



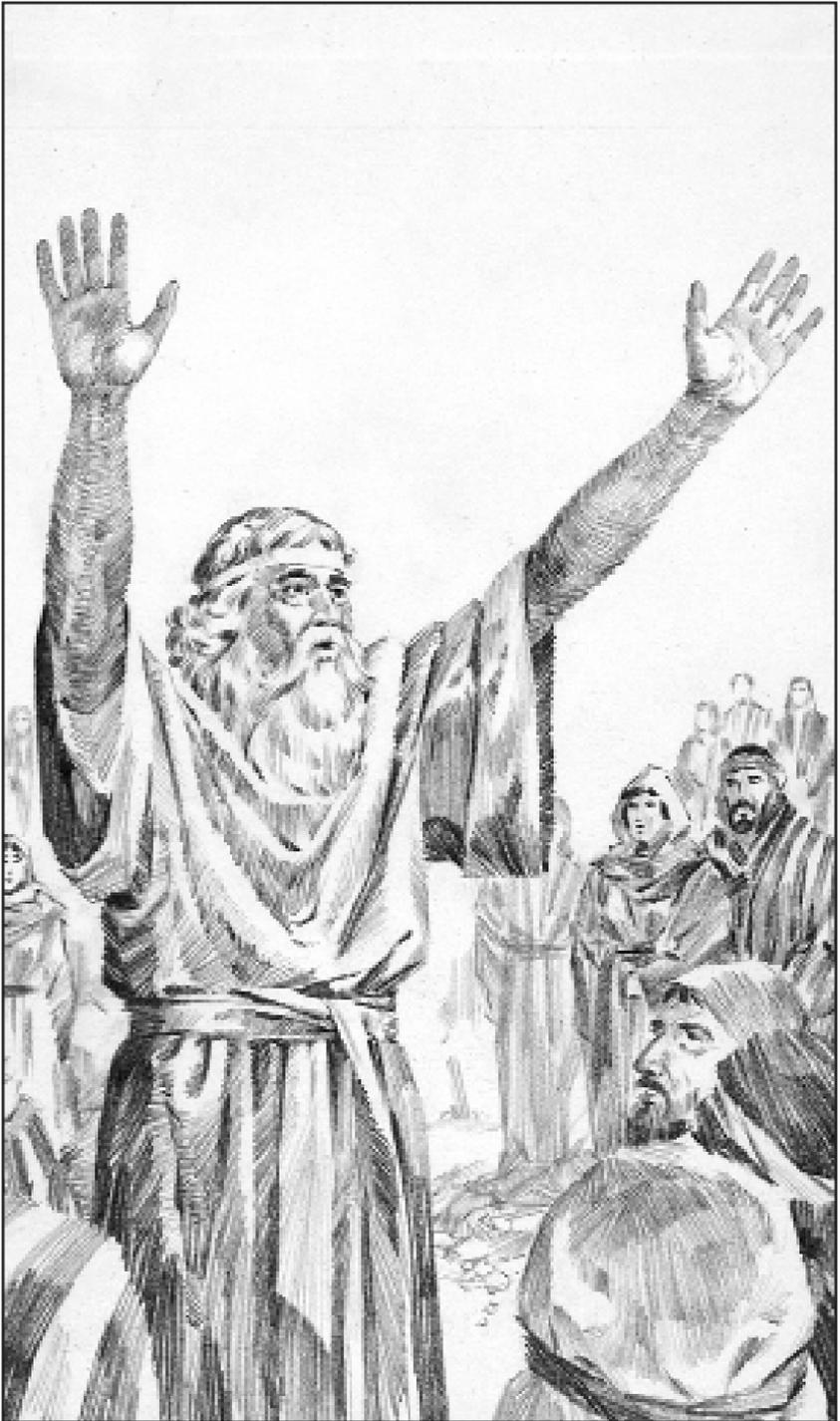
CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

I SAMUEL

Week 2



Artwork by Ken Tunell

Is This Really What You Want?

