

# 1 Chronicles 10 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

CLICK VERSE

To go directly to that verse

[1 Chronicles 10:1](#)

1 Chronicles 10:2

1 Chronicles 10:3

1 Chronicles 10:4

1 Chronicles 10:5

1 Chronicles 10:6

1 Chronicles 10:7

1 Chronicles 10:8

1 Chronicles 10:9

1 Chronicles 10:10

1 Chronicles 10:11

1 Chronicles 10:12

1 Chronicles 10:13

1 Chronicles 10:13

**1 Chronicles 10:1** Now the Philistines fought against Israel; and the men of Israel fled before the Philistines and fell slain on Mount Gilboa.

- **the Philistines fought:** 1Sa 28:1 1Sa 29:1,2 1Sa 31:1,2-13
- **mount:** 1Ch 10:8 1Sa 28:4 31:1 2Sa 1:6,21 21:12

## Related Passages:

1 Samuel 28:1+ Now it came about in those days that the Philistines gathered their armed camps for war, to fight against Israel. And Achish said to David, "Know assuredly that you will go out with me in the camp, you and your men."

1 Samuel 29:1-2+ Now the Philistines gathered together all their armies to Aphek, while the Israelites were camping by the spring which is in Jezreel. 2 And the lords of the Philistines were proceeding on by hundreds and by thousands, and David and his men were proceeding on in the rear with Achish.

1 Samuel 31:1+ Now the Philistines were fighting against Israel, and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines and fell slain on Mount Gilboa.

**Now the Philistines fought against Israel; and the men of Israel fled before the Philistines and fell slain on Mount Gilboa** - In 1Sa 28:4 Israel camped at Mount Gilboa but in 1Sa 31 they are massacred at Mount Gilboa!

[John Barnett](#) - When I read a letter or card I usually start by looking at the end to see who it is from. When I read a book I often look at the end to see whether the hero makes it alive to the end. When I start a biographical study of a person God chose to be included in His Word I always look at the END of their life first. Why is that? Because God said that the way we finish is what counts. It is not how we start the race, but how we finish the race that really matters. That's why Paul triumphantly said, "I have finished the course" (2 Timothy 4:7)!

**1 Chronicles 10:2** The Philistines closely pursued Saul and his sons, and the Philistines struck down Jonathan, Abinadab and Malchi-shua, the sons of Saul.

- **Jonathan:** 1Ch 8:33 9:39 1Sa 14:6,39,40 2Ki 23:29 Isa 57:1,2
- **Abinadab:** 1Sa 14:49

- the sons: Ex 20:5 2Ki 25:7

## PHILISTINES INFLICT FATAL BLOWS ON SAUL'S THREE SONS

The Philistines closely pursued Saul and his sons, and the Philistines struck down Jonathan, Abinadab and Malchi-shua, the sons of Saul - Three of Saul's 4 sons are killed. Only Eshbaal ("man of Baal" - what a godless name for a son!), later named Ish-bosheth ("man of shame"), remained alive and would assume the role of king after his father's death.

1 Chronicles 10:3 The battle became heavy against Saul, and the archers overtook him; and he was wounded by the archers.

- The battle became heavy: 1Sa 31:3-6 2Sa 1:4-10 Am 2:14
- he was: Ge 49:23,24

## ARROW HITS ITS MARK

The battle became heavy against Saul, and the archers overtook him; and he was wounded by the archer- Saul surely had armor on but the armor does not protect every square inch of the body. The Philistine shot the arrow, but the LORD directed it's course. This strike of Saul was not an accidental or chance hit. In God's mind, it was Saul's time to step down from the monarchy "Therefore He (YAHWEH) killed him and turned the kingdom to David the son of Jesse." (1Ch 10:14)

1 Chronicles 10:4 Then Saul said to his armor bearer, "Draw your sword and thrust me through with it, otherwise these uncircumcised will come and abuse me." But his armor bearer would not, for he was greatly afraid. Therefore Saul took his sword and fell on it.

- Draw: Jdg 9:54
- uncircumcised: Jdg 15:18 1Sa 14:6 17:26,36 2Sa 1:20
- abuse Jdg 16:21,23-25
- he was: 1Sa 31:4 2Sa 1:14-16
- Saul took: 1Ch 10:5 2Sa 1:9,10 17:23 1Ki 16:18 Mt 27:4,5 Ac 1:18 16:27

Related Passage:

2 Samuel 1:14-16 Then David said to him (THE AMALEKITE WHO CLAIMED TO HAVE KILLED SAUL) , "How is it you were not afraid to stretch out your hand to destroy the LORD'S anointed?" 15 And David called one of the young men and said, "Go, cut him down." So he struck him and he died. 16 David said to him, "Your blood is on your head, for your mouth has testified against you, saying, 'I have killed the LORD'S anointed (2Sa 1:10).'

## SAUL SEEKS EUTHANASIA

Then Saul said to his armor bearer, "Draw your sword and thrust me through with it, otherwise these uncircumcised will come and abuse me." Notice he says that the Philistines will first kill him and then abuse him, and in fact as the story concludes they did mock him! He could do nothing to prevent this from happening for he was in Sheol (whether on the hot or cool side is the question). The Hebrew abuse me, is translated in the Septuagint with [empaizo](#) meaning to ridicule, make fun of, subject to derision or mock. Even to the end, Saul was focused on self. He was concerned with self-image. It is so sad that we see him cry out to his armor bearer but now cry out to Yahweh, Who Alone could save his soul from eternal punishment (so yes, I think there is very little Scriptural evidence that he was truly repentant and regenerate)!

But his armor bearer would not, for he was greatly afraid. Why was he afraid? We can only surmise but perhaps he had the attitude of David that one should not touch the LORD'S anointed. Compare the fate of the Amalekite who brought news of Saul's

death to King David (2Sa 1:14-16)

**Therefore** (term of conclusion) **Saul took his sword and fell on it** - In other words, Saul attempted and/or committed suicide.

Given the additional information in 2Sa 1:14-16, the question arises as to who killed Saul? Did Saul kill himself or did the Amalekite kill him? Personally I think Saul committed suicide because of the armor bearer's response, which would be something like "I am the one who was supposed to protect his life and I have failed, so I will pay the penalty by taking my life." On the other hand the text says **fell on it** but does not add "and he died," which might leave open the possibility of Saul even botched his suicide attempt. However the parallel text in First Chronicles seems very clear recording "**he likewise fell on his sword and died.**"

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**Walter Kaiser - How Did Saul Die? - [goto page 191 in Hard Sayings of the Bible](#)**

Who is telling the truth? The narrator of 1 Samuel 31 or the Amalekite of 2 Samuel 1:6–10? Or to put the question in another way: Did Saul commit suicide, or was he killed by this Amalekite, as he claimed, at Saul's own request?

Although there have been attempts at harmonizing the two accounts, the effort always seems to fall short of being convincing. For example, as early as the first Christian century, Josephus tried to make the accounts fit each other. Josephus claimed (Antiquities 6, 370–72 [xiv.7]) that after Saul's armor-bearer refused to kill Saul, Saul tried to fall on his own sword, but he was too weak to do so. Saul turned and saw this Amalekite, who, upon the king's request, complied and killed him, having found the king leaning on his sword. Afterward the Amalekite took the king's crown and armband and fled, whereupon Saul's armor-bearer killed himself.

While everything seems to fit in this harmonization, there is one fact that is out of line: the armor-bearer. The armor-bearer was sufficiently convinced of Saul's death to follow his example (1 Sam 31:5). Thus, Josephus's greatest mistake was in trusting the Amalekite. Also, it is most improbable that the Amalekite found Saul leaning on his sword, an unlikely sequel of a botched attempt at suicide.

It is my conclusion that Saul did commit suicide, a violation of the law of God, and that the Amalekite was lying in order to obtain favor with the new administration.

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**Norman Geisler - [goto page 153 in When Critics Ask](#) -**

**1 SAMUEL 31:4 —Was Saul's suicide justifiable?**

**PROBLEM:** King Saul was mortally wounded, and he asked his armor bearer to assist him in committing suicide. Was this justified?

**SOLUTION:** Suicide is murder, and the Bible says, "You shall not murder" (Ex. 20:13). It makes no difference that the life taken is one's own. **All life belongs to God, and He alone has the right to take it** (Deut. 32:39 ; Job 1:21). Even the most desperate believers in the Bible who desired death never considered suicide a morally viable alternative. Rather, recognizing the sovereign hand of God over human life, they prayed like Jonah: "Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live" (Jonah 4:3). Though they wanted God to take it, they never considered it right to take it themselves. Furthermore, with the exception of Samson ([see comments on page 130](#) on Jdg 16:26–27), there are at least five cases of suicide recorded in Scripture, and none of them is approved by God—Abimelech (Jdg 9:50–56 ); Saul (1Sa 31:1–6 ); Zimri ( 1Ki 16:18–19 ); Ahithophel (2Sa 17:23 ); and Judas who betrayed Christ (Mt 27:3–10 ). Each met a tragic death, and none met with divine approval. Suicide is an attack on the image of God in man ( Gen. 1:27 ) and an attempt to usurp God's sovereignty over human life.

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**Norman Geisler - [goto page 153 in When Critics Ask](#) -**

**1 SAMUEL 31 —The report of Saul's death in this passage contradicts that given in the next chapter (2Sa 1 )**

**PROBLEM:** First Samuel 31 says that King Saul committed suicide by falling on his sword, but 2 Samuel 1 records that he was killed by an Amalekite as he was about to lean on his sword.

**SOLUTION:** Some claim that both stories are true, taking the Amalekite's story as supplementary. They claim that Saul attempted suicide, but was not dead when the Amalekite arrived and finished the job. They point to the fact that the Amalekite had Saul's sword and bracelet as evidence that his account was true, as well as the fact that David punished him by death for killing the king. The objections to this view are that it contradicts the statements of 1 Samuel 31 , that "Saul took a sword and fell on it" and that his armorbearer "saw that Saul was dead" (vv. 4–5 ), as well as the inspired record that says "so Saul ... died" (v. 6 ).

