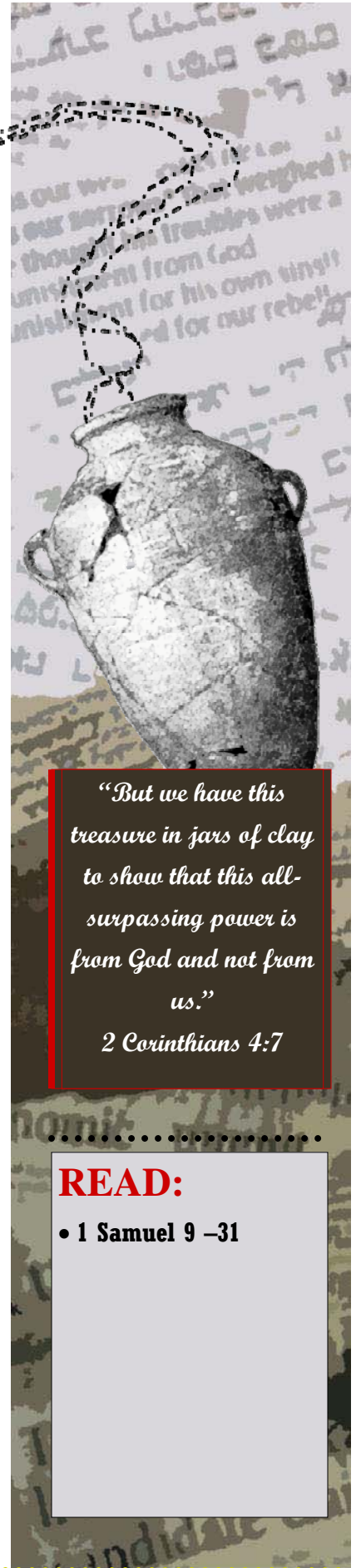


TREASURE IN JARS OF CLAY



Saul

Part 2

We meet Saul as a young man, obediently, and diligently, searching for the lost donkeys of his well-respected father. We enjoy the thrill of promise that his unsought anointing as the first king of Israel arouses. Saul is an unknown, from the small tribe of Benjamin, rising to the most revered position in his nation. It is the fulfillment of the American dream, Hebrew style.

Saul has it all: looks, position, and even God's Spirit. He has been chosen by God to be the king of his people. But from humble beginnings, hiding among the baggage at his own coronation, Saul begins to become arrogant. While he continues to credit God for his victories, he also starts feeling capable of redefining what obedience to God looks like. In fact, I see in Saul the underlying roots of sin that have caused so many of us to sin, and fall short of the glory of God. It is a subtle, but deadly, shift in attitude. Instead of gratitude to God for what has been done by His power, even through us, we begin to trust in our own wisdom to know, perhaps even better than God, what is best in a given situation. It is a dangerous move, as is all too evident in the life of Saul.

To follow our own judgment instead of God's Words to us is to put ourselves in the place of God, but we don't always see clearly that we are doing so. Many times, like Saul, we claim to be following God even while rejecting total obedience to Him. In what ways do you see Saul following the pattern of unrighteousness described in Rom. 1:21-32? _____

What alternative is suggested in Prov. 3:5-7? _____

What did rebellion against God's Word cost Saul according to 1 Samuel 15:23? _____

"But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us."

2 Corinthians 4:7

READ:

- 1 Samuel 9 –31

“But I did obey...”

I find myself beginning to squirm a bit uneasily as I consider the story of Saul. Chosen, approved, and empowered by God, I have so much in common with him. I am afraid, however, that the similarity doesn't stop there. Consider the ways that Saul rationalized his partial obedience, and what the results were.

- Saul **kind of** obeyed by offering a sacrifice to the Lord at Gilgal, at least he was recognizing the One true God, instead of the false gods of the pagans of the land ...right?

What did Samuel say Saul had failed to do in 1 Samuel 13:13,14? _____

What had God commanded in Deut. 12:5-14? _____

How did Saul justify disregarding God's commands in 1 Samuel 13:8,11,12? _____

Have you found yourself in a similar situation where you felt justified in compromising total obedience?

What had God commanded in Deut. 12:5-4?

- Saul made an oath cursing any of his men who ate before he had avenged himself on his enemies. His zeal for God's cause is admirableright? When he found his son Jonathan had unknowingly violated the oath, Saul was determined to keep his word. Noble, right?

