

# Kings and Prophets

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## Foreword

Many Christians lament that the Old Testament of the Bible is very difficult to read and digest. Pristine World through their Visual Bible Explorer series have created an excellent study covering the history of the rulers and prophets of Israel in the Old Testament that is both easily comprehensible and exciting.

It has taken the approach of using narratives, as though, they are from first hand eye-witnesses of the events and stories of the days of the Kings and Prophets.

This has indeed livened up the Old Testament study so much so that it is suitable for people of all ages. The colourful pictures and drawings are fantastic and have certainly added much sensation and thrill to the person studying it.

I strongly recommend this book to all, especially those Christians who find the Old Testament books boring and difficult to understand. This book has an added dimension where the reader will feel himself entering into the time of the events and happenings. Though it is not exhaustive, it is enough to keep the readers glued to it and want to complete it in one sitting.

I give thanks and praise to the Almighty God for His faithfulness and grace upon all readers of this book.



The Most Revd. Datuk Ng Moon Hing  
Archbishop of the Anglican Province of South East Asia  
Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of West Malaysia



# Kings and Prophets

## Introduction

The story of *Kings and Prophets* traces and simplifies the Biblical events as described from 1 Samuel right till Esther. The timeline is from approximately 1050 B.C. till about 450 B.C. i.e. a span of about 600 years! As such, we cannot go into too much detail for each of the characters.

However we can learn much even by studying the major characters and events described. Our story is broadly divided into three sections:

- I. From a League of Tribes to a United Kingdom c.1050 B.C. ~ c.930 B.C.
- II. Divided Kingdom and the Prophets c.930 B.C. ~ 722 B.C. (northern kingdom) 586 B.C. (southern kingdom)
- III. Exile and Protection of the Israelites c.722 B.C. ~ 450 B.C

### Section 1- From a League of Tribes to a United Kingdom

Here, our story will focus on four main characters. They are, in order of appearance, Samuel, Saul, David and Solomon.

The stories show Israel's transition from tribal nations governed by Judges into a united kingdom ruled centrally by a king. The story shows God's dealings with his people through his faithful servants.

This section starts with God's calling of Samuel and his replacement of Eli because of Eli's failure to obey God's instructions. Then the stories move on to the calling of Saul and later David and how David replaces Saul. David is the better person, a 'man after God's own heart' and is chosen to replace Saul as the leader of God's people.

Finally, the kingdom passes to Solomon, the wisest of all kings. He has amassed much wealth and is blessed with wisdom above all other kings. However, when he becomes proud and is turned by his many foreign wives to worshipping their gods, he ends his life failing to follow the LORD God of his forefathers.

Our story will cover some of the passages from Psalms and Proverbs as they were written by King David and King Solomon.

### Section II – The Divided Kingdom and the Prophets

After Solomon's death, the kingdom of Israel is separated into 2 smaller kingdoms: Judah in the south, with their capital in Jerusalem, comprising the tribes of Judah and Benjamin; while the remaining 10 tribes in the north are called Israel with their capital in the city of Samaria.

This section of the story which spans a period of time from about 930 B.C. till about 586 B.C. is filled with stories of many failed kings. Most of them were not faithful in worshipping the God of their forefathers. And so with the exception of a few good kings, the rest just faded into obscurity after their death.

However, this period of time is made interesting by the prophets sent by the LORD to warn, advice or pronounce judgment on the errant leaders.

In our story, we will highlight the exploits of Elijah, Elisha, Jonah, Ezekiel and Isaiah.

Many of these prophets fore-warned Israel of the coming judgement and disaster if they continued to turn away from the LORD their God. But they also foretold of God's deliverance after they have repented; that God would raise foreign kings to bring judgment,

but that he would also raise and 'anoint' foreign kings, such as Cyrus, to be their deliverer.

