

1 & 2 Samuel Series

Lesson #054

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Dean Bible Ministries

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THE BATTLE IS THE LORD'S

DIVINE RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

1 SAMUEL 15:1–11

Is There Such a Thing as Biblical Holy War?

1. The term *Holy War* is not used in the Bible.

2. The biblical term is

**1-חרם *cherem*-1 hof imperf 3 masc sing
to ban, devote, destroy**

“The basic meaning is the exclusion of an object from the use or abuse of man and its irrevocable surrender to God. The word is related to an Arabic root meaning “to prohibit, especially to ordinary use.” The word “harem,” meaning the special quarters for Muslim wives, comes from it. It is related also to an Ethiopic root, meaning “to forbid, prohibit, lay under a curse.” Surrendering something to God meant devoting it to the service of God or putting it under a ban for utter destruction.”

~TWOT

“Consecration for service to God is dealt with in Lev. 27:28 (persons or things); Josh. 6:18; Mic. 4:13 (objects). Whatever is devoted to the Lord, be it human being, animal, or property, is considered most holy by God and is therefore not to be sold or redeemed by substituting something else. According to Num. 18:14 and Ezek. 44:29, all such objects are to be given to the priests for the support of the religious ceremonies. The gold, silver, bronze, and iron from Jericho, for instance, were so designated (Josh 6:19).”

~NIDOTTE

3. As such, the core idea of consecrating something to God informs us that the doctrinal application is going to relate to sanctification.

Unlike Islamic *jihad* or the heresy of the Christian Crusades, fighting in a *cherem* did nothing toward salvation or spiritual growth.

No personal plunder or benefit from the war.

9. During this limited period of history, from the Conquest in 1406 BC through the last period of Saul's kingship, the rules of engagement in Deut. 20:16–18, which applied to the Canaanites, were distinguished from the rules of engagement in Deut. 20:10–15, which applied to non-Canaanite populations.

****No one since *ca.* 1050 BC has been authorized to engage in *cherem*.**

10. Instructions for Israel's warfare are described in Deut. 20.

1 Sam. 15:1, “Samuel also said to Saul, ‘The LORD sent me to anoint you king over His people, over Israel. Now therefore, heed the voice of the words of the LORD.

1 Sam. 15:2, “ ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts: “I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he ambushed him on the way when he came up from Egypt.

1 Sam. 15:3, “ ‘ “Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.” ’ ”



The Great Sea
(Mediterranean)

Megiddo

• Salecah

CANAAN

GILEAD

• Shechem

Jabbok R.

HILL
COUNTRY

AMMON

• Rabbath-ammon

COASTAL
PLAIN

• Jerusalem

DESERT

• Ashkelon

SHEPHELAH

WILDERNESS

PLATEAU

• Gaza

Salt
Sea

• Aroer

Arnon River

• Beersheba

NEGEV

MOAB

Ascent of
Aqrabbim
(Scorpions Pass)

• Zoar

Zered River

Amalek

EGYPT

Beer-lahai-roi?

• Azmon?

Wilderness of Zin

• Tamar

• Kadesh-
barnea

Maktesh
Ramon

EDOM

Wadi el-Arish

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נָכָה *nākâ*

Hiphel perf

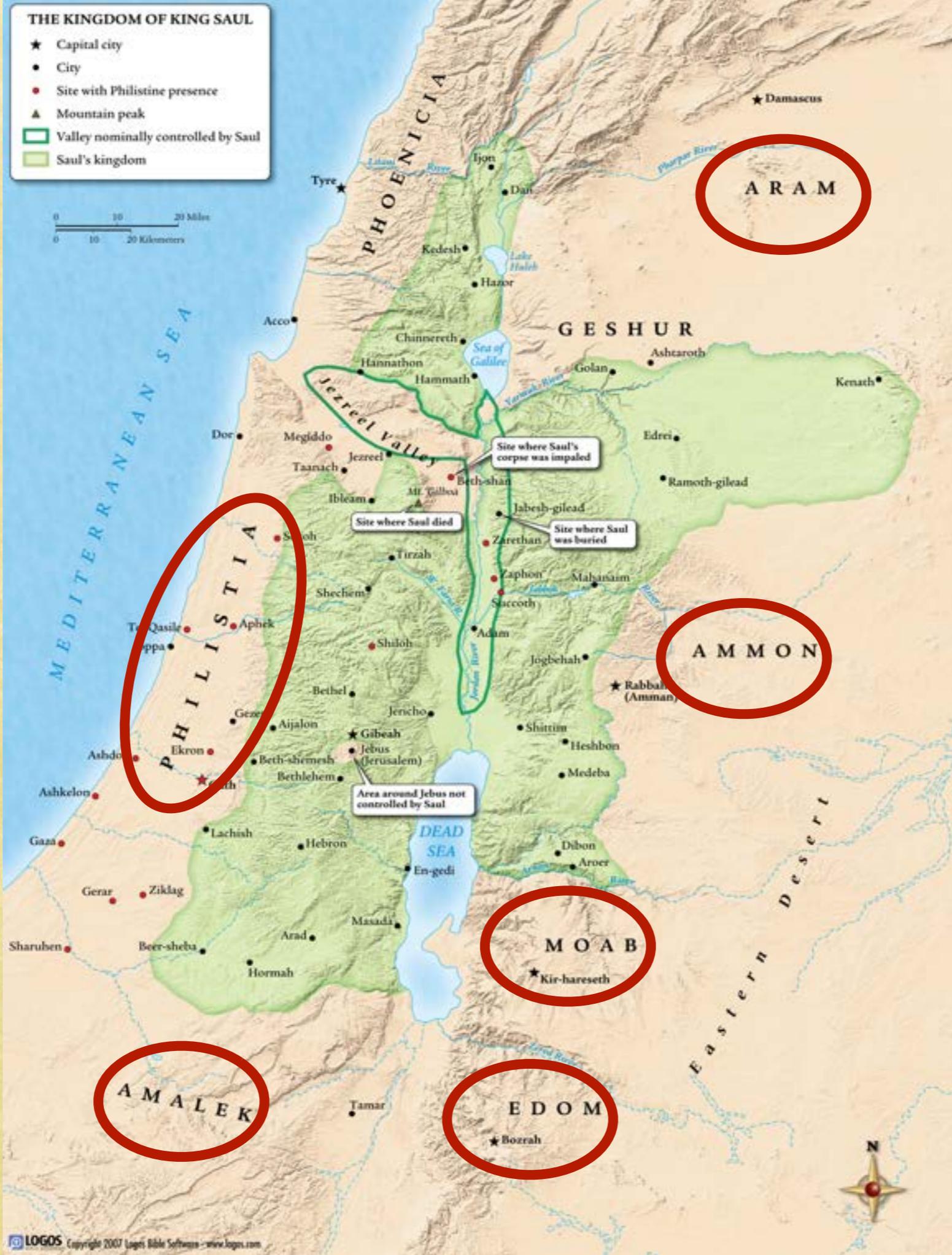
smite, strike, hit, beat, stay, kill.

