressive record.” Kugel, *How to Read the Bible*, p. 752/1366.