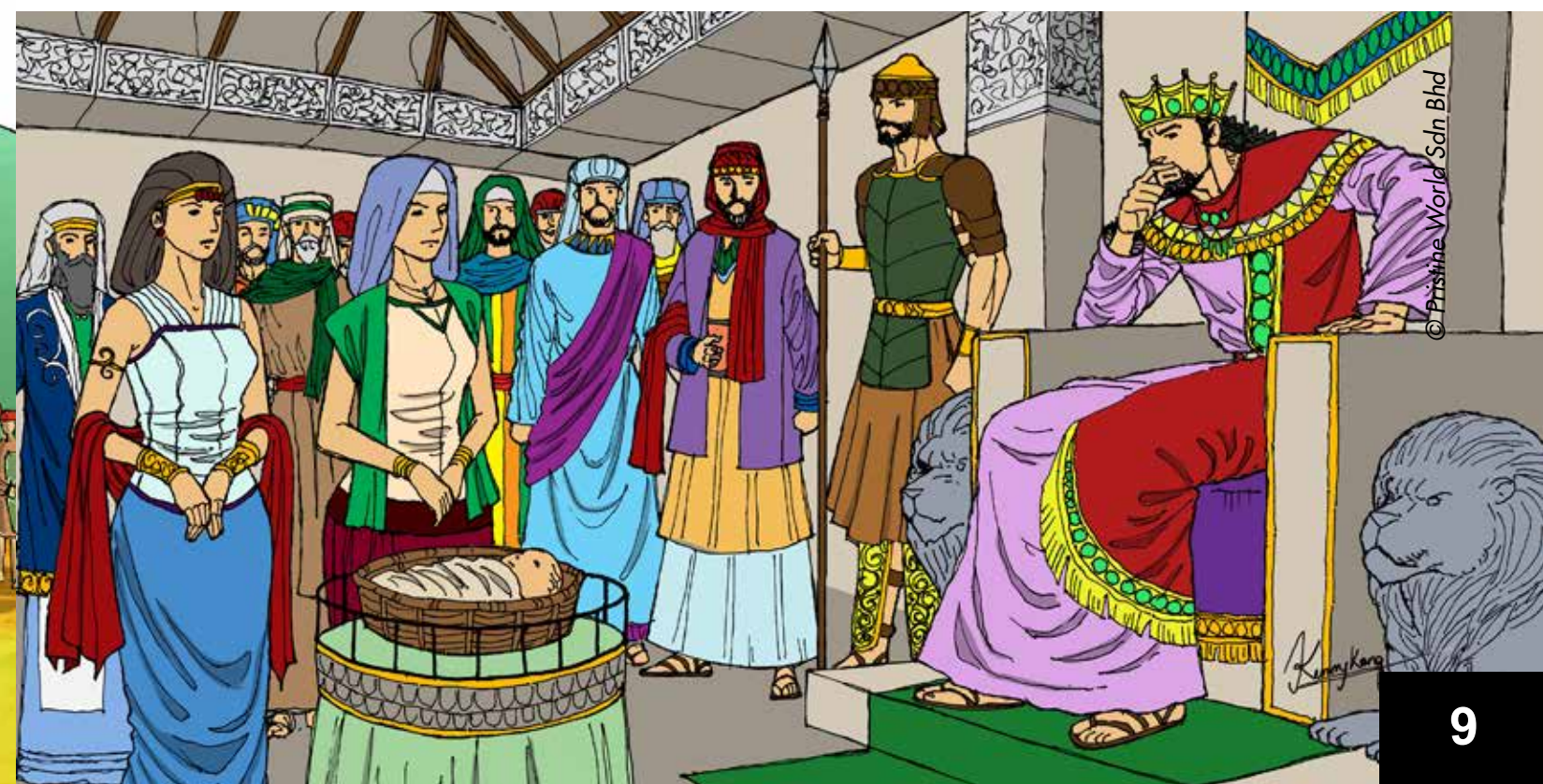
### Section III - Exile and Protection of the Israelites

In this section, we will highlight stories from Daniel and Esther. The stories tell of God's actions in protecting his faithful people even while in exile and in a foreign land.

