

K I N G D A V I D

Screenplay by

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K I N G D A V I D

1. EXT. HILLS OF BETHLEHEM. DAWN.

1.

(MAIN TITLES & CREDITS OVER) The high hills of Bethlehem in the depths of winter: stark, barren and white with snow. In a series of SOFT CUTS, CAMERA moves in towards a rocky outcrop on the horizon, where a single tamarisk tree guards the entrance to a small cave. A flock of sheep lie near the entrance in the shelter of the outcrop.

Presently a breeze begins to stir, and as the CAMERA moves closer towards the tree, a strange whispering SOUND is produced on the strings of a small harp hanging from one of the lower branches.

2. INT. CAVE. BETHLEHEM. DAWN.

2.

A shepherd boy lies asleep inside the entrance to the cave, huddled beneath a fleece. Even in the dim light of dawn, DAVID'S androgynous beauty is at once evident. He is 15, but looks younger, with fair hair and pale skin. As the strange music of the wind in the harp continues, DAVID stirs in his sleep. Now another SOUND begins to emerge: a note of menace, like the growl of distant thunder. DAVID opens his eyes - soft, blue eyes that recognise the danger at once. He sees the sheep, still sleeping peacefully outside the cave -- feels for something under the fleece -- rises silently, edges forward towards the entrance --

3. EXT. CAVE. HILLS OF BETHLEHEM. SUNRISE.

3.

DAVID emerges from the cave -- springs back at once as the vast shape of a LION leaps down onto one of the sheep from the ledge above. All is now SOUND and confusion - the lion's roar - the terrified bleating of its prey - the panic of the other sheep, running in all directions. DAVID hurls himself at the lion from behind, wrapping his arms around its body, his hand plunging a knife into its belly. The lion releases its grip on the sheep, which bolts clear, leaving DAVID and the lion to wrestle alone.

The SOUND gradually FADES, the image shifting into SLOW MOTION as the struggle between boy and beast takes on the surreal aspect of a violent embrace: the eternal conflict between Man and his God. DAVID'S face is streaked with blood, but his eyes reflect no pain: only the search for a meaning behind the savage facade of the beast with whom he wrestles.

3. Continued.

3.

The gentle SOUND of the breeze stirring through the strings of the harp returns with NORMAL CAMERA SPEED. The lion lies dead in the scarlet snow. DAVID rests beside it, stroking its mane like an exhausted lover. But there is no pleasure in his eyes - only a look of pity and regret. He lays his head on the lion's body, the tears beginning to mingle with the blood on his cheeks. His eyes close.

20. EXT. FARMSTEAD. COURTYARD & STREET. BETHLEHEM. DAY.

20.

A small crowd of SPECTATORS are gathered in a street outside a courtyard, awaiting some ritual that is evidently about to take place. From their POV, through the open gateway, we see SAMUEL, NATHAN and a rough-bearded farmer - JESSE - waiting by a stone altar. Six Levite PRIESTS stand nearby, each with a percussion instrument, while, further back, stands a group of ELDERS of the town.

Presently we hear shouts of "Stand back!" and "Out of the way!" as ELIAB, ABINADAB and SHAMMAH drag an unwilling sheep through the CROWD and into the courtyard.

TIGHT (HAND-HELD) SHOT of the wild-eyed sheep as the three brothers manhandle it across the courtyard until it is alongside the altar slab. The white-robed arms of SAMUEL enter SHOT: his hands grip the sheep's head and force it sideways down onto the slab. The young hand of NATHAN then removes a ceremonial knife from its sheath, passes it into the gnarled hand of SAMUEL...

21. EXT. HILLS OF BETHLEHEM. DAY.

21.

DAVID begins to gather the sheep together. He walks off with them, having put a small leather bag around his waist and taken his harp down from the tree.

22. EXT. JESSE'S FARMSTEAD. COURTYARD. DAY.

22.

FLASH C.U.: SAMUEL'S knife slits the throat of the sheep.....

