

## 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 14

Verses 1 - 5

Now the day came that Jonathan, the son of Saul, said to the young man who was carrying his armor, “Come and let us cross over to the Philistines’ garrison that is on the other side.” But he did not tell his father. <sup>2</sup> Saul was staying in the outskirts of Gibeah under the pomegranate tree which is in Migron. And the people who were with him were about six hundred men, <sup>3</sup> and Ahijah, the son of Ahitub, Ichabod’s brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the priest of the Lord at Shiloh, was wearing an ephod. And the people did not know that Jonathan had gone. <sup>4</sup> Between the passes by which Jonathan sought to cross over to the Philistines’ garrison, there was a sharp crag on the one side and a sharp crag on the other side, and the name of the one was Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh. <sup>5</sup> The one crag rose on the north opposite Michmash, and the other on the south opposite Geba.

Now the day came that Jonathan, the son of Saul, said to the young man who was carrying his armor, “Come and let us cross over to the Philistines’ garrison that is on the other side.” But he did not tell his father.

He probably knew that his father would never approve of this action.

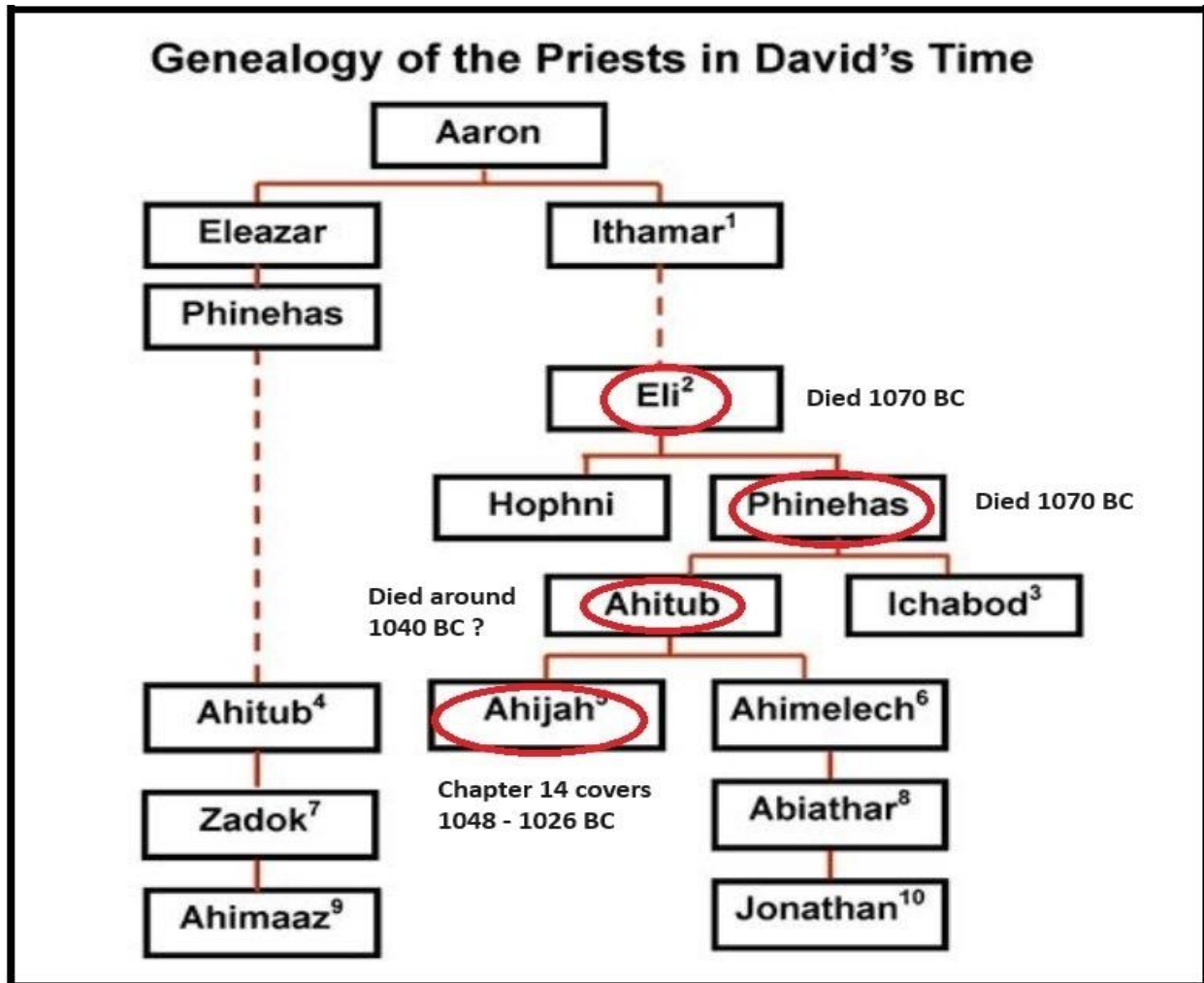
<sup>2</sup> Saul was staying in the outskirts of Gibeah under the pomegranate tree.