1 Samuel 8:1-22

Have you participated in a political campaign or voted for leaders that you later regretted choosing? How did you feel? The New Testament teaches us to respect and pray for our political leaders but it also shows the dark side of human leadership.

1. Israel's covenant with God made her a unique nation—God was her ruler. What was the motive in Israel's asking for a human king (v. 5)?
2. God had used Samuel's leadership to defeat the Philistines. Did this new request mean that the people had rejected the faithful prophet? Why? How did God encourage him (v. 7)?
3. Did Samuel take care to spell out the dark side of monarchical leadership (vs. 10-18)? Did they listen (vs. 19-20)?

1. The ups and downs of life are common to all of us. Samuel had to wrestle with rejection after a lifetime of outstanding service to Israel. Have you ever had to face rejection? How did Jesus enable you to handle it wisely—and learn from it?
2. Have you been ever had a negative evaluation by a boss, parent or workmate? Was there any truth to their complaints? How did you react? If you disagreed, were to able to appeal the evaluation?
3. Consider asking Jesus for the ability to encourage others who face rejection.

DAY 8

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

DAY 9

Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?

1 Samuel 9:1-27

OPENING
up to the Word

We all have moments, interviews or appointments that we feel are going to be decisive. How can you prepare for such occasions?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Does Saul initially strike you as humble and sincere (vs. 1-13)? Why or why not?
2. What was on Saul's mind when he first met Samuel (v. 20)?
3. What special signal did Samuel give his guests that Saul was a man of importance (vs. 22-24)?

LIVING
out the Word

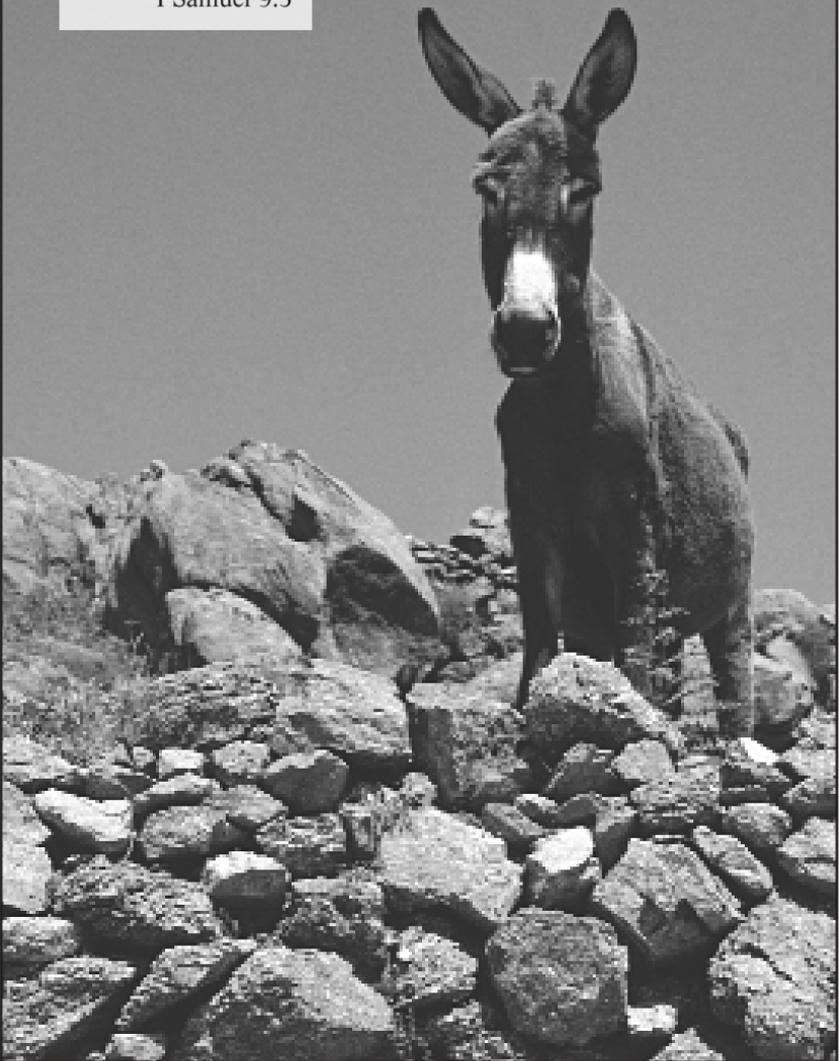
1. Note Saul's humility in his meeting with Samuel. Does God always immediately reward humility, or can you think of examples of people who seemed to be rewarded for their arrogance—or false humility?
2. Do you think Saul could have recaptured a humble attitude later in life? How?