Others see the 1 Samuel story as the correct version and the one in 2 Samuel 1 as a true record of the fabrication of the Amalekite who came upon Saul after he died and thought he could gain favor with David by taking credit for the feat. They point to the fact that the story contradicts the record in 1 Samuel 31 , that the Amalekite did not seem to know that Saul died by a sword, not a spear, and

that 1 Chronicles 10 repeats the story as recorded in 1 Samuel, but not the fabrication of the Amalekite. The main objections to this view are that 2 Samuel does not say his story is a lie, and that David killed him for his act. In response, he may have been killed on the basis of his self-confession ( 2 Sam. 1:16 ). And the fact that his story was in contradiction to that in 1 Samuel may have been taken as sufficient evidence that his story was a fabrication.

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[Apologetics Study Bible \(see note\)](#) - The Bible provides three complementary accounts of Saul's receiving mortal wounds leading to his death. According to verse 3, Saul was severely wounded by a Philistine arrow. Then, to avoid being sadistically executed by the vengeance-seeking Philistines (1Sa 17:51; 18:27), Saul fell on his own sword (1Sa 31:4), receiving a second grave wound that in time would have killed him (2Sa 1:9). His armor-bearer, seeing that the king was now dead, then fell upon his sword and perished, as well (1Sa 31:5). Later, an Amalekite—probably on the battlefield to steal personal possessions from the corpses—tried to take credit for dealing Saul's final death blow (2Sa 1:6–10); whether or not he was telling the truth, it was a foolish move on his part. Though this sequence of events as the Bible relates it is complicated, it is certainly plausible.

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**1 Chronicles 10:5 When his armor bearer saw that Saul was dead, he likewise fell on his sword and died.**

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**Related Passage:**

1 Samuel 31:5 When his armor bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his sword and died with him.

## SAUL EXITS VIA SUICIDE

**When his armor bearer saw that Saul was dead, he likewise fell on his sword and died** - While the armor bearer did not check Saul's pulse, the text does say Saul was dead. It does not say Saul appeared to be dead. Therefore it is reasonable to conclude that Saul was dead and the Amalekite who came to David in 2Sa 1:10-16 was lying, apparently in an attempt to curry favor with David, since the Amalekite would have reasoned Saul was David's enemy. As we have note before, not once does David refer to Saul as his enemy in First Samuel (one might make a case for David's use of "enemy" in some of the Psalms [Ps 3:7, 6:10, 9:3, 6, etc] but he had other enemies so that term need not refer to Saul).

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**J D Greear offers three main lessons from "Saul, A Religious (and lost) Man."**

- A. Saul kept up religious practices without ever knowing God.
- B. Saul never learned how to repent.
- C. Saul died the sinner's death.

Greear has a solemn introduction asking "Is it possible to be extremely active in God's church and not really know God at all? For some people this kind of question makes no sense at all. It may not even seem worth asking. How could a person not know God if they are active in God's church? But consider: Is it possible to be married to someone for 40 years and not really love them? Absolutely. Or does walking through a maternity ward automatically make you pregnant? Of course not. Simply being in the vicinity when God is at work is no guarantee of intimacy with Him. In fact, as the Bible demonstrates repeatedly, it is often the religiously active who find it most difficult to know the true God. Some of the most self-deceived people in our society are those who are active in our churches. (See Sermon notes [1 Samuel 28:13-20; 31:1-13 - The Tragedy of Dying Without God - The Search for a King](#))

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them is approved by God—Abimelech (Jdg 9:50–56); Saul (1Sa 31:1–6 ); Zimri ( 1Ki 16:18–19 ); Ahithophel (2Sa 17:23 ); and Judas who betrayed Christ (Mt 27:3–10). Each met a tragic death, and none met with divine approval. Suicide is an attack on the image of God in man (Gen. 1:27 ) and an attempt to usurp God’s sovereignty over human life.

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**QUESTION - [What is the Christian view of suicide? What does the Bible say about suicide?](#) See [accompanying video](#)**

**ANSWER** - The Bible mentions six specific people who committed suicide: Abimelech (Judges 9:54), Saul (1 Samuel 31:4), Saul’s armor-bearer (1 Samuel 31:4–6), [Ahithophel](#) (2 Samuel 17:23), Zimri (1 Kings 16:18), and Judas (Matthew 27:5). Five of these men were noted for their wickedness (the exception is Saul’s armor-bearer—nothing is said of his character). Some consider Samson’s death an instance of suicide, because he knew his actions would lead to his death (Judges 16:26–31), but Samson’s goal was to kill Philistines, not himself.

The Bible views suicide as equal to murder, which is what it is—self-murder. God is the only one who is to decide when and how a person should die. We should say with the psalmist, “My times are in your hands” (Psalm 31:15).

God is the giver of life. He gives, and He takes away (Job 1:21). Suicide, the taking of one’s own life, is ungodly because it rejects God’s gift of life. No man or woman should presume to take God’s authority upon themselves to end his or her own life.

Some people in Scripture felt deep despair in life. Solomon, in his pursuit of pleasure, reached the point where he “hated life” (Ecclesiastes 2:17). Elijah was fearful and depressed and yearned for death (1 Kings 19:4). Jonah was so angry at God that he wished to die (Jonah 4:8). Even the apostle Paul and his missionary companions at one point “were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself” (2 Corinthians 1:8).

However, none of these men committed suicide. Solomon learned to “fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind” (Ecclesiastes 12:13). Elijah was comforted by an angel, allowed to rest, and given a new commission. Jonah received admonition and rebuke from God. Paul learned that, although the pressure he faced was beyond his ability to endure, the Lord can bear all things: “This happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead” (2 Corinthians 1:9).

So, according to the Bible, suicide is a sin. It is not the “greatest” sin—it is no worse than other evils, in terms of how God sees it, and it does not determine a person’s eternal destiny. However, suicide definitely has a deep and lasting impact on those left behind. The painful scars left by a suicide do not heal easily. May God grant His grace to each one who is facing trials today (Psalm 67:1). And may each of us take hope in the promise, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Romans 10:13).

If you are considering suicide, please seek help now. Call 1-800-273-8255, the national hotline, get yourself to a hospital if you can, call 911, go alert someone in your home, apartment, or workplace, or wherever you are, and do whatever it takes to get help. [GotQuestions.org](#)

- National Hopeline Network: 1-800-SUICIDE
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 988
- Befrienders.org: <http://www.befrienders.org/directory>
- Suicide hotlines available in most countries: <http://www.suicide.org/international-suicide-hotlines.html>

#### **Related Resources:**

- [If a Christian commits suicide, is he/she still saved? | GotQuestions.org](#) - **ED**: Short answer - he/she is eternally safe in the arms of Jesus! Click link for a more complete discussion.
- [Why should I not commit suicide? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What does the Bible say about euthanasia / assisted suicide? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What does the Bible say about suicide?](#)
- [How can I help someone who is suicidal? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What are some Bible verses about suicide? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**1 Chronicles 10:6 Thus Saul died with his three sons, and all those of his house died together.**

- **Saul:** 1Sa 4:10,11,18 12:25 Ec 9:1,2 Ho 13:10,11

#### **Related Passages:**

1 Samuel 31:6+ Thus Saul died with his three sons, his armor bearer, and all his men on that day together.

2 Samuel 2:8 But Abner (RECALL DAVID HAD MOCKED ABNER IN 1Sa 26:14-16+ - IS THIS ABNER'S "REVENGE"?) the son of Ner (Ner was Saul's uncle), commander of Saul's army, had taken Ish-bosheth the son of Saul and brought him over to Mahanaim.

2 Samuel 21:8 So the king took the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, Armoni and Mephibosheth whom she had borne to Saul, and the five sons of Merab the daughter of Saul, whom she had borne to Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite.

**Thus Saul died with his three sons, and all those of his house died together** - The "all" refers to all the men who fought with him, because we know that some his sons and troops did survive (see 2Sa. 2:8; 2Sa 21:8).

**TSK Note** - all those of his house: "All his men," in Samuel; that is, all who were present with him in the battle; and his family received such a blow, that it never recovered itself again. For though Ishbosheth reigned over a part of the country, yet it was not in any splendour. This history seems to be repeated here as an introduction to that of the kingdom of David.

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### 1 CHRONICLES 10:6—Did all of Saul's family die with him or not?

**PROBLEM:** Here we read, "Saul and his three sons died, and all his house died together." But, in 2 Samuel 2:8, Saul's son Ishbosheth was not killed and was even later made king.

**SOLUTION:** Ishbosheth was not encompassed by this statement, since he was not part of Saul's house who had attended him or followed him to war. So he was not part of the group referred to as "all Saul's men." First Samuel 31:6 states that "Saul, his three sons, his armorbearer, and all his men died together [in battle] that same day." Further, not all the grandchildren were killed, since Saul's son Jonathan had a handicapped son named Mephibosheth who also survived (2Sa 4:4). It is understandable that someone in his condition was not part of Saul's army and, therefore, did not die with Saul's other men in battle.