What sin against God did Saul's men commit in 1 Samuel 14:31-33? _____

To what degree was Saul responsible for placing his men in the path of temptation? _____

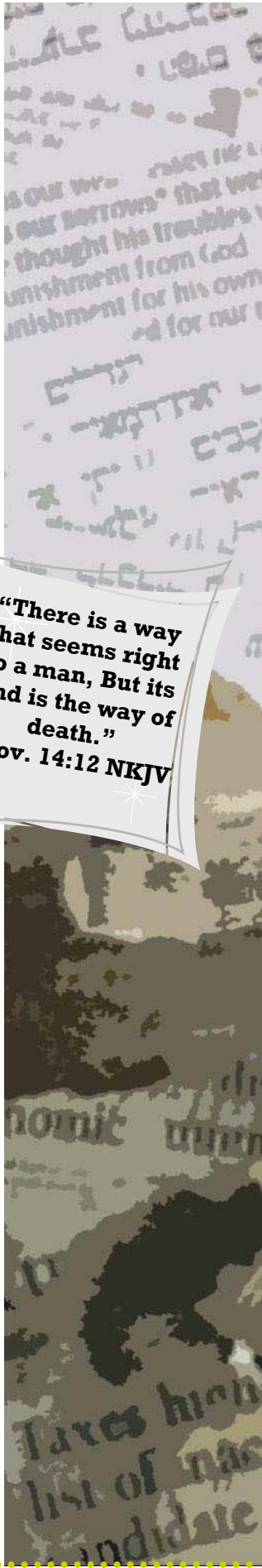
Whose vengeance was Saul after? _____

If a vow is made rashly and foolishly, do you think God would rather you stick to it, or admit error and retract it? _____

On what grounds did Saul's men object to Saul putting Jonathan to death? (1 Samuel 14:45) _____

Do you think Saul's willingness to kill Jonathan had more to do with doing what was right, or with saving face in front of his men? _____

Have you ever continued down a wrong path rather than humbly admit your error? _____



“There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.”
Prov. 14:12 NKJV

- When sent to annihilate the Amalekites, Saul spared their king, and the best of the livestock. This seems to be both compassionate, and a practical avoidance of wastefulness. Right...?

What did Samuel have to say about this in 1 Samuel 15:17-19? _____

How did Saul defend himself in 1 Samuel 15:20,21? _____

What was Samuel's response in 1 Samuel 15:22? _____

- Who had Saul expelled from Israel according to 1 Samuel 28:3? _____

Why? _____

What happened when Saul inquired of the Lord while camped at Gilboa? _____



Why did Saul have to consult the medium under the cover of darkness and deceit? _____

What did Saul want of Samuel? _____

How did Saul determine what was right and wrong? _____

Do we have Saul's world view?

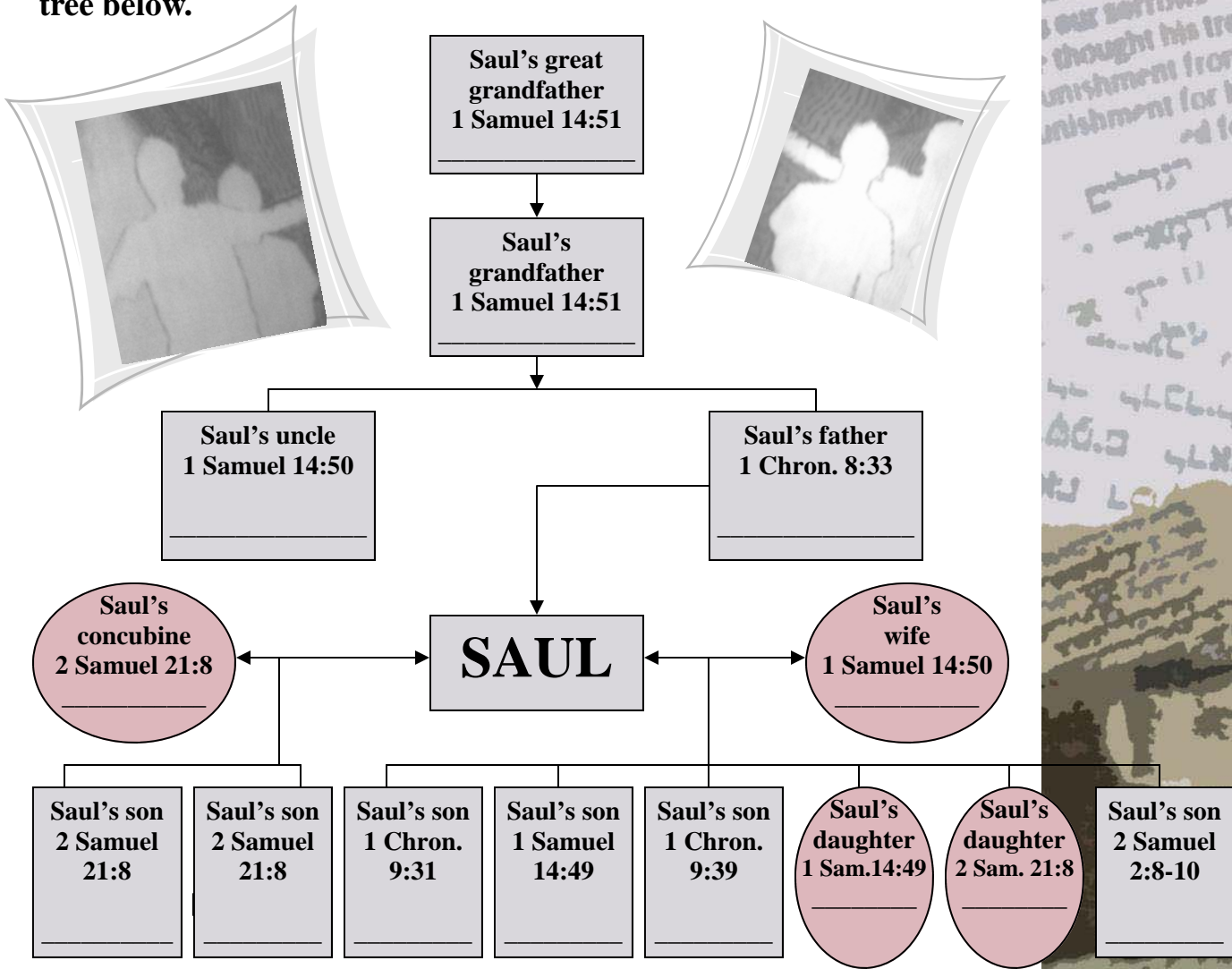
We may not have a prophet to serve as our guide, but we have been given a clear moral compass through God's Word. Do we fully obey God's commands to us, or do we, like Saul, only obey to the degree that we find it convenient to do so? How often do we supersede the words of God with our own ideas of what is good and right?