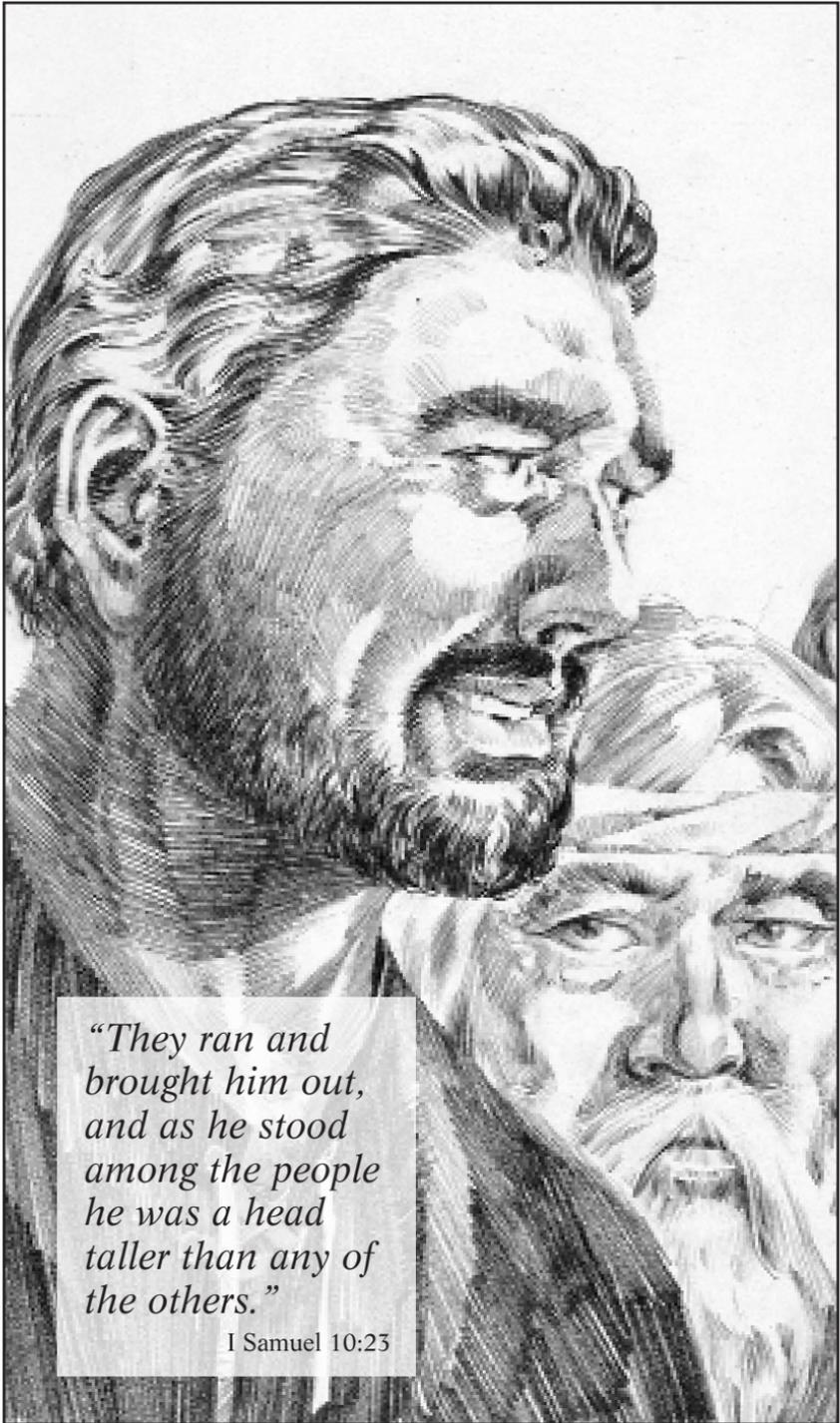
WINDOW
on the Word

*Commentators have pointed out that Samuel's freedom to offer sacrifices (vs. 12-14) shows that he combined in his person three important offices—**prophet, priest and judge**. This was rare in Israel. When the Bible mentions Samuel as a prophet, it does not merely refer to his ability to forecast events in the near future. He also spoke God's words about events in the present, denouncing evil and urging righteousness. Samuel's life was evidence of both tasks—he had ability from God to foresee the future (hence the title "seer" in verse 9), but his primary role was to speak God's words of instruction and judgment to the people.*

*“Now the
donkeys
belonging to
Saul’s
father Kish
were lost...”*

I Samuel 9:3





“They ran and brought him out, and as he stood among the people he was a head taller than any of the others.”

I Samuel 10:23

God Save the King!

DAY 10

1 Samuel 10:1-26

Have you ever done something (good or bad) out of character that made people stand up and take notice? How did you feel afterwards?

1. What traditional Israelite method of setting apart or consecration did Samuel perform for Saul (v. 1)?
2. What three signs did Samuel give Saul that greatly increased the young man's confidence in his anointing as Israel's king (vs. 2-7)?
3. Why did Samuel and Saul keep Saul's appointment a secret (vs. 9-16)?
4. At the ceremony in Mizpah young Saul displayed his humility by hiding in the baggage, but overall he was a "hit." What impressed the Israelites about Saul (vs. 23-24)? Had everyone accepted him as yet (v. 27)?

Saul made a good impression on most people. Israel's "bad request" seemed to be working out well. Have you ever seen God take a bad request with wrong motives and use it for his own good purposes?

*The **signs** God gave Saul (v. 7) through Samuel were to be a consistent feature of the prophetic office. It served to show divine backing for Samuel and his message.*