Saul and his men were north of Gibeah. This was about an hour's march from Geba, where Jonathan was. See map 1405



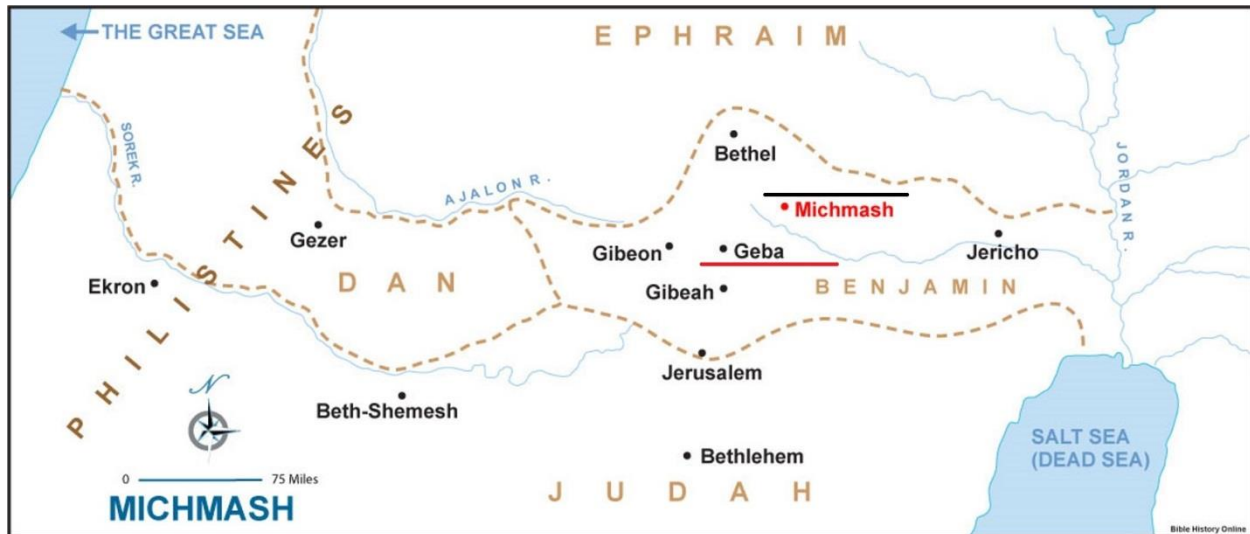
And the people who were with him were about six hundred men, <sup>3</sup> and Ahijah, the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the priest of the Lord at Shiloh, was wearing an ephod.

See chart 1410



Ahijah is a great-grandson of Eli and the text says he is the priest of the Lord at Shiloh. The Town of Shiloh was destroyed in 1070 BC by the Philistines but it seems the town had been rebuilt and reoccupied by the Jews.

<sup>4</sup> Between the passes by which Jonathan sought to cross over to the Philistines' garrison, there was a sharp crag on the one side and a sharp crag on the other side, and the name of the one was Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh. <sup>5</sup> The one crag rose on the north opposite Michmash, and the other on the south opposite Geba. See map 1415



The black line is the northern crag and the red line is the southern crag. It would have been difficult for Saul who was on the outskirts of Gibeah to help his son Jonathan who was on the other side of the southern crag.