23. EXT. HILLS OF BETHLEHEM. DAY.

23.

DAVID is travelling slowly with his sheep towards Bethlehem....

The remains of the sacrificed sheep smoulder on the altar in F.G. Beyond it, NATHAN passes a ram's horn to SAMUEL, filled with oil. SAMUEL blesses JESSE, then moves closer to him, lowering his voice to a hushed whisper.

SAMUEL

Blessings be upon you, for
this day shall the Lord God of
Israel choose Himself a king
from among your sons.

JESSE looks both fearful and confused.

JESSE

But Saul is our king....you
anoointed him yourself.

SAMUEL stares at JESSE a moment.

SAMUEL

God is not a man that He
should deceive you.

JESSE pauses, lowers his head in humble submission,
then looks up.

JESSE

Which of my sons must it be?

SAMUEL glances across at the CROWD in the street beyond
the gate, all straining to see what is going on.

SAMUEL

The Lord shall make him known
to us.

While SHAMMAH closes the gates, SAMUEL unclips a chain from around his neck and removes a pair of bejewelled discs from beneath his robe. These are the Urim and Thummim of priestly divination: two discs linked by a hinge, the Urim being made of gold set with amber, the Thummim made of silver set with black jet. SAMUEL folds the Urim and Thummim back to back to form a single disc, held together by a gold clasp.

(SC.25 deleted. SC.26 included in SC.24).

L.S.: DAVID leads his flock away down the silent
hillside towards Bethlehem in the far distance.

28. EXT. JESSE'S FARMSTEAD. COURTYARD. LATE AFTERNOON. 28.

SAMUEL places the Urim and Thummim on the altar next to the horn and gourd, indicates to JESSE that he is ready. JESSE walks forward with ELIAB, presents him to SAMUEL.

JESSE
My first-born son - Eliab.

SAMUEL looks ELIAB up and down, seems well pleased by what he sees but makes no comment. He takes the Urim and Thummim disc and spins it on its side, raising his eyes in silent prayer. The disc spins a moment, then falls with the black jet of Thummim facing upwards.

29. EXT. BETHLEHEM. APPROACH. LATE AFTERNOON. 29.

DAVID leads his flock up the stony approach towards the unimposing gates of Bethlehem.

30. EXT. FARMSTEAD. COURTYARD & STREET. LATE AFTERNOON. 30.

TIGHT SHOT: DOEG, a man with dark, pock-marked skin and a severe squint shifts into C.U. like a chill wind and peers through the crack in the gates.

DOEG'S POV, SHOOTING through the crack: The second brother, ABINADAB walks back to JESSE in L.S. while the youngest, SHAMMAH, takes his place in front of SAMUEL.

C.S.: The Urim and Thummim spins a third time, once again falling in favour of Thummim.

SAMUEL looks up at JESSE, clearly perplexed.

SAMUEL
You have no other sons?

31. EXT. WELL-OF BETHLEHEM. LATE AFTERNOON. 31.

TIGHT SHOT: DAVID'S face, reflected in the large marble drinking cup, filled with water. As he lifts the cup closer to CAMERA to drink, SHAMMAH calls O.C...

SHAMMAH (O.C.)
(shouting)
David!

DAVID is standing by the Well of Bethlehem, raising the cup to his lips, while his flocks drink from troughs. He looks round to see SHAMMAH running towards him. His eyes darken - he lowers the cup without drinking from it - lets it fall taut from its chain, the clear water spilling into the sand.

34. EXT. JESSE'S FARMSTEAD. COURTYARD. SUNSET.

34.

JESSE, ELIAB, and ABINADAB wait in silence a moment then glance up as SHAMMAH comes running through the gates, followed by DAVID. CAMERA TRACKS SLOWLY forward towards the altar, bringing SAMUEL into F.G.SHOT, now wearing the Urim and the Thummim around his neck as two hinged discs. His face is inclined towards us so that he cannot see DAVID, though he senses his approach.

JESSE escorts DAVID across to SAMUEL, who remains with his back to him.