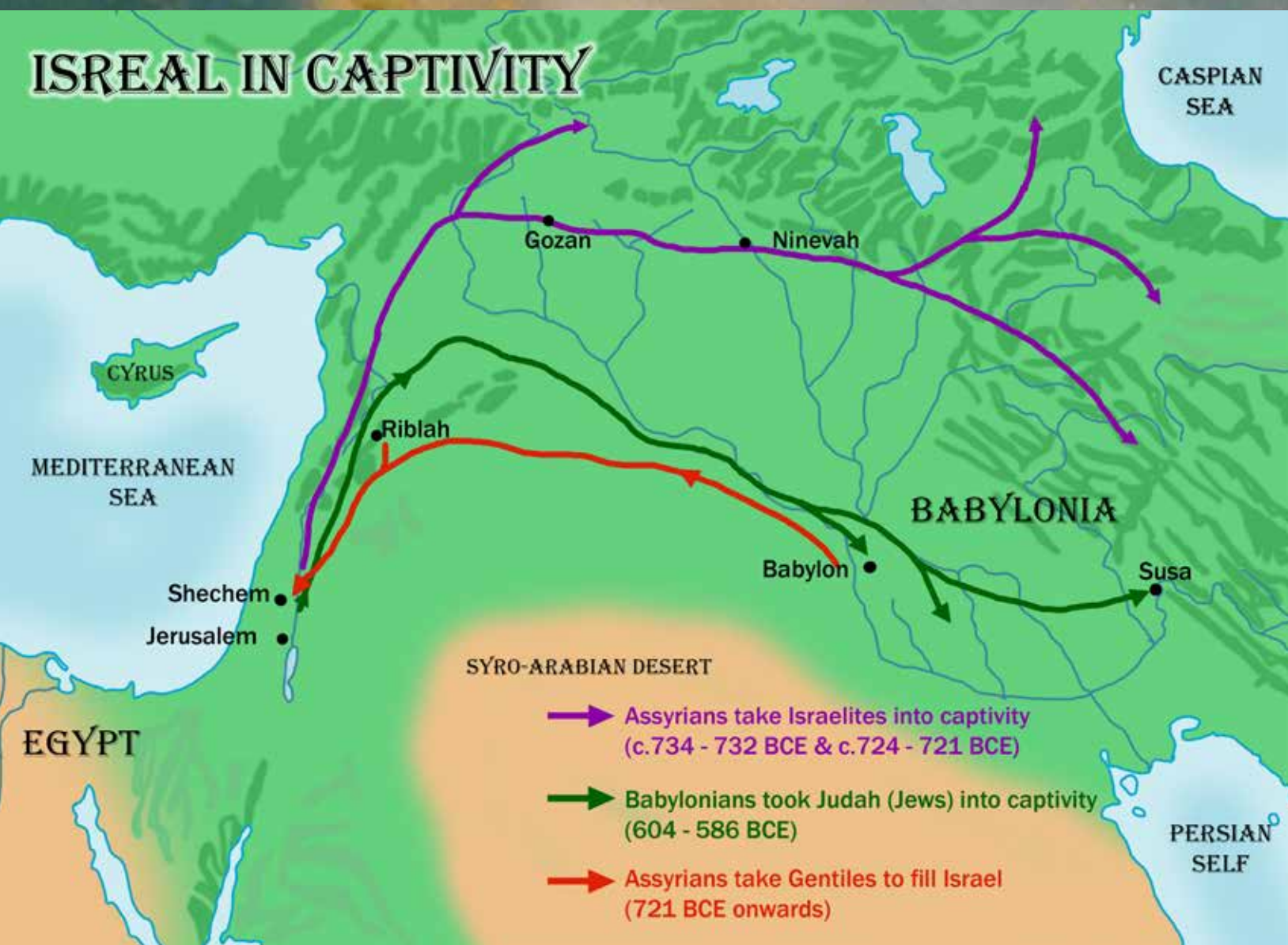
The stories also tell of how God's people can remain faithful and enjoy the protection of the LORD while living in exile.

We have included some of the prophecies of Isaiah and Ezekiel regarding the coming judgment and the later deliverance of the people of Israel. God told them all this in advance so that when it happened, the people would know that God is sovereign and that He had warned them it would happen. Then if the people turned back to God in repentance, He would bring them deliverance.