Verses 6 - 15

Then Jonathan said to the young man who was carrying his armor, “Come and let us cross over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; perhaps the Lord will work for us, for the Lord is not restrained to save by many or by few.”<sup>7</sup> His armor bearer said to him, “Do all that is in your heart; turn yourself, *and* here I am with you according to your desire.”<sup>8</sup> Then Jonathan said, “Behold, we will cross over to the men and reveal ourselves to them.<sup>9</sup> If they say to us, ‘Wait until we come to you’; then we will stand in our place and not go up to them.<sup>10</sup> But if they say, ‘Come up to us,’ then we will go up, for the Lord has given them into our hands; and this shall be the sign to us.”<sup>11</sup> When both of them revealed themselves to the garrison of the Philistines, the Philistines said, “Behold, Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they have hidden themselves.”<sup>12</sup> So the men of the garrison hailed Jonathan and his armor bearer and said, “Come up to us and we will tell you something.” And Jonathan said to his armor bearer, “Come up after me, for the Lord has given them into the hands of Israel.”<sup>13</sup> Then Jonathan climbed up on his hands and feet, with his armor bearer behind him; and they fell before Jonathan, and his armor bearer put some to death after him.<sup>14</sup> That first slaughter which Jonathan and his armor bearer made was about twenty men within about half a furrow in an acre of land.<sup>15</sup> And there was a trembling in the camp, in the field, and among all the people. Even the garrison and the raiders trembled, and the earth quaked so that it became a great trembling.

**Then Jonathan said to the young man who was carrying his armor, “Come and let us cross over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; perhaps the Lord will work for us, for the Lord is not restrained to save by many or by few.”**

Jonathan demonstrates the faith of a believer by indicating that the Lord can bring a victory thru many or by few but he also admitted that people of faith often don't know if something they are planning is part of God's will (perhaps).

**<sup>8</sup> Then Jonathan said, “Behold, we will cross over to the men and reveal ourselves to them. <sup>9</sup> If they say to us, ‘Wait until we come to you’; then we will stand in our place and not go up to them. <sup>10</sup> But if they say, ‘Come up to us,’ then we will go up, for the Lord has given them into our hands; and this shall be the sign to us.”**

Since Jonathan didn't know if his plan was part of God's will, he asked God to reveal His will by letting the enemy respond in one of two ways.

On the other hand, people should take care not to test the Lord.

See Matthew 4:5 - 7

**<sup>5</sup> Then the devil \*took Him along into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, <sup>6</sup> and he \*said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written:**

**‘He will give His angels orders concerning You’;  
and ‘On *their* hands they will lift You up,  
So that You do not strike Your foot against a stone.’”**

**<sup>7</sup> Jesus said to him, “On the other hand, it is written: ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’”**

Sometimes in life we might find ourselves in a precarious situation and we should appeal to God for His help but we should not knowingly put ourselves in precarious situations forcing God to come to our aid.

**<sup>12</sup> So the men of the garrison hailed Jonathan and his armor bearer and said, “Come up to us and we will tell you something.”**

This response was very suspicious but Jonathan and his armor bearer went up because they had made an oath to God concerning this matter.

**<sup>14</sup> That first slaughter which Jonathan and his armor bearer made was about twenty men within about half a furrow in an acre of land. <sup>15</sup> And there was a trembling in the camp, in the field, and among all the people. Even the garrison and the raiders trembled, and the earth quaked so that it became a great trembling.**

The length of a furrow is 1/8<sup>th</sup> of a mile. So a half furrow would be 1/16<sup>th</sup> of a mile or the length of a football field. Jonathan and his armor bearer killed 20 men in an area the size of a football field.

