

1 Samuel 8-16 Quotes and Notes 2026

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
 - 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. 10.24.¹)
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).²
2. Israelite armies are far outnumbered by Philistine forces 36,000 to 3,000 (1 Sam. 13.2, 5).³
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).

¹ 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.

² 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.

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

- 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*⁴ for plowshares, mattocks, three-pronged forks, and axes, and for setting the goads. Thus on the day of the battle, no sword or spear 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”⁵
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).⁶
3. Saul builds an altar to the Lord (1 Sam. 14.35).⁷
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).

⁴ *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. 226. The King James translation of לְמַחְרֶשֶׁת פִּים לְמַחְרֶשֶׁת reads, “they had a file for the mattocks.” But it can also be translated as “And it was charged a **pim** for the mahārešā (plowshare).”

⁵ וַתִּתֵּי חֲרָדָה בַּמַּחֲנֶה בַשָּׂדֶה וּבְכָל־הָעָם “And there was **fear** in the camp, in the field, and among all the people” 1 Sam. 14.15a, my translation.

⁶ 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.

⁷ Remember that altars probably already exist at Shiloh, and probably Bethel. This could be considered a contradiction to the edict in Deuteronomy 12.

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).⁸
 - 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 15-16

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).⁹
2. Saul gathered 200,000 footmen and 10,000 came from Judah (1 Sam. 15.4)¹⁰
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).

⁸ 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 הַבְּרָה תַּמִּימִים "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 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 εἴπῃς 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)

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ אֶלֶף *eleph*, translated as "thousand," has some ambiguity here, thus **opening up the possibility for a much lower number.**

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).¹¹
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).¹²
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).¹³
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).¹⁴
11. Look not on the outward appearance! (1 Sam. 16.7).¹⁵ David is chosen and anointed as king (1 Sam. 16.8-13).
12. An evil spirit troubles Saul (1 Sam. 16.14).¹⁶ 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).

¹¹ 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..."

¹² 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.

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ 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.

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