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### G C Morgan - So Saul died.—1 Samuel 31.6 - 1 Chronicles 10

This closing chapter of the Book is draped in sackcloth, and covered with ashes. It tells the tragic story of the last act in the career of a man who was a ghastly failure. Defeat at the hands of the Philistines drove Saul to uttermost desperation. Wounded in the final fight, and fearing that the last blow might be struck by an enemy, he called upon his armour-bearer to slay him. Upon his refusing to do so, Saul died by his own hand physically, as he had already perished as to purpose and possibility by his own sin and his own folly. Suicide is always the ultimate action of cowardice. In the case of Saul, and in many similar cases, it is perfectly natural; but let it never be glorified as heroic. It is the last resort of the man who dare not stand up to life. Schopenhauer once said that suicide is not the result of hatred of life, but rather of love of it. A man loves life and because he cannot live, as he considers, full life, he will not live at all. There is a great element of truth in that; but still it leaves the brand of the coward upon the suicide. It ever seems to me that the chief spiritual value of this first Book of Samuel lies in the solemn lessons taught by the story of the life and failure of this man Saul. It proclaims in clarion tones the arresting and searching truth, that great advantages and remarkable opportunities are in themselves no guarantees of success. Unless the heart be firm and steady in its allegiance to principle and its loyalty to God, these things will only be weights and burdens, crushing the soul, and assuring the uttermost ruin of the man to whom they come. (Borrow [Life applications from every chapter of the Bible](#))

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**Gleason Archer** - [page 185 of New International Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties](#) - First Samuel 31 gives account of Saul's death that conflicts with another given in 2 Samuel 1. How can both be correct?

1 Samuel 31:3–4 informs us that Saul was fatally wounded by a Philistine arrow at the disastrous battle of Mount Gilboa. Realizing that he was about to die, Saul himself appealed to his own armorbearer to thrust his sword through his heart and kill him immediately—"lest these uncircumcised [Philistines] come and pierce me through and make sport of me" (NASB). But since the armor bearer could not bring himself to take the life of his king, Saul took his own sword, fastened its hilt firmly in the ground, and then fell on it in such a way as to end his misery right then and there.

In 2 Samuel 1 we read that a certain Amalekite who had served in Saul's bodyguard fled from the battlefield and made his way to David's camp, in order to bring him news of Saul's death. According to the account he gave to David (vv. 6–10), he was summoned by King Saul to his side while he was hopelessly surrounded by the triumphant Philistines; and he was ordered by the king to take his life immediately, in order to end his misery from his fatal wounds. The Amalekite then complied with his request (v.10): "So I stood beside him and killed him, because I knew that he could not live after he had fallen. And I took the crown which was on his head and the bracelet which was on his arm, and I have brought them here to my lord" (NASB).

This presents obvious discrepancies with the account in 1 Samuel 31, but it is not presented as being an actual record of what happened during Saul's dying moments; it is only a record of what the Amalekite mercenary said had taken place. Coming with Saul's crown and bracelet in hand and presenting them before the new king of Israel, the Amalekite obviously expected a handsome reward and high preferment in the service of Saul's successor. In the light of the straightforward account in the previous chapter, we must conclude that the Amalekite was lying in order to gain a cordial welcome from David. But what had actually happened was that after Saul had killed himself, and the armorbearer had followed his lord's example by taking his own life (1 Sam. 31:5), the Amalekite happened by at that moment, recognized the king's corpse, and quickly stripped off the bracelet and crown before the Philistine troops discovered it. Capitalizing on his good fortune, the Amalekite then escaped from the bloody field and made his way down to David's headquarters in Ziklag. But his hoped-for reward turned out to be a warrant for his death; David had him killed on the spot, saying: "Your blood is on your head, for your mouth has testified against you, saying, 'I have killed the LORD's anointed' " (2 Sam. 1:16; NASB). His glib falsehood had brought him the very opposite of what he had expected, for he failed to foresee that David's high code of honor would lead him to make just the response he did.

It should be added that this particular Amalekite came from a different Amalekite tribe from that which Saul had earlier destroyed at God's command—the tribe over which Agag had ruled (1Sa 15:7–8). Those Amalekite lived between Havilah and Shur. But there were other Amalekites not involved in this campaign, some of whom raided David's settlement at Ziklag (1Sa 30).

**1 Chronicles 10:7 When all the men of Israel who were in the valley saw that they had fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook their cities and fled; and the Philistines came and lived in them.**

- Lev 26:31,36 De 28:33,43 Jdg 6:2 1Sa 13:6 31:7

#### **Related Passages:**

1 Samuel 13:6+ When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait (for the people were hard-pressed), then the people hid themselves in caves, in thickets, in cliffs, in cellars, and in pits.

Leviticus 26:32; 36+ 'I will make the land desolate so that your enemies who settle in it will be appalled over it....36 'As for those of you who may be left, I will also bring weakness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies. And the sound of a driven leaf will chase them, and even when no one is pursuing they will flee as though from the sword, and they will fall.

Deuteronomy 28:33+ "A people whom you do not know shall eat up the produce of your ground and all your labors, and you will never be anything but oppressed and crushed continually.

### **ISRAELITES FLEE THEIR CITIES**

**When all the men of Israel who were in the valley saw that they had fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead,**The battle had taken place on Mount Gilboa and Israelites would have been watching from across the valley. To their horror they witnessed the total defeat of Saul's forces, so that surviving soldiers fled, then the citizens fled for fear of further Philistine reprisals! That was a wise move for them to run for their lives, because the Philistines clearly had a take no prisoner's policy!

**they forsook their cities and fled; and the Philistines came and lived in them**The promised land was now occupied by uncircumcised Philistines. This was a consequence of the sins and poor leadership of King Saul, who became more obsessed with killing David he thought was his enemy then will killing the true enemy, the Philistines.

**1 Chronicles 10:8 It came about the next day, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his sons fallen on Mount Gilboa.**

- to strip: 1Sa 31:8 2Ki 3:23 2Ch 20:25

### **PHILISTINES SEEKING SPOIL FIND SAUL'S CORPSE**

**It came about the next day, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his sons fallen on Mount**

**Gilboa.** Saul and sons would have been recognized by their more royal apparel. The Philistines realized they had cut the nation off at its head so to speak, by killing their king. Little did that know that God was behind the scenes in full control of the scenes. He was behind, and He was in the process of raising up a man after his own heart to fill the void left by Saul, a man after man's heart.

**Mount Gilboa** - (boiling spring or bubbling spring), is a peak in the mountain range on the eastern side of the plain or valley of Esdraelon (Jezreel), rising over the city of Jezreel. Mt Gilboa is mentioned in Scripture only in connection with memorable as the scene of Saul's disastrous defeat by the Philistines, where he and his three sons were slain (1Sa 28:4; 31:1-8; 2Sa 1:6-21; 21:12; 1 Chr. 10:1, 8). When the tidings of this defeat were conveyed to David, he gave utterance to those pathetic words in the "Song of the Bow" (2 Sam. 1:19-27).

**1 Chronicles 10:9 So they stripped him and took his head and his armor and sent messengers around the land of the Philistines to carry the good news to their idols and to the people.**

- took: 1Ch 10:4 1Sa 31:9,10 2Sa 1:20 Mt 14:11
- tidings: Jdg 16:23,24 Da 5:2-4,23

## SAUL DECAPITATED AND DE-ROBED

**So they stripped him and took his head and his armor and sent messengers around the land of the Philistines to carry the good news to their idols and to the people** - The very thing Saul had feared was taking place. They ridiculed Saul by sending his head and armor throughout Philistia. Note the phrase **to carry the good news to the house of their idols** which is based on their pagan belief that their gods (Dagon, etc) had given them the victory over Israel. Thus Saul's head and armor would serve almost as thank offerings to their gods. **Carry the good news** in the Septuagint is ironically the great NT word [euaggelizo/euangelizo](#) for proclaiming the good news of the Gospel!

**1 Chronicles 10:10 They put his armor in the house of their gods and fastened his head in the house of Dagon.**

- **their gods:** 1Sa 31:10
- **in the temple:** 1Sa 5:2-7

### Related Passage:

1 Samuel 21:9 Then the priest said, "The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the valley of Elah, behold, it is wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod; if you would take it for yourself, take it. For there is no other except it here." And David said, "There is none like it; give it to me."

Location of Beth-shan W of Jabesh-gilead

Dore Woodcut of Saul & son's Bodies on Wall

## TROPHIES OF PHILISTINE VICTORY

**They put his armor in the house of their gods and fastened his head in the house of Dagon**

**Compare 1 Samuel 31:10 -They put his weapons in the temple of Ashteroth** - Even as David had placed Goliath's sword in the Tabernacle, the Philistine do so as a testimony to the superior (they thought) power of their god Ashteroth compared to the Living God of the Hebrews. The omnipotent God is allowing all of these blasphemous activities to take place. **and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan** - Note location of Beth-shan [on map above](#), just south of Sea of Galilee, next to Jordan River and just west of Jabesh-gilead. This would be a public disgrace for the king of Israel. Even worse before the pagan nations this would result in profaning the Name of the God in Whose place the king ruled. (cf Ezek 36:20-22, 39:7)

**1 Chronicles 10:11 When all Jabesh-gilead heard all that the Philistines had done to Saul,**

- when: 1Sa 11:1-11 31:11-13 2Sa 2:4-7

Jabesh-Gilead just east of  
Beth-shan in Manasseh

## MEN OF JABESH-GILEAD HEAR OF OF SAUL'S IGNOMINIOUS TREATMENT

**Ignominious** means deserving or causing public disgrace or shame.

When all **Jabesh-gilead** heard all that the Philistines had done to Saul - The mention of inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead is significant as (1) Beth-shan was visible from their town and (2) many years prior Saul had delivered these residents from oppression by the Ammonite Nahash.

**Jabesh-Gilead** - was a town to the east of Jordan River, on the top of one of the green hills of Gilead, within the limits of the half tribe of Manasseh, and in full view of Beth-shan. It is first mentioned in connection with the vengeance taken on its inhabitants because they had refused to come up to Mizpeh to take part with Israel against the tribe of Benjamin (Jdg. 21:8-14). After the battles at Gibeah, that tribe was almost extinguished, only six hundred men remaining. An expedition went against Jabesh-Gilead, the whole of whose inhabitants were put to the sword, except four hundred maidens, whom they brought as prisoners and sent to "proclaim peace" to the Benjamites who had fled to the crag Rimmon. These captives were given to them as wives, that the tribe might be saved from extinction (Jdg. 21). This city was afterwards taken by Nahash, king of the Ammonites, but was delivered by Saul, the newly-elected king of Israel. In gratitude for this deliverance, forty years after this, the men of Jabesh-Gilead took down the bodies of Saul and of his three sons from the walls of Beth-shan, and after burning them, buried the bones under a tree near the city (1 Sam. 31:11-13). David thanked them for this act of piety (2 Sam. 2:4-6), and afterwards transferred the remains to the royal sepulchre (21:14).