God intervened on Israel's behalf in two ways:

1. Creating fear in the hearts of the Philistines.
2. Causing an earthquake to take place.

Verses 16 - 23

**Now Saul's watchmen in Gibeah of Benjamin looked, and behold, the multitude melted away; and they went here and *there*. <sup>17</sup> Saul said to the people who *were* with him, "Number now and see who has gone from us." And when they had numbered, behold, Jonathan and his armor bearer were not *there*. <sup>18</sup> Then Saul said to Ahijah, "Bring the ark of God here." For the ark of God was at that time with the sons of Israel. <sup>19</sup> While Saul talked to the priest, the commotion in the camp of the Philistines continued and increased; so Saul said to the priest, "Withdraw your hand." <sup>20</sup> Then Saul and all the people who *were* with him rallied and came to the battle; and behold, every man's sword was against his fellow, *and there was very great confusion*. <sup>21</sup> Now the Hebrews *who were* with the Philistines previously, who went up with them all around in the camp, even they also *turned* to be with the Israelites who *were* with Saul and Jonathan. <sup>22</sup> When all the men of Israel who had hidden themselves in the hill country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines had fled, even they also pursued them closely in the battle. <sup>23</sup> So the Lord delivered Israel that day, and the battle spread beyond Beth-aven.**

**<sup>18</sup> Then Saul said to Ahijah, "Bring the ark of God here." For the ark of God was at that time with the sons of Israel.**

The Septuagint has the following:

**And Saul said to Achia, Bring the ephod; for he wore the ephod in that day before Israel.**

**19 While Saul talked to the priest, the commotion in the camp of the Philistines continued and increased; so Saul said to the priest, “Withdraw your hand.”**

This verse confirms that the text in the Septuagint is correct because Saul told the priest to withdraw his hand meaning from the pouch in the ephod where the Urim & Thummin were stored.

Saul was in the process of making an inquiry of God’s will but he changed his mind and decided not to complete the process. Instead he rallied his troops and joined the battle. Had he waited, he would have avoided the errors that followed.

**20 Then Saul and all the people who were with him rallied and came to the battle; and behold, every man’s sword was against his fellow, and there was very great confusion.**

We know this refers to the Philistines because the men of Israel did not have any swords except for Saul and Jonathan.

**21 Now the Hebrews *who were with the Philistines previously*, who went up with them all around in the camp, even they also *turned* to be with the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan.**

Many Israelites had forsaken Saul and joined the Philistines but when it became evident that Israel was winning, they changed sides again.

**22 When all the men of Israel who had hidden themselves in the hill country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines had fled, even they also pursued them closely in the battle.**

Also, the Israelites who had been hiding in the caves joined in the pursuit.

**23 So the Lord delivered Israel that day, and the battle spread beyond Beth-aven.**

Somewhere along the way, over the last 400 years, it seems the people of Israel should have figured out that the battles they had won happened by the hand of God.

How many times has God won the battle for Israel by confusing the enemy to such an extent that they end up fighting and killing themselves.

Verses 24 -30

Now the men of Israel were hard-pressed on that day, for Saul had put the people under oath, saying, “Cursed be the man who eats food before evening, and until I have avenged myself on my enemies.” So none of the people tasted food. <sup>25</sup> All *the people of the land* entered the forest, and there was honey on the ground. <sup>26</sup> When the people entered the forest, behold, *there was* a flow of honey; but no man put his hand to his mouth, for the people feared the oath. <sup>27</sup> But Jonathan had not heard when his father put the people under oath; therefore, he put out the end of the staff that *was* in his hand and dipped it in the honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth, and his eyes brightened. <sup>28</sup> Then one of the people said, “Your father strictly put the people under oath, saying, ‘Cursed be the man who eats food today.’” And the people were weary. <sup>29</sup> Then Jonathan said, “My father has troubled the land. See now, how my eyes have brightened because I tasted a little of this honey. <sup>30</sup> How much more, if only the people had eaten freely today of the spoil of their enemies which they found! For now the slaughter among the Philistines has not been great.”

Now the men of Israel were hard-pressed on that day, for Saul had put the people under oath, saying, “Cursed be the man who eats food before evening, and until I have avenged myself on my enemies.” So none of the people tasted food.

Jephthah made a foolish oath and it cost him the life of his daughter.