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word

Well Begun Is Half Done

1 Samuel 11:1-14

OPENING
up to the Word

Human beings are by nature inconsistent. But is inconsistency always bad? Has anyone ever pointed out inconsistencies in you?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. How was Saul's leadership put to the test almost immediately (vs. 1-5)?
2. How would you describe Saul's reaction (vs. 6-11)? (a) speedy, (b) decisive, (c) hasty, (d) berserk, (e) effective.
3. How did Saul show he could be both gracious and courageous (vs. 12-15)?

LIVING
out the Word

Why does it sometimes seem that things go drastically wrong just after things seem to be right? Newly-appointed King Saul was faced with a cruel military threat almost immediately after taking office. Has anything similar happened to you? If so, were there specific biblical passages that helped you at such a time?

WINDOW
on the Word

Israel as a country was in the middle of warlike and sometimes powerful neighbors. Israel was always in danger of invasion. A glance at a good Bible atlas shows why. The land of Israel was only as big as the state of Vermont—80 miles across. There were four basic geographic regions: the coastal plain, the Jordan Valley near the Dead Sea, the Transjordanian highland region and a central hill country, which afforded the best protection from invaders. A major valley ran east-west in the central portion, leaving the area open to invasion from across the Jordan. The most protected region was in the hills of Judea, a factor which David recognized when he fortified the city of Jerusalem. The country had little in the way of natural defenses. Geography emphasized that only God could save Israel.

You Don't Know What You've Got Until You Lose It

DAY 12

1 Samuel 12:1-25

Was history a favorite subject of yours when you were in school? Why or why not?