**1 Chronicles 10:12** all the valiant men arose and took away the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons and brought them to Jabesh, and they buried their bones under the oak in Jabesh, and fasted seven days.

- **the oak:** Ge 35:8 2Sa 21:12-14
- **fasted:** Ge 50:10 2Sa 3:35

### Related Passages:

**1 Samuel 31:12** all the valiant men rose and walked all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-shan, and they came to Jabesh and burned them there. 13 They took their bones and buried them under the tamarisk tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days.

## RAID RETRIEVES BODIES OF SAUL & SONS

**all the valiant men arose and took away the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons and brought them to Jabesh, and they buried their bones under the oak in Jabesh, and fasted seven days** - 1Sa 31:12 adds three facts not recorded in the parallel passage in Chronicles - (1) they went at night to retrieve the bodies, (2) they burned the bodies and (3) buried them under the [tamarisk](#) tree.

**F B Meyer** - **All the valiant men...** This was a noble and generous act. At the beginning of his reign, in the early dawn of youthful promise and prowess, when he was the darling of the nation, Saul had interposed to deliver their beleaguered city. And now, as the awful tidings of his defeat and suicide spread like fire through the country, the men whom he had succored remembered his first kingly act, and showed their appreciation for his kindness by doing a strong and chivalrous deed in rescuing his remains from dishonor. They could not help him, but they could save his honor. When David heard of this act, he sent messengers to the men of Jabesh-Gilead, thanking them for their chivalrous devotion to the memory of the fallen king, and promising to requite the kindness as one done to the entire nation, and to himself.

Are we careful enough of the honor and name of our dear Lord? He has done for us spiritually all that Saul did for Jabesh-Gilead,

It was well that these men did not wait for others to act. Had they done so, the body of Saul might have rotted piecemeal on the walls of the temple at Bethshan. If they had left this act of reparation for Abner, or Ish-bosheth, it would never have been done. There is no order of precedence, when a wrong has to be righted, or a friend vindicated. The man who is next must act. Let us strike into the fray, and count that our opportunity is warrant enough. He who can, may.

**ANSWER** - The Bible does not give any specific teaching about cremation. There are occurrences in the Old Testament of people being burned to death (1 Kings 16:18; 2 Kings 21:6) and of human bones being burned (2 Kings 23:16-20), but these are not examples of cremation. It is interesting to note that in 2 Kings 23:16-20, burning human bones on an altar desecrated the altar. At the same time, the Old Testament law nowhere commands that a deceased human body not be burned, nor does it attach any curse or judgment on someone who is cremated.

Is cremation something a Christian can consider? Again, there is no explicit scriptural command against cremation. Some believers object to the practice of cremation on the basis it does not recognize that one day God will resurrect our bodies and re-unite them with our soul/spirit (1 Corinthians 15:35-58; 1 Thessalonians 4:16). However, the fact that a body has been cremated does not make it any more difficult for God to resurrect that body. The bodies of Christians who died a thousand years ago have, by now, completely turned into dust. This will in no way prevent God from being able to resurrect their bodies. He created them in the first place; He will have no difficulty re-creating them. Cremation does nothing but “expedite” the process of turning a body into dust. God is equally able to raise a person’s remains that have been cremated as He is the remains of a person who was not cremated. The question of burial or cremation is within the realm of Christian freedom. A person or a family considering this issue should pray for wisdom (James 1:5) and follow the conviction that results. [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

1 Chronicles 10:13 So Saul died for his trespass which he committed against the LORD, because of the word of the LORD which he did not keep; and also because he asked counsel of a medium, making inquiry of it,

LXE 1 Chronicles 10:13 So Saul died for his transgressions, wherein he transgressed against God, against the word of the Lord, forasmuch as he kept it not, because Saul enquired of a wizard to seek counsel, and Samuel the prophet answered him:

KJV 1 Chronicles 10:13 So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, even against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it;

NET 1 Chronicles 10:13 So Saul died because he was unfaithful to the LORD and did not obey the LORD's instructions; he even tried to conjure up underworld spirits.

CSB 1 Chronicles 10:13 Saul died for his unfaithfulness to the LORD because he did not keep the LORD's word. He even consulted a medium for guidance.

ESV 1 Chronicles 10:13 So Saul died for his breach of faith. He broke faith with the LORD in that he did not keep the command of the LORD, and also consulted a medium, seeking guidance.

NIV 1 Chronicles 10:13 Saul died because he was unfaithful to the LORD; he did not keep the word of the LORD and even consulted a medium for guidance.

NLT 1 Chronicles 10:13 So Saul died because he was unfaithful to the LORD. He failed to obey the LORD's command, and he even consulted a medium

NRS 1 Chronicles 10:13 So Saul died for his unfaithfulness: he was unfaithful to the LORD in that he did not

keep the command of the LORD; moreover, he had consulted a medium, seeking guidance,

NJB 1 Chronicles 10:13 Thus died Saul in the infidelity of which he had been guilty towards Yahweh, in that he had not obeyed the word of Yahweh and because he had consulted a necromancer for guidance.

NAB 1 Chronicles 10:13 Thus Saul died because of his rebellion against the LORD in disobeying his command, and also because he had sought counsel of a necromancer,

YLT 1 Chronicles 10:13 And Saul dieth because of his trespass that he trespassed against Jehovah, against the word of Jehovah that he kept not, and also for asking at a familiar spirit -- to inquire, --

GWN 1 Chronicles 10:13 So Saul died because of his unfaithfulness to the LORD: He did not obey the word of the LORD. He asked a medium to request information from a dead person.

BBE 1 Chronicles 10:13 So death came to Saul because of the sin which he did against the Lord, that is, because of the word of the Lord which he kept not; and because he went for directions to one who had an evil spirit,

- **which he committed against the LORD:** 1Sa 13:13 1Sa 15:2,23
- **because he asked counsel of a medium:** 1Sa 28:7-20
- **medium:** Ex 22:18 Lev 19:31 Lev 20:6 De 18:10-14 2Ki 21:6 Isa 8:19 Ac 8:9-11 16:16-18

#### Related Passages:

1 Samuel 13:13+ Samuel said to Saul, "You have acted foolishly; you have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which He commanded you, for now the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever.

1 Samuel 15:2+ "Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he set himself against him on the way while he was coming up from Egypt.

1 Samuel 15:8+ He captured Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. 9 But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were not willing to destroy them utterly; but everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.

1 Samuel 15:19-23+ "Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD, but rushed upon the spoil and did what was evil in the sight of the LORD?" 20 Then Saul said to Samuel, "I did obey the voice of the LORD, and went on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and have brought back Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. 21 "But the people took some of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the choicest of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the LORD your God at Gilgal." 22 Samuel said, "Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. 23 "For rebellion is as the sin of divination, And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from being king." 24 Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned; I have indeed transgressed the command of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and listened to their voice.....26 But Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you; for you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel."

Leviticus 20:6-7+ 'As for the person who turns to mediums and to spiritists, to play the harlot after them, I will also set My face against that person and will cut him off from among his people. 7 (PENALTY FOR MEDIUMS) 'Now a man or a woman who is a medium or a spiritist shall surely be put to death. They shall be stoned with stones, their bloodguiltiness is upon them."

Deuteronomy 18:10-14+ "There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, 11 or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. 12 "For whoever does these things is detestable to the LORD; and because of these detestable things the LORD your God will drive them out before you.

## TWO REASONS SAUL DIED

**So Saul died for his trespass** ([maal](#); Lxx - [anomia](#) = lawlessness;"breach of faith" - ESV; "unfaithfulness" - NRSV; "infidelity" - NJB; "rebellion" - NAB) **which he committed against the LORD, because of the word of the LORD which he did not keep** CSB = "Saul died for his unfaithfulness to the LORD because he did not keep the LORD's word." Because (term of explanation) explains that Saul's trespass was not keeping or obeying the Word of the LORD, in one instance

**THOUGHT** - Notice the first reason links unfaithfulness with disobedience. This is a crucial principle. Why? Because it is so easy to say "I believe in Jesus," and then go out and live like you believe in the devil. In other words faith without works is dead faith. Faith without the "works" of obedience is not saving faith. To be sure faith alone in Christ Alone saves, but the faith that genuinely saves is not alone but show that it is genuine by obedience. Jesus said if you love Me keep My commandments.

**And also because he asked counsel of a medium, making inquiry of it- NET** = "he even tried to conjure up underworld spirits." - In the first reason above notice the inherent idea of rebellion to God's Word and in the second note the abomination of divination, which are summed up in 1Sa 15:23 in the phrase "rebellion is as the sin of divination."

So Saul died for his trespass which he committed against the LORD, (1)**because** of the word of the LORD which he did not keep (1Sa 13:13+, 1Sa 15:3, 8, 9, 19-23, 24, 26+, 1Sa 28:18); and also (2) **because** he asked counsel of a medium (1Sa 28:7-14, cf Dt 18:9-14+), making inquiry of it, 14 and (3)**did not inquire of the LORD** (cf 1Sa 28:6). Therefore He killed him and turned the kingdom to David the son of Jesse.

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**Trespass** (treachery) ([04604](#)) [maal](#) from the verb maal = to act unfaithfully or treacherously, to violate a legal obligation) is a masculine noun which refers to an unfaithful (not adhering to vows, allegiance, or duty) act, a violation of allegiance (the fidelity owed by a subject to his or her Sovereign God) or of faith and confidence. Most uses of maal reflect violations are against Jehovah (exception = Job 21:34).