See Judges 11:30-31

<sup>30</sup> And Jephthah made a vow to the LORD and said, “If You will indeed hand over to me the sons of Ammon, <sup>31</sup> then whatever comes out the doors of my house to meet me when I return <sup>1</sup>safely from the sons of Ammon, it shall be the LORD’s, and I will offer it up as a burnt offering.”

<sup>29</sup> Then Jonathan said, “My father has troubled the land. See now, how my eyes have brightened because I tasted a little of this honey. <sup>30</sup> How much more, if only the people had eaten freely today of the spoil of their enemies which they found! For now the slaughter among the Philistines has not been great.”

Here we see the result of Saul’s foolish oath. All of the people were deprived of the honey and the supplies of the Philistines that had been left behind which left the men fatigued and unable to fight to their best ability.



Verses 31 - 35

They struck among the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon. And the people were very weary. <sup>32</sup> The people rushed greedily upon the spoil, and took sheep and oxen and calves, and slew *them* on the ground; and the people ate *them* with the blood. <sup>33</sup> Then they told Saul, saying, “Behold, the people are sinning against the Lord by eating with the blood.” And he said, “You have acted treacherously; roll a great stone to me today.” <sup>34</sup> Saul said, “Disperse yourselves among the people and say to them, ‘Each one of you bring me his ox or his sheep, and slaughter *it* here and eat; and do not sin against the Lord by eating with the blood.’” So all the people that night brought each one his ox with him and slaughtered *it* there. <sup>35</sup> And Saul built an altar to the Lord; it was the first altar that he built to the Lord.

They struck among the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon.

See Map 1420



And the people were very weary. <sup>32</sup> The people rushed greedily upon the spoil, and took sheep and oxen and calves, and slew *them* on the ground; and the people ate *them* with the blood.

The people were so hungry they did not take the time that was needed to properly bleed the animals they slew.

This could have been avoided if Saul had not made his foolish oath.



**<sup>34</sup> Saul said, “Disperse yourselves among the people and say to them, ‘Each one of you bring me his ox or his sheep, and slaughter *it* here and eat; and do not sin against the Lord by eating with the blood.’” So all the people that night brought each one his ox with him and slaughtered *it* there.**

Saul must have assumed that if the people were together in one place they would act more responsibly and bleed the animals according to the law.

**<sup>35</sup> And Saul built an altar to the Lord; it was the first altar that he built to the Lord.**

Saul may have recognized that he was partly responsible for the sin of the people when they ate the blood with the meat and decided to make an altar so the priest could offer a sacrifice for his sin and the sin of the people.

Verses 36 - 42

**Then Saul said, “Let us go down after the Philistines by night and take spoil among them until the morning light, and let us not leave a man of them.” And they said, “Do whatever seems good to you.” So the priest said, “Let us draw near to God here.” <sup>37</sup> Saul inquired of God, “Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will You give them into the hand of Israel?” But He did not answer him on that day. <sup>38</sup> Saul said, “Draw near here, all you chiefs of the people, and investigate and see how this sin has happened today. <sup>39</sup> For as the Lord lives, who delivers Israel, though it is in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die.” But not one of all the people answered him. <sup>40</sup> Then he said to all Israel, “You shall be on one side and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other side.” And the people said to Saul, “Do what seems good to you.” <sup>41</sup> Therefore, Saul said to the Lord, the God of Israel, “Give a perfect *lot*.” And Jonathan and Saul were taken, but the people escaped. <sup>42</sup> Saul said, “Cast *lots* between me and Jonathan my son.” And Jonathan was taken.**

**Then Saul said, “Let us go down after the Philistines by night and take spoil among them until the morning light, and let us not leave a man of them.”**

After everyone had eaten Saul encouraged the men to continue the battle against the Philistines during the night. The men were willing to do as the king wanted but the priest put a pause to that idea by suggesting they consult God first.

**So the priest said, “Let us draw near to God here.”<sup>37</sup> Saul inquired of God, “Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will You give them into the hand of Israel?” But He did not answer him on that day.**

Since the Urim & Thummin answered questions with a yes or a no it is puzzling how Saul did not get an answer that day. Perhaps they were relying on some kind of sign.