JESSE

My youngest son, sir. David.

A pause, then SAMUEL turns round. As he does so, the rays of the setting sun strike the Urim's amber, deflecting light onto DAVID'S face.

DAVID looks at SAMUEL, his face and eyes glowing in the golden amber light. SAMUEL stares at him, his own eyes shining in the dead parchment of his face. His search is over.

35. EXT. JESSE'S FARMSTEAD. COURTYARD. DUSK.

35.

L.S.: SHOOTING through the crack in the courtyard gates: DAVID kneeling on both knees before SAMUEL by the altar. SAMUEL takes the ram's horn from NATHAN, ceremoniously pours the oil over DAVID'S head. JESSE and his other SONS are visible in E.L.S., watching the ceremony from a window in the farmstead.

SHOOTING through the farmstead window, as if from JESSE'S POV, SAMUEL continues to pour the oil over DAVID, intoning words that are inaudible from this remove.

LOW ANGLE: the oil trickles down DAVID'S face as he looks up at SAMUEL with bemused incredulity.

SAMUEL passes the horn back to NATHAN, leaving DAVID awed and confused.

SAMUEL

You kneel before me as the
shepherd of your father's flock,
but God has chosen you to be
the Shepherd of His people Israel -
to unite His scattered tribes and
claim the Promised Land.

DAVID

But this is the Promised Land.,

SAMUEL

Bethlehem is a mere fragment!

(quoting)

'And the Lord commanded Moses:
"When you enter the land I am
giving you, you shall devour
all the nations that you find
living there: Hittites, Amorites,
Canaanites, Jebusites - utterly
destroy all of them, otherwise
they will tempt you to worship
their Gods instead of Me."'

DAVID

(almost to himself)

It's not possible.....

SAMUEL

To God, the Splendour of Israel,
all things are possible.

DAVID

Not without bloodshed.

SAMUEL

Did I say there was to be
no bloodshed?

FADE OUT:

TITLE FADES IN: Gold lettering on black -

KING DAVID

TITLE FADES OUT: MUSIC begins, continues through
the following scene:

3A. EXT. COUNTRYSIDE. DAY.

3A.

FADE UP on an abstract, dislocated MONTAGE of an army
on the march: the ISRAELITE ARMY, ten centuries before
Christ. It consists of an ill-assorted collection of
mercenaries, devoid of armour, horses or even weapons -
apart from plowshares, colters, mattocks and other
primitive farm implements. The images are impressionistic,
and we are not concerned as yet with identifying characters
by name. The troops are led by a huge Titan of a man -
KING SAUL, flanked by his three sons and his Commander
in Chief, ABNER. Of the three sons, the youngest -
PRINCE JONATHAN, is favoured by the CAMERA. He is in
his early 30's, but is clean-shaven and looks younger.

TITLE FADES IN:

JUDEA - 1000 B.C.

TITLE FADES OUT.

3B. EXT. ISRAELITE CAMPSITE. HILLS OF BETHLEHEM. DUSK. 3B.

The army have bivouaced for the night, high on a hill above the distant town of Bethlehem. The soldiers sit round campfires, singing and joshing after the manner of their trade.

Presently, PRINCE JONATHAN emerges from one of the tents, moves among the SOLDIERS in a detached fashion - an observer rather than a participant. We hear snatches of conversation, enough to establish in an oblique, non-expositional fashion that the Israelites are embarked on a campaign against the Amalekites, several days' journey from their present campsite. Occasionally JONATHAN'S princely status is acknowledged by a respectful gesture from one of the soldiers as he passes among them.

As JONATHAN reaches the perimeter of the camp, he becomes aware of a SOUND in the distance, barely audible above the raucous singing of the soldiers: the faraway strains of a harp. His curiosity aroused, JONATHAN moves towards the ridge of the hill.

3C. EXT. RIDGE & VALLEY BEYOND. DUSK. 3C.