**Maal - 26v - falsehood(1), treachery(2), trespass(1), trespass\*(1), unfaithful(3), unfaithful act(4), unfaithful deeds(1), unfaithfully(6), unfaithfulness(6), very unfaithful(1).** Lev. 5:15; Lev. 6:2; Num. 5:6; Num. 5:12; Num. 5:27; Num. 31:16; Jos. 7:1; Jos. 22:16; Jos. 22:20; Jos. 22:22; Jos. 22:31; 1 Chr. 9:1; 1 Chr. 10:13; 2 Chr. 28:19; 2 Chr. 29:19; 2 Chr. 33:19; 2 Chr. 36:14; Ezr. 9:2; Ezr. 9:4; Ezr. 10:6; Job 21:34; Ezek. 15:8; Ezek. 17:20; Ezek. 18:24; Ezek. 39:26; Dan. 9:7

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#### **F B Meyer - 1 Chronicles 10:13 So Saul died for his trespass. (R. V.)**

It is suggestive to ponder the threefold analysis of Saul's trespass as given here. He kept not the word of the Lord— this probably refers to his failure to execute the sentence on Amalek; he asked counsel of one that had a familiar spirit— this errand had taken him to Endor on the eve of the battle; he inquired not of the Lord— this was conspicuously the case in his persecution of David.

Do we sufficiently inquire of the Lord? We ask the advice of our friends and religious teachers; we sometimes use doubtful methods of ascertaining God's will, as allowing the Bible to drop open, or interpreting some coincidence in the way we secretly desire to follow; besides which there is an increasing tendency in society to use the crystal, to consult spiritualistic mediums, to employ palmistry. These latter, of course, repeat the sin of Saul, in going to Endor; and the resort to them on the part of children of this world shows that the heart of man must have something exterior to itself for worship and trust; if it has forsaken God it will deal with the devil, rather than drift on alone. But let us all cultivate more carefully the blessed habit of waiting on God. If we ask Him for guidance, He will be sure to impart it; only we must put aside all selfish and personal ends, desiring to know His will, with a single purpose, and an unalloyed determination to follow it at any cost.

Christ has told us that willingness to do His will, is the sure organ of spiritual knowledge. "He that wills to do His will, shall know." Be of good cheer, beloved, God hath chosen thee that thou shouldst know His will, and see that just One, and shouldst hear the voice of His mouth.

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#### **Ray Comfort - Is it wrong to "speak to the dead"?**

Those who do so are dabbling with the demonic realm, something the Bible refers to as a "familiar spirit." Unger's Bible Dictionary tells us "[A] familiar spirit is a divining demon present in the physical body of the conjurer.... The term "familiar" is used to describe the foreboding demon because it was regarded by the English translators as a secret (famulus), belonging to the family (familiaris), who was on intimate terms with and might be readily summoned by the one possessing it." Those who seek the supernatural should seek God through prayer and through His Word. God killed King Saul because he sought guidance through a familiar spirit, rather than through the Lord. (Borrow the [Evidence Bible](#))

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**G Campbell Morgan - 1Chr. 10:13 Saul died for his trespass . . . and also for that he asked counsel of one that had a familiar spirit.-1 Chr 10:13.**

Before the chronicler proceeds to tell the story of the reign of David, he records the death of Saul. In sublime and graphic language he recounts the facts of the passing of the king chosen by men. It is a terrible picture of a man of magnificent capacity and opportunity going down in ruin. **Magnificent indeed was the ruin, but it was ruin** Saul was a man who had great opportunities, but his failure was disastrous. Of good standing in the nation; distinctly called and commissioned by God: honoured with the friendship of Samuel; surrounded by a band of men whose hearts God had touched; everything was in his favour. From the beginning he faltered and failed. **Step by step he passed along a decline of character and conduct** At last, routed by his enemies, he died by his own hand, in the midst of the field of defeat (ED: ISRAEL'S PHYSICAL DEFEAT A METAPHORICAL PICTURE OF HIS SAD LIFE!). He went out of life, having failed himself, and dragging his nation into such confusion that its very existence was threatened. These words reveal the secrets of his failure. **First and fundamentally, he trespassed against God. He went the way of the disobedient, Then finally, he sought counsel from the dark underworld of evil spirits.** These two things constantly follow each other, in this order. **When a human being is called of God to service, there is always given to such a one the guidance of God, in direct spiritual communication. If there be disobedience, this guidance is necessarily withdrawn. Then, the forsaken man or woman, craving for supernatural aid, turns to sorcery, witchcrafts, spiritism; and the issue is always destructive. Upon the whole subject of responsible service, the story of Saul throws the light of most solemn warning.** (Borrow [Life applications from every chapter of the Bible](#))

**1 Chronicles 10:14 and did not inquire of the LORD. Therefore He killed him and turned the kingdom to David the son of Jesse.**

BGT 1 Chronicles 10:14 καὶ οὐκ ἐζητήσεν κύριον καὶ πῦρ κτείνεν αὐτόν καὶ πῦρ στρέψεν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Δαυὶδ εἰς Ἰεσσαὶ

LXE 1 Chronicles 10:14 and he sought not the Lord: so he slew him, and turned the kingdom to David the son of Jesse.

KJV 1 Chronicles 10:14 And enquired not of the LORD: therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse.

NET 1 Chronicles 10:14 He did not seek the LORD's guidance, so the LORD killed him and transferred the kingdom to David son of Jesse.

CSB 1 Chronicles 10:14 but he did not inquire of the LORD. So the LORD put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David son of Jesse.

ESV 1 Chronicles 10:14 He did not seek guidance from the LORD. Therefore the LORD put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse.

NIV 1 Chronicles 10:14 and did not inquire of the LORD. So the LORD put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David son of Jesse.

NLT 1 Chronicles 10:14 instead of asking the LORD for guidance. So the LORD killed him and turned the kingdom over to David son of Jesse.

NRS 1 Chronicles 10:14 and did not seek guidance from the LORD. Therefore the LORD put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David son of Jesse.

NJB 1 Chronicles 10:14 He had not consulted Yahweh, who therefore caused his death and transferred the monarchy to David son of Jesse.

NAB 1 Chronicles 10:14 and had not rather inquired of the LORD. Therefore the LORD slew him, and transferred his kingdom to David, the son of Jesse.

YLT 1 Chronicles 10:14 and he inquired not at Jehovah, and He putteth him to death, and turneth round the kingdom to David son of Jesse.

GWN 1 Chronicles 10:14 He didn't request information from the LORD. So the LORD killed him and turned the kingship over to David, Jesse's son.

BBE 1 Chronicles 10:14 And not to the Lord: for this reason, he put him to death and gave the kingdom to

David, the son of Jesse.

- **inquired:** Jdg 10:11-16 1Sa 28:6 Eze 14:3-6
- **He killed him:** Pr 17:13 Isa 10:7,15
- **turned:** 1Sa 13:14 15:28 16:1,11-13 28:17 2Sa 3:9,10 5:3

## YAHWEH KILLED KING SAUL

**and did not** (Lxx = absolutely did not) **inquire** (darash; Lxx - [ekzeteo](#) - intensely seek after) **of the LORD** - He made a futile attempt, but the LORD had rejected him, because Saul had rejected His Word (1Sa 15)

Here is my note of explanation on 1Sa 28:6 which clearly says "Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD did not answer him." At first glance it sounds like Yahweh is being unfair stating here that Saul did not inquire of Him. First note that 1Sa 28:6 was Saul's second inquiry of Yahweh (1Sa 14:37 - also uses [shaal](#); Lxx - [eperotao](#) - to ask for something) both inquiries received a "divine busy signal!" Note that 1Ch 10:14 says Saul "**did not inquire of the LORD**," where inquire is a different Hebrew word (darash) and in context means to ask (Ge 25:22; Ex 18:15; Dt 12:5; 1Ki 22:5; 2Ki 3:11) and it includes the sense of God's people seeking after their God (Dt. 4:29; Hos. 10:12; Amos 5:4), a type of seeking that will be greatly rewarded (Ps 34:10). That this nuance of seeking God Himself is an important aspect of asking God is shown by the Septuagint translation of 1Ch 10:14 which uses the verb [ekzeteo](#) which describes an intense seeking, a diligent searching, with a sincere and earnest desire to obtain God's favor (as in Septuagint translations of Dt 4:29, 2Ch 15:2, 13, Ps 14:2, Jer 29:13). In the Septuagint of 1Ch 10:14, the verb [ekzeteo](#) (intense seeking) is preceded by the strongest Greek negative (ou/ouk) signifying that Saul **absolutely did not seek for God** with this type of heart seeking! One might say it this way -- Saul wanted an answer from God, but he was not really seeking after God Himself! **THOUGHT** - Have you (I) ever prayed with that mindset? (Rhetorical!)

**Therefore He killed him and turned the kingdom to David the son of Jesse** - We do not belong to ourselves and that includes even non-believers. God is sovereign over our bodies and can justly cause our death whenever His perfect wisdom deems it is time. It was Saul's time and God said in essence "Time's up!"

**THOUGHT** - O, to ponder the end of men like Saul, men who could have been so great and greatly used by the LORD, but who threw it all away because they wanted their WAY! Redeem the time of your life, for this is all the time the LORD has allotted to you (I'm preaching to myself!). [Watch my youtube talk](#) to a men's group on Redeem the Time.

**John MacArthur** adds "Though Saul killed himself (v. 4), God took responsibility for Saul's death, which was fully deserved for consulting a medium, an activity punishable by death (cf. Dt 17:1-6). This demonstrates that human behavior is under the ultimate control of God, who achieves His purpose through the actions of people. (Borrow [The MacArthur Study Bible](#))

God killing Saul and turning the kingdom to David reminds one of Daniel's words when God answered their prayer in Daniel 2 -

"Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven; 20 Daniel said, "Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, For wisdom and power belong to Him. 21 "It is He who changes the times and the epochs; **He removes kings and establishes kings**; He gives wisdom to wise men And knowledge to men of understanding. 22 "It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, And the light dwells with Him. 23 "To You, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, For You have given me wisdom and power; Even now You have made known to me what we requested of You, For You have made known to us the king's matter." (Daniel 2:19-23+)

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**Inquire** ([01875](#))(**darash**) means to seek, to inquire of, to examine, to require, consult, ask. One of the most frequent uses of this word is in the expression "to inquire of God," which sometimes indicates a private seeking of God in prayer for direction (Gen. 25:22), and often it refers to the contacting of a prophet who would be the instrument of God's revelation (1 Sam. 9:9; 1 Kings 22:8). At other times this expression is found in connection with the use of the Urim and Thummim by the high priest as he sought to discover the will of God by the throwing of these sacred stones (Nu 27:21).