**<sup>38</sup> Saul said, “Draw near here, all you chiefs of the people, and investigate and see how this sin has happened today.<sup>39</sup> For as the Lord lives, who delivers Israel, though it is in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die.” But not one of all the people answered him.**

With the battle halted for the night Saul decided to have the leaders investigate who disobeyed his order about not eating until evening.

Here again Saul makes another rash statement (or should we call it an oath) that even if Jonathan had broken the oath, he would be put to death.

**<sup>41</sup> Therefore, Saul said to the Lord, the God of Israel, “Give a perfect *lot*.” And Jonathan and Saul were taken, but the people escaped.<sup>42</sup> Saul said, “Cast *lots* between me and Jonathan my son.” And Jonathan was taken.**

Saul probably already knew who had done it but followed the lawful means of discovering who the guilty party was. However, Saul made the answer come quicker by putting himself and Jonathan on one side and the people on the other side.

Verses 43 - 46

**Then Saul said to Jonathan, “Tell me what you have done.” So Jonathan told him and said, “I indeed tasted a little honey with the end of the staff that was in my hand. Here I am, I must die!”<sup>44</sup> Saul said, “May God do this *to me* and more also, for you shall surely die, Jonathan.”<sup>45</sup> But the people said to Saul, “Must Jonathan die, who has brought about this great deliverance in Israel? Far from it! As the Lord lives, not one hair of his head shall fall to the ground, for he has worked with God this day.” So the people rescued Jonathan and he did not die.<sup>46</sup> Then Saul went up from pursuing the Philistines, and the Philistines went to their own place.**

<sup>45</sup> But the people said to Saul, “**Must Jonathan die, who has brought about this great deliverance in Israel? Far from it! As the Lord lives, not one hair of his head shall fall to the ground, for he has worked with God this day.”**

The battle with the Philistines started when Jonathan and his armor bearer attacked the Philistines and killed 20 of them at Michmash. Then God made the Philistines and the earth tremble that Israel might have a great victory that day. The true hero of this story was Jonathan not the King.

<sup>46</sup> Then Saul went up from pursuing the Philistines, and the Philistines went to their own place.

When the men supported Jonathan instead of Saul, the king decided not to pursue the battle any longer.

Verses 47 - 48

Now when Saul had taken the kingdom over Israel, he fought against all his enemies on every side, against **Moab**, the sons of **Ammon**, **Edom**, the kings of **Zobah**, and the **Philistines**; and wherever he turned, he inflicted punishment. <sup>48</sup> He acted valiantly and defeated the **Amalekites**, and delivered Israel from the hands of those who plundered them.