In the prophecies of a coming deliverer, some of the prophecies talked about a future Deliverer who would bring salvation to all nations of the world. This prophecy could only be fulfilled by Jesus Christ, the Son of God.







## Kings and Prophets

# 1. Prophet Samuel – Last Judge of Israel

One day in the land Israel, Samuel, the last of the great judges, now an old man, was having a conversation with a young man who had come to meet him.

He spoke to the young man like a father speaking to his son: "It has been more than 300 years since Moses led us out of slavery in Egypt. By His mighty hand, the LORD struck Egypt with plagues and destroyed Pharaoh's army as Moses led our forefathers across the Red Sea.

Then Joshua led us across the Jordan. The LORD instructed us to conquer and take possession of this land. He gave us judges to help defeat our enemies. Ehud, Deborah, Gideon and then came an enemy we could not defeat; the Philistines. God gave us a mighty warrior, Samson. He caused much trouble for the Philistines. But he fell in love with a Philistine woman, Delilah. In the end he was betrayed by the woman and fell into the hands of the Philistines.

### INFO BANK

#### Samuel

Samuel was priest, prophet and judge of all Israel. He was unique in many ways. He was the last judge whose influence covered not just one or two tribes but all the tribes of Israel. He was also the first of the great prophets after Moses who was so influential that when the people wanted a central ruler, they turned to Samuel to find a king for them.

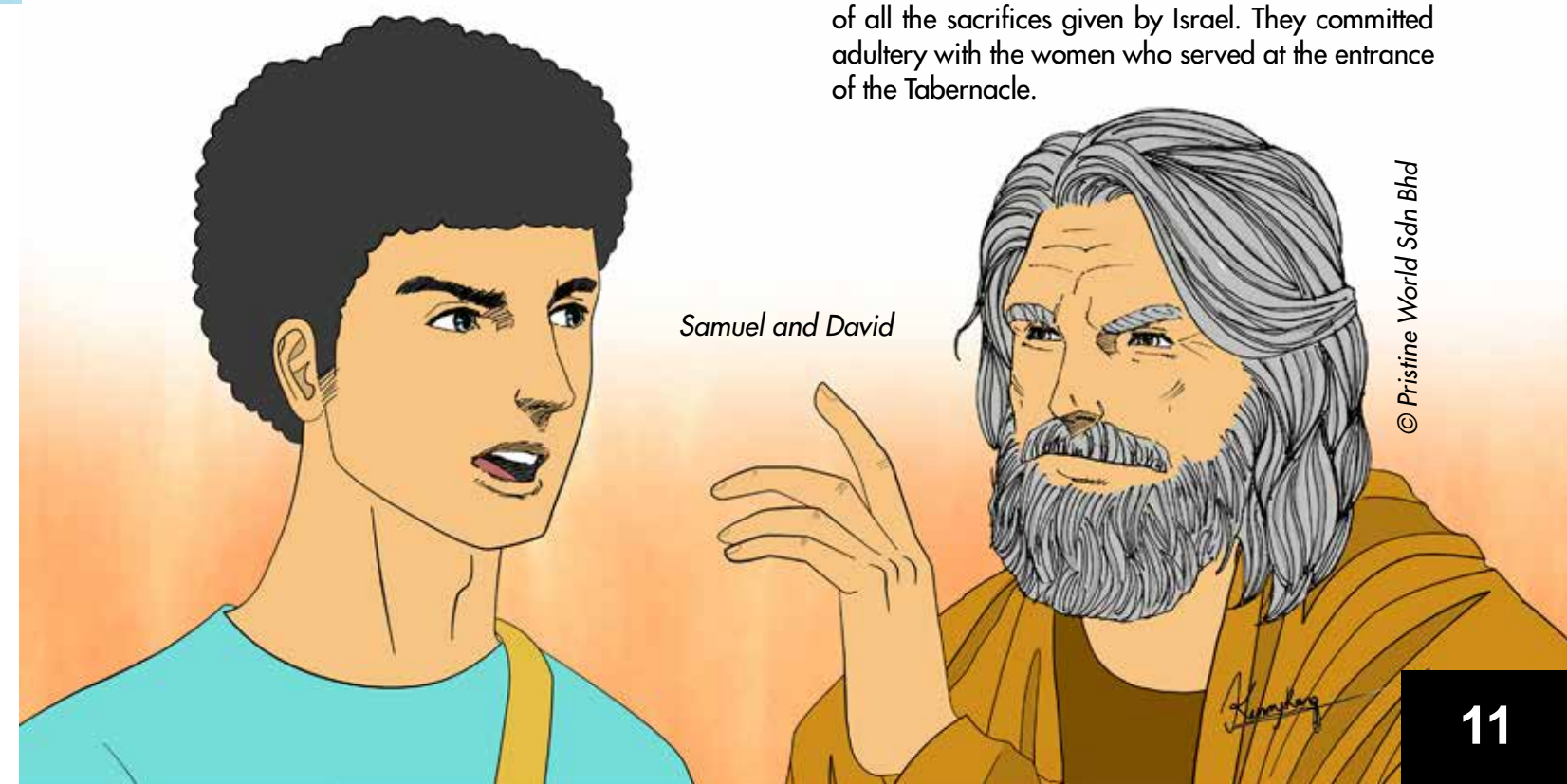
"About this time, Eli the priest was called to be a judge of Israel."