We can get a good sense of one aspect of the meaning of **darash** when God says "You will **seek** (baqas; Lxx = [ekzeteo](#) intense seeking) Me and find Me when you search (darash; Lxx = [zeteo](#)) for Me **with all your**

**heart."** (Jer. 29:13) What is the condition of seeking Yahweh and finding Him? It is seeking with one's whole heart!

We see a similar nuance in Dt 4:29+ "But from there you will seek (baqas; Lxx = [zeteo](#)) the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you search (darash; Lxx = [ekzeteo](#) intense seeking) for Him **with all your heart and all your soul.**" Notice the importance of the heart in

**Baker** - Figuratively, it may refer to seeking out or inquiring about lovers (Jer. 30:14) or to care for Zion (Jer. 30:17). It denotes inquiring about persons (2 Sam. 11:3) or their welfare (souls)(Ps. 142:4[5]). It indicates the Lord's care for His land (Deut. 11:12). It carries the general sense of seeking out property, such as a lost ox or cattle (Deut. 22:2), or examining a matter (Deut. 13:14[15]; Judg. 6:29; 1 Ki. 22:7) or event. It takes on the meaning of requiring or demanding someone's blood in a moral or legal sense (Gen. 9:5; 2 Chr. 24:22; Ps. 10:13) but also of seeking good itself (Amos 5:14). **Its most important theological meaning** involves studying or inquiring into the Law of the Lord (Ezra 7:10) or inquiring of God (Gen. 25:22; Ex. 18:15; Deut. 12:5; 1 Ki. 22:5; 2 Ki. 3:11). **God's people seek after their God**(Deut. 4:29; Hos. 10:12; Amos 5:4). **Seeking the Lord** will be greatly rewarded (Ps. 34:10). Seeking heathen gods or persons who deal with the dead is to be avoided (1 Sam. 28:7; Isa. 8:19; Ezek. 14:10). The works of God, however, are to be examined and studied (Ps. 111:2). ([The Complete Word Study Dictionary – Old Testament](#))

**Leonard Coppes** - Our word is distinguished from its frequent parallel and equivalent bāqash (q.v.) (dārash-bāqash, Psalm 38:12 [H 13]; Ezekiel 34:6; bāqash-dārash, Judges 6:29; Deut. 4:29) inasmuch as it 1. means **"to seek with care"** (1 Samuel 28:7), 2. **is often cognitive** (its end is "to know"), and 3. **seldom governs an infinitive**. For other synonyms see bāqash. Cf. Ugaritic drsh (UT 19: no. 709). Our verb occurs 164 times. The meaning **"to seek with care"** (cognitive) occurs in Leviticus 10:16, where Moses seeks to find out in detail what happened to the sin-offering, and in 2 Samuel 11:3 where David seeks to find out who Bathsheba was (cf. Deut. 23:6; Jeremiah 29:7). Israel is told to seek carefully the place God would choose (Deut. 12:5) and justice (Isaiah 1:17; cf. Isaiah 16:5). In the eschaton Jerusalem, the place no one seeks (Jeremiah 30:17), will be the place "sought out" (Isaiah 62:12; or "cared for," Deut. 11:12). Furthermore, it is the Gentiles who would seek out the messianic king (Isaiah 11:10). His place of rest (Numbers 10:33; Deut. 12:9) is glorious. **Closely related to the above is the meaning "to care for."** The Psalmist retorts "no man cares for my soul" (Psalm 142:4 [H 5]). Israel is told to seek the welfare of the city of their exile (Jeremiah 29:7). Perhaps 1 Chron. 15:13; 2 Chron. 1:5 refer to "care" for the ark and the brazen altar.

**Another theological theme develops from Deut. 4:29 (cf. bāqash) where Israel is warned of future defection and admonished to wholehearted worship** (Deut. 6:6; Matthew 22:37). The Chronicler evaluates the history of Israel in terms of their "seeking" God (1 Chron. 22:19; 1 Chron. 28:9; 2 Chron. 31:21, etc.) or idols (2 Chron. 25:15). Isaiah reports Israel's refusal to seek God in spite of divine chastening (Isaiah 9:13 [H 12]; cf. Jeremiah 10:21). God reminds them of the ancient promise (Isaiah 55:6; Jeremiah 29:13; Hosea 10:12). He reproves them for "seeking" him while continuing in their transgressions (Isaiah 58:2) but promises blessings in the eschaton for those who seek him in truth (Isaiah 65:10). Interestingly, even those who do not seek shall find God (Isaiah 65:1; Isaiah 11:10; Romans 10:20).

**To seek God also connotes an inquiry after knowledge, advice, insight, into a particular problem**(Genesis 25:22). Such inquiry could be made through a prophet, i.e. a divine spokesman (Exodus 7:1; Exodus 18:15ff.; 1 Samuel 9:9; Jeremiah 21:2, etc.), or through a priest using "lots" (shā'al; Deut. 17:9). Seeking the word of a false deity often involved complex rituals (Deut. 12:30; 2 Chron. 25:15 (?); 2 Samuel 11:3; Ezekiel 21:21 [H 26]). Closely related to this is the "legal" use of our verb, viz., to seek divine judgment (Exodus 18:15; Deut. 17:4, 9; cf. Matthew 18:5-20; 1 Cor. 6; 1 Tim. 3) by consulting divinely authorized "judges."

**Finally, our root is used of divine vengeance on those who take a life.** God will diligently seek restitution of a life for a life (Genesis 9:5; cf. bāqash). In at least one instance this stipulation is evoked and divinely executed (2 Chron. 24:22, 24; Psalm 9:12 [H 13]; Psalm 10:4). To fail in declaring God's work puts a "shepherd" (a minister) under this divine sentence (Ezekiel 33:6). All pronouncements from divine messengers (prophets) require human acceptance and obedience whether miraculously attested or not (Deut. 13:1ff.) if they are consistent with previous revelation even if they add thereto (Deut. 18:22; John 7:40; Acts 3:22f.). Ultimately, God requires justice, lovingkindness, and a humble walk (Micah 6:8; cf. Ezekiel 20:40). (See online [TWOT](#))

**Gilbrant** - **Dārash** occurs over one hundred fifty times and generally means "to seek" or "to inquire." In Lev. 10:16 the meaning is more intensive. Paired with a modifier, the term describes how Moses seeks to find out in detail what happened to the sin offering, and in 2 Sam. 11:3 when David sought to find out who Bathsheba was. It also occurs in Jer. 29:7 when the exiles are told to seek the peace and prosperity of the city in which they have been exiled. It is used negatively in Deut. 23:6. Moses told the people to seek a treaty with the Ammonites or Moabites. Israel was told to seek carefully the place God would choose for sacrifices (Deut. 12:5) and justice (Isa. 1:17). In the end, Jerusalem, the place no one seeks (Jer. 30:17), will be the place "sought out" (Isa. 62:12).

**An important theological theme can be demonstrated around the idea of "seeking," "consulting" or "inquiring" of God** In Gen. 25:22, Rebekah inquired of the Lord; in Exo. 18:15, Moses told Jethro that the people came to him to seek God's will; in 1 Ki. 22:8, Ahab told Jehoshaphat that they may inquire of the Lord through Micaiah. There are also times when the people "inquired" of

something else. In 1 Chr. 13:3, David told the people they needed to bring back the Ark of the Lord, because they did not inquire of it in the past. In 1 Ki. 22:5, Jehoshaphat tells Ahab to inquire of the word of the Lord. In Isa. 34:16, instruction is given to inquire of the book of the Lord. The idea of seeking heathen gods and prophets is also developed with this word in Ezek. 14:10 which says punishment will come to those who seek false prophets. In 1 Sam. 28:7, Saul desired to inquire of a medium. In 1 Chr. 10:13, one of the reasons for Saul's death is attributed to his seeking counsel of a medium.

The idea of "seeking" God is also developed through the use of *dārash* (Deut. 4:29). In fact, the chronicler evaluated the history of Israel in terms of their seeking God (1 Chr. 22:19; 28:9; 2 Chr. 31:21) or idols (2 Chr. 25:15). Isaiah reported Israel's refusal to seek God in spite of divine chastening (Isa. 9:13). Israel was instructed to seek the Lord (Isa. 55:6; Jer. 29:13; Hos. 10:12), but it is the Gentiles who would seek out the messianic King (Isa. 11:10). The people of Israel are reproved for "seeking" Him while continuing in their sins (Isa. 58:2), but are promised blessings if they genuinely seek him (Isa. 65:10). A person may also seek God through prayer and worship. In Deut. 4:29, the people were told that they would find God if they sought Him with all their heart. In Hos. 10:12 the prophet stated that it was time to seek the Lord. Amos 5:4, 6 says that those who seek the Lord shall live.