According to a 2007 Gallup poll, nearly as many Americans see homosexuality as morally acceptable (47%) as those who see it as morally wrong (49%). Over half (59%) of Americans view sex between an unmarried man and woman as acceptable, which is more than the number who find it acceptable to wear clothing made of animal fur! Whose standard are we living by?

"The consistent deterioration of the Bible as the source of moral truth has led to a nation where people have become independent judges of right and wrong, basing their choices on feelings and circumstances. It is not likely that America will return to a more traditional moral code until the nation experiences significant pain from its moral choices." George Barna

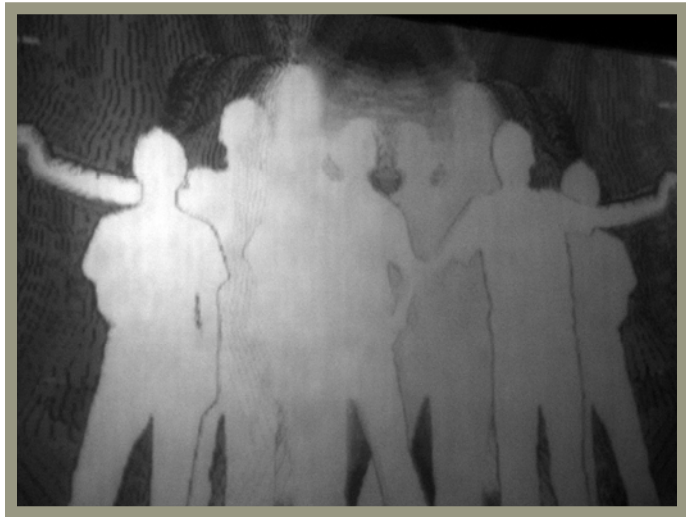
PUZZLE PAGE—Saul's Family Tree

Find the names in the word search on page 5 to fill in Saul's family tree below.