At the mention of the name Eli, the young man asked, "I have heard of Eli. Wasn't he the judge before you?"

Old Samuel said, "Yes, I served Eli from my youth in the Tabernacle in Shiloh. Eli served the LORD well, but his sons did evil. They stole the best parts of all the sacrifices given by Israel. They committed adultery with the women who served at the entrance of the Tabernacle.



Source: New Unger's Bible Hand book



Samuel and David

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I was a young boy at that time and did not know that the LORD had already warned Eli to discipline his sons." The young man asked, "What happened then?"

Samuel replied, "One night while I was sleeping in the Tabernacle near the Ark, I heard a voice calling, 'Samuel, Samuel' I ran to old Eli and asked what he wanted. But Eli said he did not call me. This happened three times before Eli realised that it was the LORD who was calling me and he told me what to do."



Samuel sitting on floor mattress inside a big tent with the Ark of Covenant nearby.

### 1 Sam 3:10-13

"What happened then?" asked the young man. Samuel continued, "I heard the voice again, 'Samuel, Samuel.' This time I answered, 'Speak LORD, your servant is listening."

The LORD spoke to me: "I am about to do a shocking thing in Israel. I am going to carry out all my threats against Eli and his family, from beginning to end. I have warned him that judgment is coming upon his family, forever, because his sons are blaspheming God and he hasn't disciplined them. (NLT)



That was the first time the LORD spoke to me directly. The next morning I told Eli all that the LORD had said to me. Eli accepted the message from the LORD without protest. He knew he had failed in his duty to restrain his sons and that judgment was inevitable. 'It is the LORD's will,' Eli replied. Let him do what he thinks is best."

Then Samuel looked at the ground and continued, "Shortly after that there was a battle with the Philistines. Israel's armies were defeated and the Ark of the Covenant was taken by the Philistines. Eli's sons were killed and Eli also died when he heard the news.

On hearing this the young man asked, "and how did the Ark finally return to Israel?"

Samuel laughed, "By His mighty hand, the LORD sent plagues to whichever Philistine city that received the Ark and they were forced to send the Ark back to Israel ... but that is another story. Now, coming back to what happened to Eli.