OPENING
up to the Word

1. 1 Samuel 12 is Samuel's "farewell" address, complete with signs and wonders in the form of a lightning storm. Was the prophet a man of integrity (vs. 1-5)?
2. What is the consistent theme Samuel draws from Israel's history (vs. 6-13)?
3. Was Samuel still of two minds about the fact that Israel had asked for a king (v. 17)?
4. How did Samuel reveal his love for the people (v. 23)?
5. What Old Testament guideline for national and personal success did the prophet prescribe for Israel (vs. 24)?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. If you had to give a speech about a man or woman who had lived a life of faith, who would be the subject of your speech?
2. As a priest, failing in his duty to intercede in prayer for Israel was considered a sin by Samuel (v. 23). Do you take prayer for others that seriously?

LIVING
out the Word

Samuel's long, productive life exemplified what it meant to be a prophet. It is summed up well in his speech to the people. He analyzed the past and showed how it applied to the present. He talked about the future. He pointed the people to God's goodness. He warned them against idolatry, and he promised to be their servant-intercessor and teacher. Samuel's leadership set a standard against which all future prophets would be measured. Samuel's sermon, given during the wheat harvest (v. 17) was confirmed by a heavenly display of rain and thunder. In Palestine, winter is the rainy season. In March the rain begins to taper off with the "latter rain" (Dt 11:14, KJV). Rain during the wheat harvest (late May and early June) would be highly unusual.

WINDOW
on the Word

DAY 13

Fools Rush In

1 Samuel 13:1-23

OPENING
up to the Word

Think of a famous tragedy from history or literature. Why do you think some people start out well and end up poorly?

DIGGING
into the Word

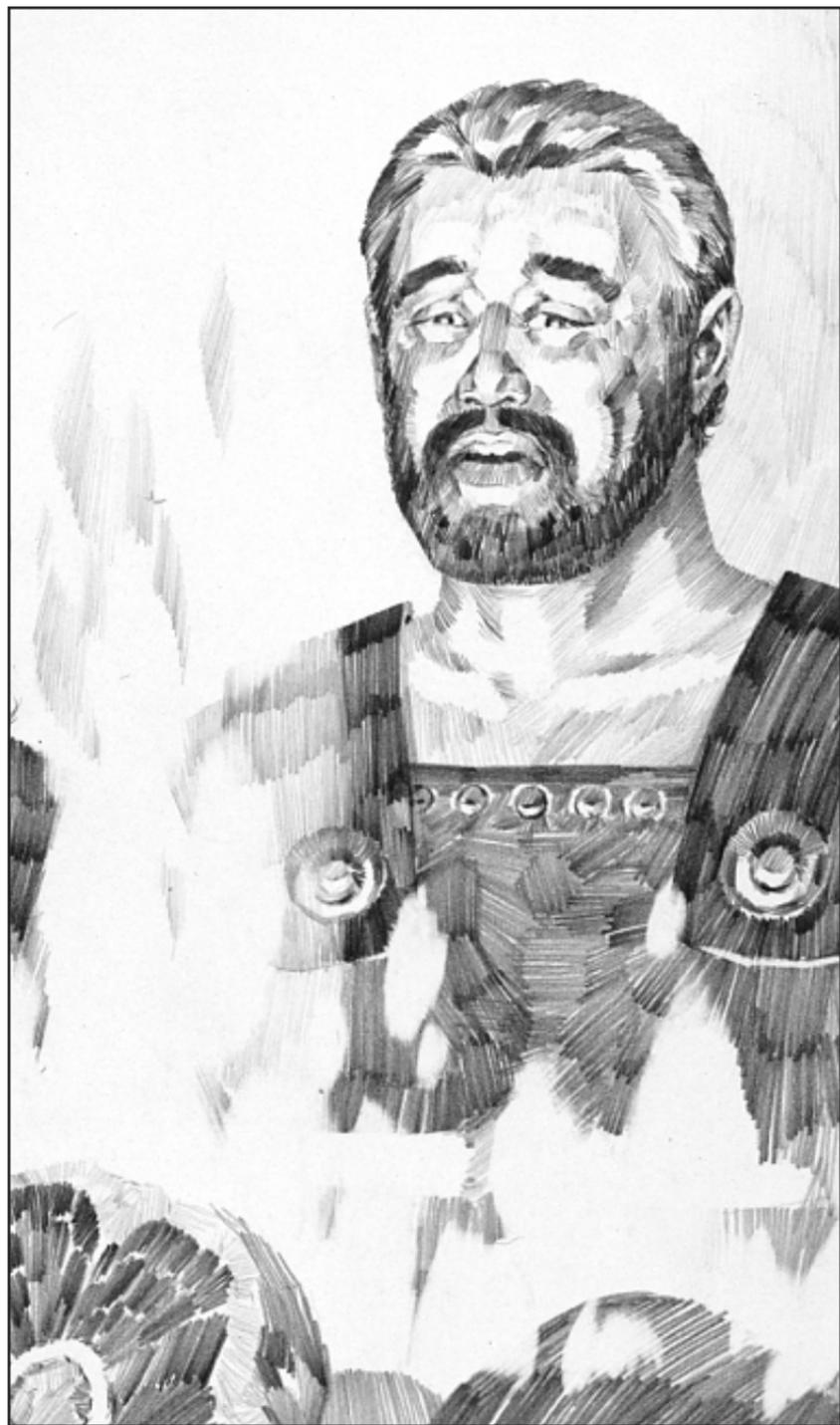
1. What was the nature of Saul's first major blunder (vs. 8-12)?
2. Samuel's rebuke was decisive and thorough (v. 13). How did Samuel describe the basic nature of the new king God would soon appoint (v. 14)?
3. "Not a blacksmith could be found in the whole land of Israel" (v. 19). This showed how grim Israel's military position was. How does verse 22 confirm this?