JONATHAN reaches the top of the ridge, looks down into a small valley beyond. DAVID is visible in E.L.S. on the far side, kneeling outside the rocky outcrop and silhouetted against the moonlit sky. The thin, haunting melody of the harp is now clearer.

3D. EXT. ROCKY OUTCROP. HILLS OF BETHLEHEM. DUSK. 3D.

DAVID kneels in F.G. outside the cave entrance, playing on the small kinnor-harp and humming a theme in descant to the melody of the harp. He pauses briefly, barely reacting to the SOUND of pebbles being dislodged some distance away as JONATHAN moves up the slope towards him.

ANGLE on JONATHAN as he stands in the shadow of the rock, mesmerized by the beauty of DAVID'S voice and the strange, surreal nature of the scene.

A pause as the last note of the harp hangs in the still night air. DAVID remains gazing upwards a moment, then lowers his eyes and looks at JONATHAN: a long, defiant gaze that combines the insolence of youth with the vulnerability of a child.

44. EXT. VALLEY BETWEEN CAMPS. VALE OF ELAH. DAY. 44.

FULL SHOT: C.S. PHILISTINE ARMOUR BEARER. He looks up to where the Israelite troops are camped.

ARMOUR BEARER (O.C.)

Slaves of a god with no name,
awake! Wake up to the challenge
of Goliath, Champion of the
Philistines! Do you dare to
send forward a champion or once
again cower in silence?!

REVERSE ANGLE: ISRAELITE SOLDIERS line the clifftop,
peering down in the direction of the challenger.
Their unanimous look of impotence indicates their
awareness of Goliath's credentials.

As the challenge continues O.C., CAMERA TRACKS along
the line of ISRAELITE SOLDIERS.

ARMOUR BEARER (O.C.)

Is there not a man among you who
will defend the honour of your
god and your king? If he can
kill Goliath in single combat,
we shall become your slaves, but
if Goliath should kill your
champion, then the day shall be
ours.

As the ARMOUR BEARER speaks, DAVID is seen wandering into
the main area of the camp from the hills beyond. He
looks down into the valley. A couple of SOLDIERS look
towards the weaponless youth.

1ST SOLDIER

Well, boy, thinking of
challenging Goliath??

2ND SOLDIER

He's only killed fifty men.

ARMOUR BEARER (O.C.)

Well, Israelites? What is
your answer?

The SOLDIERS look back down into the valley. Some of
them guiltily exchange glances. A few walk back to
their tents, not wanting to hear further ridicule and
abuse. The voice booms up again from the valley.

ARMOUR BEARER (O.C.)

Then let all the world bear
witness -- there is no God in
Israel!!!

Quietly, DAVID starts to make his way down the valley in-
between the opposing ARMIES. A couple of SOLDIERS notice
him leave. They draw him to the attention of OTHERS.
Some tend to laugh but others watch his progress down the
hill with respect.

A group of senior OFFICERS, including ABNER and JOAB are discussing tactics with the aid of a map drawn on a hide and held down with rocks. JONATHAN stands a short distance away. SAUL is seated, his manner suggesting a lack of conviction in the proposed tactics against the Philistines.

Occasionally the echo of the ARMOUR BEARER'S VOICE is just audible from the valley below.

ABNER

Our scouts have found a way
round the back of the encampment.
Now if Joab were to take the
Ephraim division.....

He breaks off as a SOLDIER enters the tent. He stands near the entrance.

ISHYO

What is it, soldier?

SOLDIER

It's the shepherd lad, sir.
We think he's gone down to
face Goliath.

JONATHAN looks up.

ISHYO

The King has expressly forbidden
any soldier to accept the
challenge.

(Saul nods in agreement).
When Goliath kills him, the
Philistines will claim a victory.
.....Go and fetch him back!

SOLDIER turns to go.

ABNER

Wait. He's not a soldier, is he?

SOLDIER'S head nods in agreement.

So how can the Philistines make
such a claim?

SAUL

Let him go. Soldiers are a
sentimental breed. The slaying of
an innocent young martyr might be
just the incentive they need.