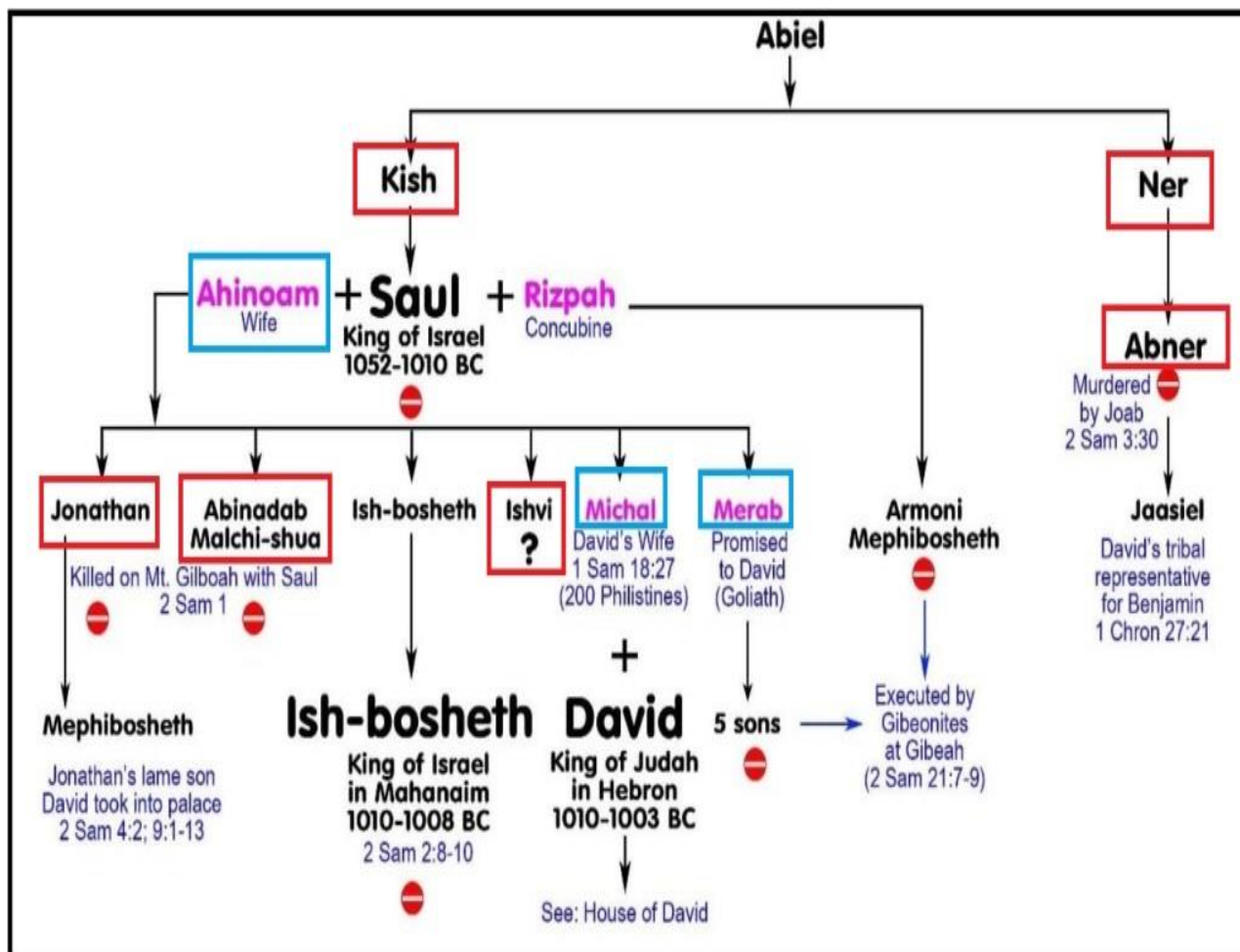
This paragraph covers a total of 22 years (1048 to 1026 BC)

Saul was chosen to fight the battles of Israel and as the text says, “wherever he turned he inflicted punishment”.

Verses 49 - 51

Now the sons of Saul were **Jonathan** and **Ishvi** and **Malchi-shua**; and the names of his two daughters were these: the name of the firstborn **Merab** and the name of the younger **Michal**. <sup>50</sup> The name of Saul’s wife was **Ahinoam** the daughter of Ahimaaz. And the name of the captain of his army was **Abner** the son of Ner, Saul’s uncle. <sup>51</sup> **Kish** was the father of Saul, and **Ner** the father of Abner was the son of Abiel.

See chart 1425



Ish-Bosheth is not listed as one of Saul's children. This list may have been written before Ish-Bosheth was born.

Abner made Ish-Bosheth king over part of Israel following Saul's death. He contested with David for the throne of Israel for a period of seven years.

See 2 Samuel 2:8-11

<sup>8</sup> But Abner the son of Ner, commander of Saul's army, had taken Ish-bosheth the son of Saul and brought him over to Mahanaim. <sup>9</sup> And he made him king over Gilead, over the Ashurites, over Jezreel, over Ephraim, and over Benjamin, even over all Israel. <sup>10</sup> Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, was forty years old when he became king over Israel, and he was king for two years. The house of Judah, however, followed David. <sup>11</sup> And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.

Verse 52

**Now the war against the Philistines was severe all the days of Saul; and when Saul saw any mighty man or any valiant man, he attached him to his staff.**

This conflict between Israel and the Philistines has been going on for a very longtime. Prior to King Saul there was intermittent war between these two nations for 70 years. Here it says this continued for another 40 years.