Theologically, *dārash* is also used of divine vengeance on those who take a life. God will seek restitution of a life for a life (Gen. 9:5; 2 Chr. 24:22, 24). The verb is also used in more common ways. In Deut. 22:2, it refers to "looking for" sheep. The Lord "looks for" his sheep (Ezek. 34:6, 8, 11). The Lord searches out men's hearts (1 Chr. 28:9). Various matters may be inquired about: a miraculous sign (2 Chr. 32:31) and sin (Job 10:6). ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

**Darash - 152 verses - ask(1), avenge(1), calls(1), care(1), cares(3), comes the reckoning(1), consult(2), consulted by them at all(1), demand(1), inquire(33), inquired(5), inquirer(1), investigate(3), investigated(1), looks(2), making inquiry(1), questioned(1), require(7), required(1), requires(1), resort(3), search(6), searched(1), searched carefully(1), searches(2), seek(53), seek after(1), seeking(2), seeks(3), sought(18), studied(1), study(1), surely require(1).** Gen. 9:5; Gen. 25:22; Gen. 42:22; Exod. 18:15; Lev. 10:16; Deut. 4:29; Deut. 11:12; Deut. 12:5; Deut. 12:30; Deut. 13:14; Deut. 17:4; Deut. 17:9; Deut. 18:11; Deut. 18:19; Deut. 19:18; Deut. 22:2; Deut. 23:6; Deut. 23:21; Jdg. 6:29; 1 Sam. 9:9; 1 Sam. 28:7; 2 Sam. 11:3; 1 Ki. 14:5; 1 Ki. 22:5; 1 Ki. 22:7; 1 Ki. 22:8; 2 Ki. 1:2; 2 Ki. 1:3; 2 Ki. 1:6; 2 Ki. 1:16; 2 Ki. 3:11; 2 Ki. 8:8; 2 Ki. 22:13; 2 Ki. 22:18; 1 Chr. 10:13; 1 Chr. 10:14; 1 Chr. 13:3; 1 Chr. 15:13; 1 Chr. 16:11; 1 Chr. 21:30; 1 Chr. 22:19; 1 Chr. 26:31; 1 Chr. 28:8; 1 Chr. 28:9; 2 Chr. 1:5; 2 Chr. 12:14; 2 Chr. 14:4; 2 Chr. 14:7; 2 Chr. 15:2; 2 Chr. 15:12; 2 Chr. 15:13; 2 Chr. 16:12; 2 Chr. 17:3; 2 Chr. 17:4; 2 Chr. 18:4; 2 Chr. 18:6; 2 Chr. 18:7; 2 Chr. 19:3; 2 Chr. 20:3; 2 Chr. 22:9; 2 Chr. 24:6; 2 Chr. 24:22; 2 Chr. 25:15; 2 Chr. 25:20; 2 Chr. 26:5; 2 Chr. 30:19; 2 Chr. 31:9; 2 Chr. 31:21; 2 Chr. 32:31; 2 Chr. 34:3; 2 Chr. 34:21; 2 Chr. 34:26; Ezr. 4:2; Ezr. 6:21; Ezr. 7:10; Ezr. 9:12; Ezr. 10:16; Est. 10:3; Job 3:4; Job 5:8; Job 10:6; Job 39:8; Ps. 9:10; Ps. 9:12; Ps. 10:4; Ps. 10:13; Ps. 10:15; Ps. 14:2; Ps. 22:26; Ps. 24:6; Ps. 34:4; Ps. 34:10; Ps. 38:12; Ps. 53:2; Ps. 69:32; Ps. 77:2; Ps. 78:34; Ps. 105:4; Ps. 109:10; Ps. 111:2; Ps. 119:2; Ps. 119:10; Ps. 119:45; Ps. 119:94; Ps. 119:155; Ps. 142:4; Prov. 11:27; Prov. 31:13; Eccl. 1:13; Isa. 1:17; Isa. 8:19; Isa. 9:13; Isa. 11:10; Isa. 16:5; Isa. 19:3; Isa. 31:1; Isa. 34:16; Isa. 55:6; Isa. 58:2; Isa. 62:12; Isa. 65:1; Isa. 65:10; Jer. 8:2; Jer. 10:21; Jer. 21:2; Jer. 29:7; Jer. 29:13; Jer. 30:14; Jer. 30:17; Jer. 37:7; Jer. 38:4; Lam. 3:25; Ezek. 14:3; Ezek. 14:7; Ezek. 14:10; Ezek. 20:1; Ezek. 20:3; Ezek. 20:31; Ezek. 20:40; Ezek. 33:6; Ezek. 34:6; Ezek. 34:8; Ezek. 34:10; Ezek. 34:11; Ezek. 36:37; Hos. 10:12; Amos 5:4; Amos 5:5; Amos 5:6; Amos 5:14; Mic. 6:8; Zeph. 1:6

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**Norman Geisler - [goto page 181 in When Critics Ask](#) -**

**1 Chronicles 10:14—Did Saul inquire of the Lord or not?**

**PROBLEM:** 1 Samuel 28:6 says "when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord did not answer him." However, this verse says just the opposite, namely, "he [Saul] did not inquire of the Lord; therefore He killed him." But how can both be true?

**SOLUTION:** It should be noted first that two different words with different meanings are used here. Samuel uses the Hebrew word *shaal*, which usually means simply to ask, to consult, or to request. Chronicles, however, uses the word *darash* which often means to search for, or to seek after. In other words, Saul did not sincerely inquire of the Lord because He really wanted to know God's will, but because he was hoping God would agree with his will.

In brief, Saul inquired casually but not sincerely. He went through the ritual, but he was not seeking the reality.

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**[Apologetics Study Bible \(see note\)](#)** Why didn't the Lord answer Saul's plea for help? The Bible teaches that people who consistently reject God's leadership in their lives, and refuse to follow the guidance He has already provided, should not expect Him to deliver them from trouble resulting from their poor choices (Job 27:9; 35:12; Pr 1:23-28; Is 1:15; Jer 11:11; 14:12; Ezek 8:18; Mic 3:4; Zech 7:13; James 4:3). **Saul had consistently disobeyed God** (1Sa 13:13-14; 15:11-23), even going so far as to kill the Lord's

priests (1Sa 22:17-19). He had created vast problems for himself and his nation. The Lord was not going to promise the king supernatural deliverance from those problems, even though Saul earnestly sought His help. Instead, God would use the Philistines as the instrument of judgment against Saul.

**1 Samuel 28:6 When Saul inquired of the LORD** "says that Saul inquired of the Lord, while 1Ch 10:14 says he did not. The contradiction is apparent only in English translations. In this verse Saul **"asked"** (Heb da-ras; "inquired of") the Lord to provide guidance, but the Lord did not answer him. In 1Ch 10:13-14 Saul "asked" (Hb da-ras; "consulted") a medium for guidance but did not "seek" (Heb darash; "inquire of") the Lord. The point is that Saul died because he committed a capital offense in consulting a medium (see Lev 20:27) rather than seeking to obey God."

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#### **F B Meyer - Endor and Gilboa (SAMUEL 28; 1 CHRONICLES 10:13)**

Earth fades! Heaven breaks on me; I shall stand next  
Before God's throne; the moment's close at hand  
When man the first, last time, has leave to lay  
His whole heart bare before His Maker....

—R. B.

YEARS had passed since David's sling had brought Goliath to the ground, and the Philistines had fled headlong at Ephesdammim before the onset of the men of Israel. A new invasion was now planned to revenge that disgrace, and re-establish the Philistine supremacy over the plain of Esdraelon, which was the necessary link between the wealthy cities of the Euphrates Valley and the vast market for their wares and produce furnished by the cities of the Nile Valley. To hold that great trade-route involved the right to impose very valuable taxation on the merchandise transported to and fro—hence the desire to hold its keys. The tides of Philistine invasion, therefore, poured up by the seacoast route, which was favourable for the evolutions of the Philistine chariots and cavalry, and a strongly fortified camp was formed at Shunem, about three and a half miles north of Jezreel, and celebrated in aftertime as the abode of the rich woman who so hospitably entertained the prophet Elisha.

Hastily gathering what forces he could collect, Saul marched northwards, and pitched his camp on the slopes of Mount Gilboa, four miles distant from the invading army, and on the south of the Great Plain. "Green plains rising from the level of the Kishon lead to the slopes of Gilboa, swelling after a time into low heights, which rise bare and stony. Behind these the many summits of the hills shoot up abruptly some five or six hundred feet, bleak, white, and barren, their only growths spots of scrub oak and mountain thorns and flowers, which in spring at least are never wanting in Palestine."

The sight of the great force which was arrayed against him seems to have completely paralysed Saul's courage. He contrasted the complete accoutrements of the Philistines with the spears and slings of Israel, and "his heart trembled greatly." The heroic courage which faith might have brought him was not now possible, since the sense of God's presence was withdrawn. There was no rift in the black canopy of despair that overshadowed his terror-stricken soul. He could say with another, "Behold I go forward, but He is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him; on the left hand, where He doth work, but I cannot behold Him; He hideth Himself on the right hand that I cannot see Him" (Job 23:8). It was to this that the terrible series of tragedies, which we are now about to narrate, must be attributed. The restraining grace of God, which he had so long despised and resisted, no longer strove with him, and he was left to follow the promptings of those evil spirits—"the rulers of the darkness of this world"—who, for mysterious purposes, are permitted to assail the sons of men.

True, he inquired of the Lord, for probably the first time after the lapse of many years; but there was no repentance or confession of sin, only abject terror and frantic despair. Therefore "the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets." "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."

**I. ENDOR.**—At some previous period, as we have seen, "Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land." He may have done this in one of those strange lucid moments when he became conscious of the strivings of God's good Spirit, or as a set-off to the wild strivings of passion of which he was guiltily conscious—so often men seek to atone for the sins into which they have been betrayed, by some strong outward act, intended as a make-weight in the other scale, or a sop to an uneasy conscience. It became clear, however, that he had no heartfelt abhorrence of the crimes he thus punished, seeing that in his own dire extremity he had recourse to the very arts he had striven to abolish, and sought from the mouth of hell the help for which he had appealed to heaven in vain!