Saul's grandson
2 Samuel 21:7

Saul's great grandson
1 Chron. 9:40

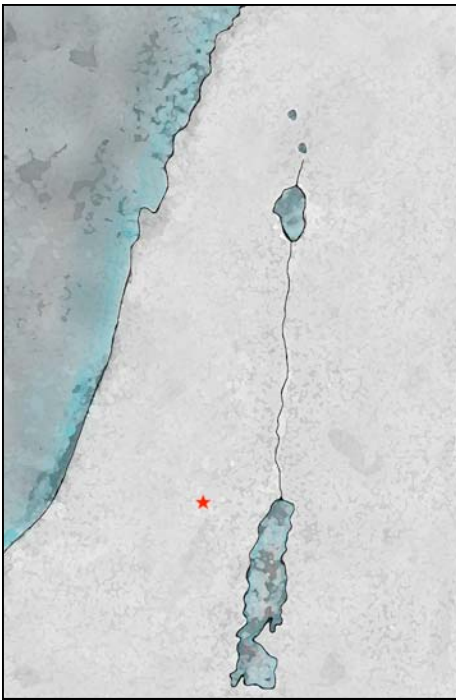


Saul's Family

D	D	P	I	L	M	A	L	C	H	I	S	H	U	A	D	O	Y	M
I	J	G	D	C	Y	J	M	G	A	M	S	Z	N	C	O	Z	B	P
Z	W	X	H	K	A	R	M	O	N	I	I	W	E	O	J	A	K	E
D	I	B	C	Y	U	S	V	N	O	Y	H	C	K	Q	R	J	L	D
A	W	N	C	H	N	Z	C	A	C	A	I	J	H	E	K	A	X	A
Q	D	J	A	K	P	E	Y	G	P	H	Y	E	M	A	U	I	O	W
A	U	Q	B	P	R	H	Q	Z	S	T	B	D	Z	A	L	R	G	K
N	O	K	I	D	T	J	I	I	G	Y	P	K	H	B	V	H	C	Y
Z	O	A	N	G	D	R	K	M	D	J	H	Y	L	I	T	V	E	H
P	F	V	A	U	P	J	O	N	A	T	H	A	N	E	R	B	C	Z
H	D	Q	D	M	O	B	K	X	E	V	N	I	H	L	B	Y	K	B
I	T	A	A	R	Q	L	W	H	D	E	V	S	Q	D	D	M	R	Y
S	P	Q	B	V	Z	M	S	L	H	B	O	X	C	W	U	Q	C	H
J	X	X	J	J	A	O	Q	H	I	B	P	G	N	C	L	I	A	X
H	U	Q	Y	O	B	P	T	O	I	U	O	X	H	H	W	C	L	F
T	Z	I	N	H	K	I	M	H	B	D	C	S	T	O	I	I	I	F
N	N	I	S	H	X	L	P	U	T	L	N	D	J	M	M	L	H	M
G	H	I	Y	H	U	E	B	O	Z	G	D	E	R	V	Z	D	K	A
A	H	U	C	Q	M	M	Q	R	M	W	E	K	R	E	Q	F	X	M

• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____
• _____	• _____

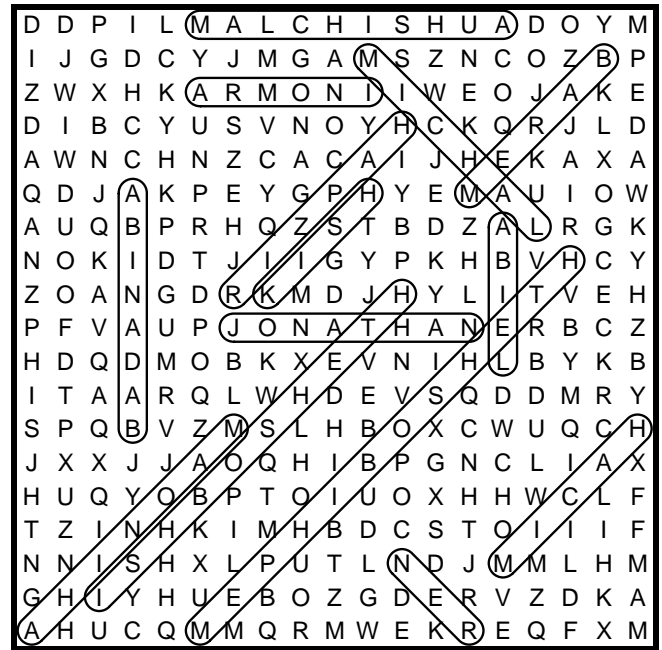




Using the map in the back of your Bible, mark some of the important locations during Saul's reign.

Puzzle answers:

- ABIEL
- ABINADAB
- AHINOAM
- ARMONI
- ISHBOSHETH
- JONATHAN
- KISH
- MALCHISHUA
- MEPHIBOSHETH
- MERAB
- MICAH
- MICHAL
- NER
- RIZPAH



For more studies, go to:



Down Victory Road

www.downvictoryrd.com

In C. S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters*, Uncle Screwtape offers his nephew a little advice on the goal and strategy of temptation.

“You will say that these are very small sins; and doubtless, like all young tempters, you are anxious to be able to report spectacular wickedness. But do remember, the only thing that matters is the extent to which you separate the man from the Enemy. It does not matter how small the sins are, provided that their cumulative effect is to edge the man away from the Light and out into the Nothing. Murder is no better than cards if cards can do the trick. Indeed, the safest road to Hell is the gradual one—the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts.”

***Your affectionate uncle,
Screwtape***

Sources:

<http://www.gallup.com/poll/27757/americans-rate-morality-social-issues.aspx>

<http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/16-teensnext-gen/25-young-adults-and-liberals-struggle-with-morality?q=morality>