**חָרַם-1 *cherem-1* hofal
imperf 3 masc sing
*to ban, devote,
destroy***

THE KINGDOM OF KING SAUL

- ★ Capital city
- City
- Site with Philistine presence
- ▲ Mountain peak
- ▭ Valley nominally controlled by Saul
- ▭ Saul's kingdom

0 10 20 Miles
0 10 20 Kilometers



ARAM

PHILISTIA

AMMON

MOAB

AMALEK

EDOM

Num. 13:29, “The Amalekites dwell in the land of the South [*Negev*]; the Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the mountains; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea and along the banks of the Jordan.”

Judg. 12:15, “Then Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite died and was buried in Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, in the mountains of the Amalekites.”

Ex. 17:14, “Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Write this for a memorial in the book and recount it in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.’”

Ex. 17:15, “And Moses built an altar and called its name, *The-LORD-Is-My-Banner*;

Ex. 17:16, “for he said, ‘Because the LORD has sworn: the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.’”

Deut. 25:17, “Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you were coming out of Egypt,

Deut. 25:18, “how he met you on the way and attacked your rear ranks, all the stragglers at your rear, when you were tired and weary; and he did not fear God.

Deut. 25:19, “Therefore it shall be, when the LORD your God has given you rest from your enemies all around, in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess as an inheritance, that you will blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. You shall not forget.”

1 Sam. 15:4, “So Saul gathered the people together and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand foot soldiers and ten thousand men of Judah.

1 Sam. 15:5, “And Saul came to a city of Amalek, and lay in wait in the valley.

1 Sam. 15:6, “Then Saul said to the Kenites, ‘Go, depart, get down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them. For you showed kindness to all the children of Israel when they came up out of Egypt.’ So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites.

1 Sam. 15:7, “And Saul attacked the Amalekites, from Havilah all the way to Shur, which is east of Egypt.

1 Sam. 15:8, “He also took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed [*cherem*] all the people with the edge of the sword.

1 Sam. 15:9, “But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were unwilling to utterly destroy [*cherem*] them. But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed [*cherem*].”

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MEDITERRANEAN SEA

DEAD SEA

Negeb

MOAB

EDOM

SINAI

MIDIAN

AQABA/ELAT

Wilderness of Shur

Wilderness of Zin

Wilderness of Paran

Wilderness of Sin

Kadesh-barnea

Punon

Petra

Timnah

Ezion-geber

J. Baqir

J. el-Lawz

al-Qurayya

J. esh-Sha'ira

J. Sin Bisher

J. Yeleq

J. Helal

Azmon

J. Magharah

Aroer

Kir-hareseth

Ije-abarim

Arad

Gaza

Ashkelon

T. el-Farana

T. el-Herr

Migdol (T. el-Borg)

T. Kedu

Sile (T. Hebua)

Daphnae (T. Defana)

T. Abu Sefeh

Succoth/Tjeku (T. el-Maskhuta)

Large Bitter Lake

Small Bitter Lake

Lake(s) Ballah

Lake Timsah

J. Serbal

Rephidim

W. Feiran

W. of Arish

W. of Arish

W. of Arish

Hamat

Arnon River

Zered River

Lake Menzaleh

Lake Sirbonis

W. Tumilat

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1 Sam. 15:10, “Now the word of the LORD came to Samuel, saying,

1 Sam. 15:11, “ ‘I greatly regret that I have set up Saul as king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments.’

And it grieved Samuel, and he cried out to the LORD all night.”