### INFO BANK

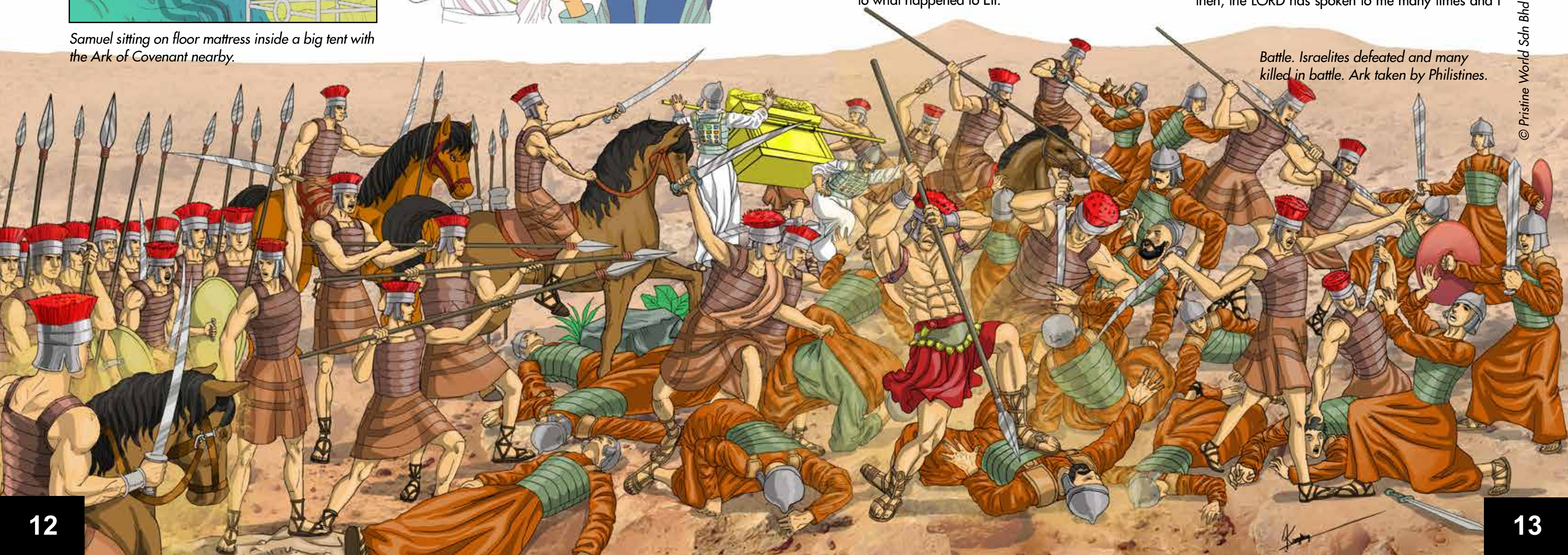
#### Israel's armies were defeated

The battle is described in detail in 1 Samuel 4 where Israel camped at Ebenezer and the Philistines camped at Aphek. After a first defeat, the Israelites brought the Ark of the Covenant to the battle field thinking that the presence of the Ark would help them win. But instead they were comprehensively defeated and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas were killed in battle.

#### Ark of the Covenant was taken by the Philistines

The Ark of the Covenant was taken by the Philistines. Read 1 Samuel 5-6 on how the Ark was finally returned to the Israelites.

"Eli had failed to do the LORD's will and failed to heed the LORD's warning. I did not know it then, but the LORD had chosen me to replace him. Since then, the LORD has spoken to me many times and I



Battle. Israelites defeated and many killed in battle. Ark taken by Philistines.



have not failed to bring forth His word to Israel or to carry out His instructions. I was His spokesman, His prophet from Dan in the north to Beer-Sheba in the south."

Samuel paused for a while. Then he continued, "Many years passed. Then one day, the people and the elders of Israel gathered and approached me here in Ramah. They said to me, 'You are old and your sons are not like you. They accept bribes and pervert justice. Give us a king to judge us. We want a king like what the other nations have.'

"I was so disappointed then. I cried before the LORD and asked Him what should I do now? The LORD said to me, <sup>1 Sam 8:7</sup> "Listen to all that the people are saying to you; It is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king.

<sup>8</sup> As they have done from the day I brought them out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you.