About two miles north from Shunem, in the rear, therefore, of the Philistine army, lay the little village of Endor. It was one of those spots from which Manasseh had failed to expel the old population; and amongst these, the descendants of the ancient Canaanites, was an old woman who professed to be able to bring up the souls of the dead. It is likely enough that her claims were baseless. By ventriloquism and sleight of hand she no doubt simulated the voice and appearance of those who seemed to come from the other world at her bidding. If there was more than that, we do not hesitate to affirm our belief that in all ages demons have been in

collusion with necromancers and spiritualists, and have answered to their call. This is at the root and heart of the phenomena of modern spiritualism.

Heavily cloaked and disguised, accompanied by two trusty companions whom tradition has identified as Abner and Amasa, Saul set forth in the early hours of the night, crossed the plain, made a detour round the eastern shoulder of Little Hermon, and arrived safely at the witch's dwelling. The door opened to admit them to the house, and amid the dark weirdness of the interior, revealed by the glimmering light of a brazier, choked with smoke, the woman was quite unable to recognise the features of the haggard man who accosted her with the request that she should bring up whomsoever he should name.

At first she hesitated, reminding him how perilous her profession was, and suggesting that to give him satisfaction might cost her life. "Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits and wizards out of the land; wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die?"

With an oath which strangely implicated the God whom he was at that moment denying, and with a touch of his kingly prerogative the king assured her that no punishment should befall her for doing what he requested. "As the Lord liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing."

Thus reassured, the woman asked whom she should bring up; but she must have been not a little startled, when in a hoarse whisper, as of one paralysed and awestruck by his weird surroundings, the King said, "Bring me up Samuel."

Retiring from him to a distance, the wretched woman began her incantations, perhaps dropping a powder on the coals of the brazier, muttering incantations in a low voice, making passes and adjurations. But before she had completed her preparations the Almighty seems to have interfered, sending back his faithful servant from the world beyond the article of death, so that the witch might not even appear to have the credit of securing so wonderful a visitation. "The woman saw Samuel."

At the same moment that she recognised Samuel, she seems to have recognised Saul also. Startled and frightened for her life she called with a loud voice, and spake unto Saul, saying, "Why hast thou deceived me?" Perhaps in her excited condition of soul, she was endowed with that supernatural insight which we call clairvoyance; or perhaps there was something in Samuel's appearance so startlingly vivid and real that she was led in that dread hour to connect prophet and king as in years gone by; or perhaps the king in his eagerness had drawn near, and had dropped the mantle which veiled his face and figure. But however it befell, she saw through his disguise, and in horror-stricken tones, cried, "Thou art Saul!"

Again he reassured her, and asked her what she had seen.

"A majestic being, worthy to be God," she replied, "arising as if from out of the earth."

Pressed by Saul to describe his appearance more minutely, for she was beholding a mysterious form, which, though present in the same chamber as himself, was veiled from him, she said, "He resembles an old man covered with a robe." "And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he bowed with his face to the ground, and made obeisance."

Very touching and thrilling was the conversation that followed. I am disposed to think that it was held without the medium of the witch, and that God permitted the prophet to speak with Saul, as afterwards Moses and Elijah to speak with our Lord of the decease to be presently accomplished at Jerusalem. It is likely that these sentences were actually interchanged between the king and his former friend and confidant, to whom he turned remorsefully in his awful agony. Do you not think that if, even then, Saul had turned to Jehovah with tears of confession and the simplicity of faith, he would have been answered according to the multitude of the Divine compassions? Assuredly he would; but there was no sign of such a change of temper.

Samuel did not wait to be questioned, but sadly told the awestruck king that, even in the other life, his misdoings had filled his spirit with unrest, so much so that he could not forbear returning to speak to him once more. "Why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up?"

Saul's answer was that of despair. "I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams; therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do."

But from the lips of the prophet came no words of comfort or hope. It was useless to ask of the servant the help which was denied by the Master. There was no gain in evading the fact that God Himself was on the side of David, and against the king, whose reign had begun with such fair promise. The multiplied misfortunes which had befallen him and his realm were due to his disobedience to the direct instructions issued with respect to Amalek. The sin which he had now perpetrated had put the last touch on all his transgressions. Nothing, at this hour, could stay or avert the descending avalanche. As he had sown, he must reap; as he had fallen, so he must lie. It was, therefore, revealed that the Lord would deliver Israel also with him into the hand of the Philistines, and on the morrow Saul and his sons should have also passed into the world of spirits; the Hebrew host would be annihilated, the camp

sacked, and the land left to the fate which the conquerors of those days knew well how to expect.

Little wonder was it that the king fell straightway his full length upon the earth, and was sore afraid. He was already weak with watching and fasting through the previous day; the events of the night had completely unnerved him; and his nervous system collapsed under the terrible strain. Even the callous nature of the witch was smitten with compunction and pity. Her woman's nature was thoroughly aroused by the awful horror that lay on the King's soul. She besought him to eat. By the trust she had reposed in him she pleaded that she had some claim on his mercy, to be expended not for her, but for him. "Let me set a morsel of bread," she pleaded, "before thee; and eat, that thou mayest have strength when thou goest on thy way."

At first he refused. It seemed as though he would never rise again from the mud-floor on which all the glory of his manhood lay prone. "But his servants, together with the woman, constrained him; and he hearkened unto their voice. So he arose from the earth, and sat upon the bed." What memories must have passed before his mind, as he sat on that divan, whilst the woman hastened to prepare the meal! Did he not remember the first happy days of his reign; Jabesh-gilead; the overthrow of the Philistines, not once or twice; and the love of his people? But, step by step, he saw how he had gone down from the sunlit summits to the dark valley, where the black torrent ran, and the overhanging rocks met overhead. As with a drowning man, the whole of his previous career passes before him in a moment of time, so the whole panorama of his past must have stood in clear outline before the mental vision of the king. Then, after hastily partaking of the calf and the unleavened cakes, the three figures stole through the darkness, back to the camp.

**II. GILBOA.**—On the morrow there was some slight alteration in the disposition of the respective hosts. The Philistines moved towards Aphek, a little to the west of their camp; while the Israelites descended from the heights of Gilboa, and took up a position near the spring or fountain of Jezreel (1Sa 29:1).

Presently the battle was joined. In spite of the most desperate efforts to withstand the onset of the heavily mailed troops that were opposed to them, the Hebrews were routed, and fled from before the Philistines. It is expressly noted by the historian that the lower slopes of Gilboa were covered by the wounded, whose hearts' blood bedewed the mountain pastures (31:1, R. V. margin).

Saul and Jonathan made the most desperate efforts to retrieve the day:

"From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty,  
The bow of Jonathan turned not back  
And the sword of Saul returned not empty."

But it was in vain. "The battle went sore against Saul." "The Philistines slew Jonathan and Abinadab and Melchishua, the sons of Saul." The flower of his army lay strewn around him; the chivalry of Israel was quenched in rivers of blood. Then, leaving all others, the Philistines concentrated their attack on that lordly figure which towered amid the fugitives, the royal crown on his helmet, the royal bracelet flashing on his arm. "The Philistines followed hard upon Saul ... and the archers overtook him, and he was greatly distressed because of the archers." He knew what fate awaited him if he was captured whilst his life was yet in him. Exposed to ignominy, tortured to death, it seemed to him that immediate death were far preferable to such a fate. "Then said Saul to his armour-bearer, Draw thy sword and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and make a mock of me."

The armour-bearer dared not lift up his hand against the sacred person of his king, so Saul, placing his sword-hilt firmly in the earth, fell upon the point, which pierced his heart.

The narrative which the Amalekite gave afterwards to David suggests that the effort to take his life was not at once successful; and he seems to have asked this child of a race which he was once bidden utterly to destroy, to give him the last finishing stroke. "He said unto me, Stand, I pray thee, over me, and slay me; for anguish hath taken hold of me; because my life is yet whole in me." It may be, however, that all this was a fabrication, intended to win David's favour; for we are told that when the armour-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he likewise fell upon his sword, and died with him.

The day of Gilboa was a veritable Chevy Chase. "Saul died, and his three sons, and his armour-bearer, and all his men, that same day together." The next day the Philistines set to work to strip the dead, and finding the bodies of Saul and his sons, they despatched their heads, armour, and decapitated corpses to be carried in triumph through the streets of their principal cities, and finally to be affixed to the walls of Beth-shan. As the tidings spread, the people left the towns and villages in the neighbourhood, and fled across the Jordan. Roving bands followed up the victory, and carried fire and sword into all parts of the land. It was the tidings of their approach to Gibeah that caused the accident to Mephibosheth. "He was five years old when the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel, and his nurse took him up and fled; and it came to pass, as she made haste to flee, that he fell, and he became lame" (2Sa 4:4).

One brave deed relieved the sombre hues of that terrible catastrophe. The men of Jabesh-gilead could not forget how nobly Saul had come to their aid in the early days of his reign; and they resolved, at least, to retrieve the royal body from the ignominy to which

Philistine malice had exposed it. The valiant men therefore arose, and went all night, took down the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the temple walls, bore them reverently back to Jabesh, burnt them to conceal the hideous mutilation to which they had been subjected, buried them under "the tamarisk tree in Jabesh," and lamented with unfeigned grief this tragic close to a reign which had been once as a morning without clouds.

It is an awful thing when a man persists, as Saul and as Judas, to the end striving against God. We feel that it was a dreadful thing to do as he did; we are horrified at his temerity; we marvel at his infatuation; yet we may fall into his wicked ways, and be overcome of evil as he was. We, too, may have resort to things, habits, and people which we had once religiously tabooed. We, too, are liable to step back to our undoing. If a man, having felt the evil of covetousness, and set himself against the love of money, after a while allows it again to invade his soul; if a man has been a slave of his appetites, and having realised their degrading tendencies, has acted, for a while, on a vow of temperance, but has gradually allowed them to resume their former sway; if after years of irreligion he has begun to be in earnest about his soul, but has again relapsed into moral apathy—is not this like Saul seeking help in the cave of the enchantress, whose class he had proscribed? Such men are wells without water, clouds carried before the blast of the tempest, for whom, in the words of the apostle, is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever: "For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse than the beginning; for it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they had known it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered unto them."