

The Setting

Understanding the Philistine threat

The Via Maris

Shunem’s location (see map on screen)

Ancient geography and its theological significance

Israel’s mission as light and blessing to the nations

Genesis 12:1-3 Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

Isaiah 42:6 I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness;
I will take hold of your hand.
I will keep you and will make you
to be a covenant for the people
and a light for the Gentiles

Many scholars and authors believe Canaan’s central location was to help Israel fulfill this mission. (Credit Dr. Michael Williams and many others)

Saul’s utter failure vs. David’s success in chapter 27

Vs. 18 Because you did not obey the voice of the LORD and did not carry out his fierce wrath against Amalek, therefore the LORD has done this thing to you this day.

Our good king, our new purpose

Matthew 5:14-16 You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

God’s people surrounded by enemies

The Silence of God

Vs. 6 And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD did not answer him, either by dreams, or by Urim, or by prophets.

Vs. 15 Saul answered, “I am in great distress, for the Philistines are warring against me, and God has turned away from me and answers me no more, either by prophets or by dreams.

Important: this is not a warning for a believer in Jesus. This is a warning for the unbeliever. God does not treat his children like this.

John 10:11, 26, 27 I am the Good Shepherd... ²⁷ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.

Also important! This is a warning for those who do not listen to Christ and do not know him.

Luke 23:8-9 When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had long desired to see him, because he had heard about him, and he was hoping to see some sign done by him. ⁹ So he questioned him at some length, but he made no answer.

Hebrews 4:7 Therefore God again set a certain day, calling it Today, when a long time later he spoke through David, as was said before:

“Today, if you hear his voice,
do not harden your hearts.”

A final thought about the mission of the church...

Questions for Study and Reflection

1. Had you ever considered Israel’s strategic location for bringing blessing to the nations? How does this tell you about your purpose?
2. Why does God put Israel in the middle of a perpetual battleground instead of in a peaceful, out of the way location?
3. What is Saul trusting in this passage, and what is he living for? How does this demonstrate his lack of faith and allegiance to God?
4. Is God ever silent to his people? Why is God’s silence to Saul not for the Christian, but a warning for the unbeliever?