<sup>9</sup> Now listen to them; but warn them solemnly and let them know what the king who will reign over them will claim as his rights." (NIV)

*Elders of Israel and people shouting with hands raised 'We want a king'.*

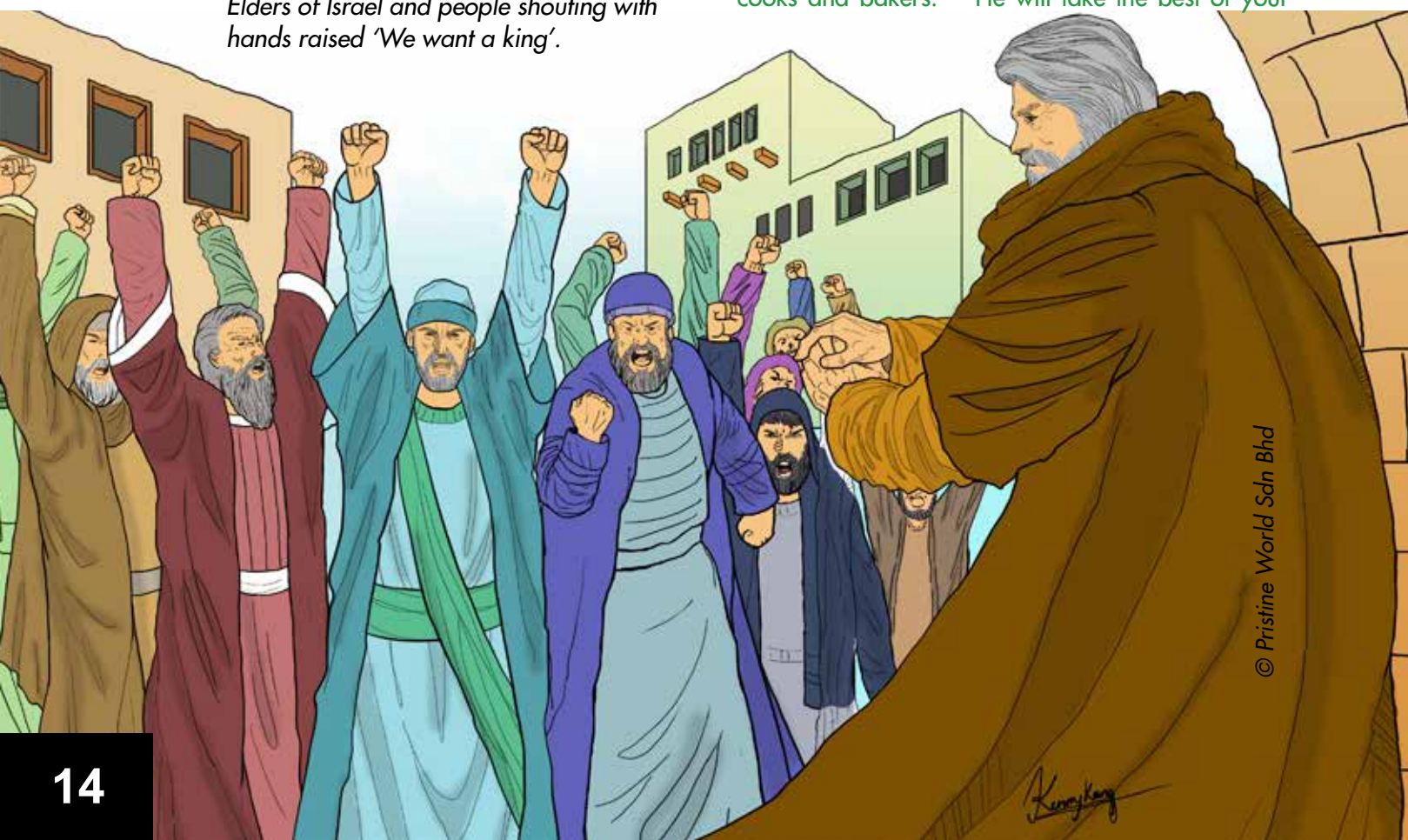
"I told them everything the LORD told me. <sup>1 Sam 8:11</sup> This is what the king who will reign over you will claim as his rights: He will take your sons and make them serve with his chariots and horses, and they will run in front of his chariots.



*Samuel tells the people what to expect of a king.*

<sup>12</sup> Some he will assign to be commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and others to plow his ground and reap his harvest; and still others to make weapons of war and equipment for his chariots.

<sup>13</sup> He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. <sup>14</sup> He will take the best of your



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fields and vineyards and olive groves and give them to his attendants.

He will tax you heavily, taking your grain, your male and female servants and the best of your cattle and donkeys for his own use. You might end up becoming his slaves. What will you do then?