LIVING
out the Word

1. There is always a tendency in religious, political or personal disputes to sympathize with the underdog. Some think Samuel gave Saul a raw deal. Do you agree or disagree?
2. What factors in verses 5 to 7 might make Saul's hasty actions seem logical and understandable? Have you ever been in a situation where it seemed right to react quickly?
3. There is an old saying, "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread." Do you consider Saul a fool for taking things into his own hands—or is there a time and a place for doing so? What argument did Saul use to justify himself (vs. 11-12)? Have you ever found yourself using self-justifying tactics?

WINDOW
on the Word

The prerogative to offer sacrifices was strictly regulated by the Law (Ex 27:1-21; Lev 8). The role of the Levites was so important that an entire chapter was devoted to the high priest's garments (Ex 28:1-43). Saul, by hastily acting out of fear and panic, was violating the law of the nation he had been appointed to protect. The kings of other nations commonly performed sacrifices, and Saul may have assumed that permission came with the anointing. Samuel himself was a Levite only by adoption, not by ancestry.



Artwork by Ken Tunell

One Man With Courage

1 Samuel 14:1-52

OPENING
up to the Word

Have you seen a sports event where a crucial play was called back or a goal disallowed because of some minor infraction of a rule?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Did Saul still have access to the Levites and the ark of the covenant at this time (vs. 2-3)?
2. Saul's son Jonathan would precipitate a Philistine defeat (vs. 1, 6-13). Yet he refused to tell his father what he was doing. Why?
3. The Philistines began to scatter under the combined pressure of Jonathan's surprise attack and an earthquake (v. 15). What did Saul do next (vs. 17-19)? How does this action with the ark show us the state of Saul's mind?
4. Do you think Saul's extreme reaction to Jonathan's mistake was justified, or was it merely a matter of wounded pride because of Jonathan's success? Saul religiously obeyed dietary laws (v. 34), yet he consulted with God only when it served his purpose (vs. 36-46). Why the contradictory behavior? Is legalistic obedience easier than yielding to God's intent?
5. How was Jonathan's life spared (vs. 45)?

LIVING
out the Word

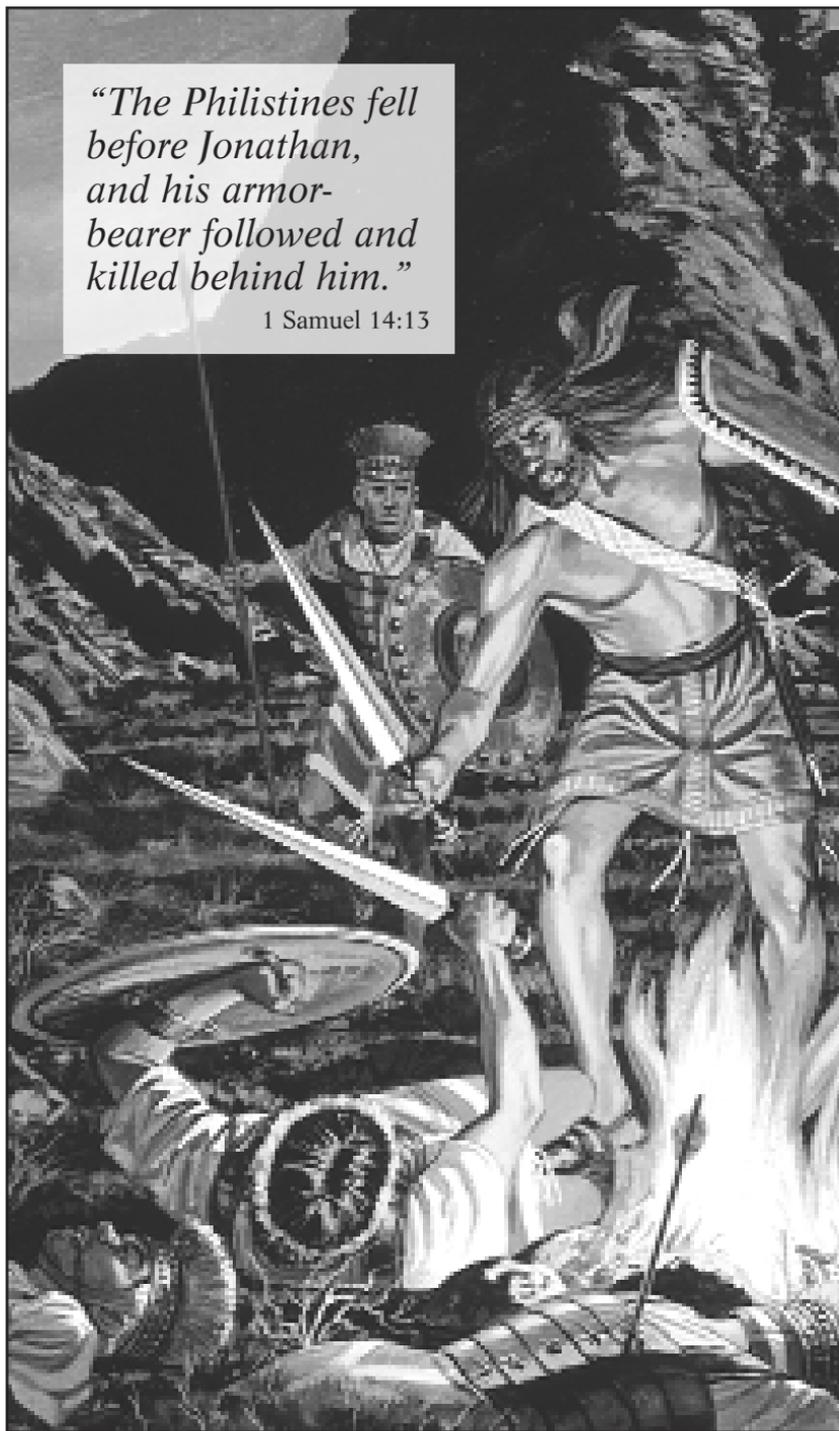
There is an old saying, "One man with courage makes a majority." Jonathan exemplified courage in the face of adversity. Is there anyone you admire for sheer courage?

WINDOW
on the Word

*Even today tourists can stand at **Michmash** (today's Mukhmas) and look down towards the deep wadi that Jonathan and his armor bearer traversed.*

*“The Philistines fell
before Jonathan,
and his armor-
bearer followed and
killed behind him.”*

1 Samuel 14:13



Artwork by Larry Salk