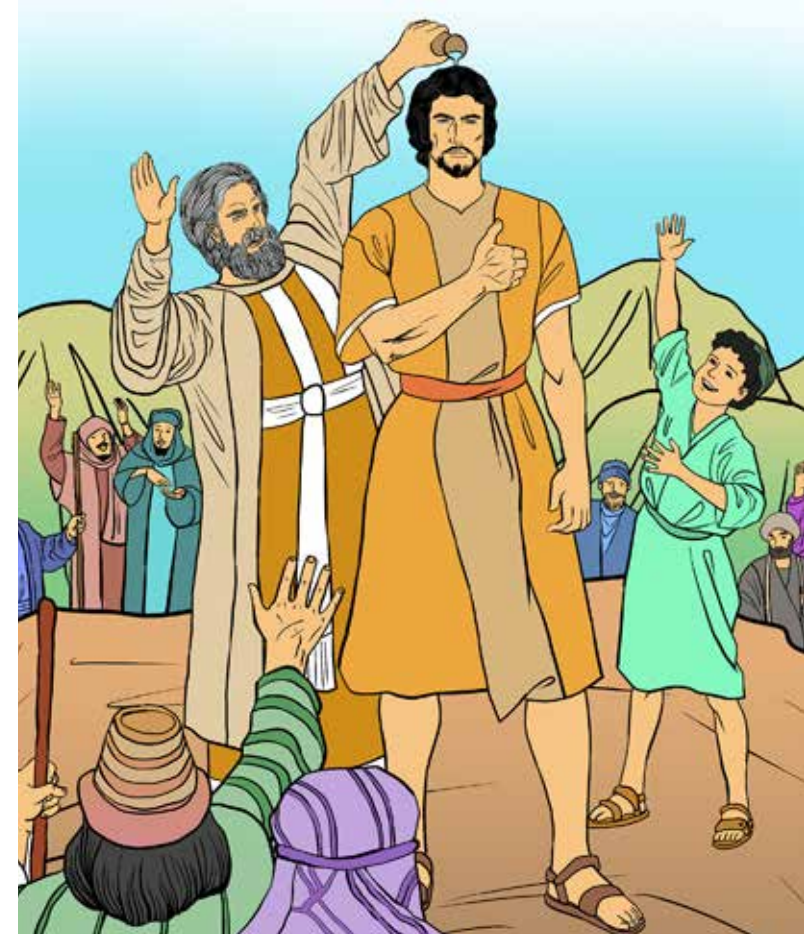
But the people answered, 'We want a king over us. Just like all the other nations, we want a king to lead us and go out before us and fight our battles. Find a king for us.'

The LORD said to me, <sup>1 Sam 8:22</sup> Listen to them and give them a king. And so I agreed to find a king for Israel and sent the people home.

Later, I anointed Saul, son of Kish and presented him to the elders and people in Mizpah. The people shouted, "Long live the king!" Then I explained to them the rights and duties of kingship. I wrote them down on a scroll and deposited it before the LORD. I did this so that the people would know what they could expect from a king and also in the hope of preventing abuses by the king. Yes ... I was the one who anointed Saul, and in the beginning he started well.

The young man turned to look at Samuel directly and said, "Then why did you anoint me? I was a contented shepherd taking care of my father's flocks. Today, I am a hunted fugitive. Hunted like a wild animal ... by the very person you anointed. Why?"

Samuel became sad and replied him, "Because Saul had failed to follow the instructions of the LORD. Many warnings were given to Saul. But he failed to heed the warnings." Then Samuel looked at the young man and a smile came to his face, "because of this, the LORD has chosen you to replace him."



*Samuel anointing Saul in front of his family and tribe.*

### Lessons from the Story

1. The LORD chooses. But those who disobey his call run the danger of being replaced, especially if they continue to ignore His warnings. Just as Eli had been replaced by Samuel, Saul would be replaced by David.

### Questions for Discussion

1. Why was Samuel so highly respected as a prophet of God?
2. Why did the people want a king to succeed Samuel?
3. Why did Samuel anoint a second king while the first king was still alive?