JONATHAN moves to the tent door and looks out in the
direction of the valley.

DAVID moves slowly forward towards the ARMOUR BEARER.

ARMOUR BEARER (O.C.)
Do you hear me, Saul? We challenge
you to put your god to the test.
If your champion slays Goliath, then
all will know that your nameless god
is with you.....

DAVID pauses, peering in front of him at Goliath's
ARMOUR BEARER, though for a moment we - and DAVID -
might assume him to be Goliath. The ARMOUR BEARER
stations himself about forty yards ahead of DAVID,
on the far side of a small stream.

ARMOUR BEARER (O.C.)
Our lands shall be yours, and
we shall be your slaves.....

As the ARMOUR BEARER continues, DAVID kneels as if in
awe of him; but in C.S., we see that he is selecting
several pebbles.

ARMOUR BEARER (O.C.)
But if Goliath should kill your
champion, then your god shall
be proved impotent in the affairs
of Israel.....

DAVID looks up at the ARMOUR BEARER, then raises his
eyeline higher, reacting to something O.C. above him....

The vast shape of GOLIATH looms into view: a human
colossus, sheathed in bronze, and wearing a helmet
crowned with two ox horns.

As the ARMOUR BEARER continues, DAVID rises slowly to
his feet, his hand extracting the sling from his
shepherd's bag, his eyes rooted on GOLIATH.

ARMOUR BEARER
You shall become our slaves
and this land shall.....
(waving David aside)
Out of the way, boy.....
(calling up)
.....this land shall be ours!

DAVID places a pebble in his sling, starts to swing it
back and forth. From the ARMOUR BEARER'S POV, he
appears as a slight, insignificant shape.

ARMOUR BEARER
Who are you, boy? What do
you want?

DAVID
(without emotion)
I am David, and I have come
to kill your champion.

DAVID raises the sling higher, swings it faster above his head. The ARMOUR BEARER laughs in disbelief, translates to GOLIATH in a foreign tongue. GOLIATH bursts out laughing: a wild, insane laugh, like a howling animal. He takes the sword from his ARMOUR BEARER, then begins to advance towards DAVID.

LOW ANGLE: DAVID holds his ground, swinging the sling faster and faster until it blurs into a dark halo above him.

DAVID'S POV (LOW ANGLE): GOLIATH advances towards us, wielding his great sword and laughing all the while, his massive shape backlit by the rays of sunlight.

53. EXT. ISRAELITE CAMP. DAWN.

53.

The SOLDIERS of SAUL'S army stand in groups along the edge of the plateau, listening to the echo of GOLIATH'S laughter. The rumour of DAVID'S exploit is still being passed by word of mouth, and the reaction is one of puzzled disbelief at such madness.

JONATHAN walks back to where ABNER, JOAB and ELIAB stand in front of SAUL'S tent, gazing down into the void. SAUL appears in the opening of the tent behind them.

Suddenly the laughter stops. All peer down into the valley.

54. EXT. VALE OF ELAH. DAWN/DAY.

54.

DAVID stands motionless, gazing up ahead of him. His arms hang limp, the sling still in his hand.

GOLIATH towers about ten yards in front of DAVID, on the far side of the stream. He sways to and fro, like a great oak in the growing breeze, one hand still clutching his sword, the other clasped to his forehead.

A pause, then he drops the sword and staggers forward, lurching out with both arms towards DAVID. As he drops his hand from his forehead, blood trickles down from the hole in his skull. He reaches the edge of the stream, then suddenly pitches forward, his head striking the rock on the far side, within feet of where DAVID is standing.

DAVID stares down at the lifeless hulk without trace of emotion. The ARMOUR BEARER drops the shield and flees. DAVID takes no notice.

TIGHT SHOT: DAVID slowly kneels beside GOLIATH'S head, gazes at his huge eyes, then leans forward and gently strokes the eyelids shut.

He glances at the blood now on his own hands, breathes the trace of a sigh.

DAVID
(very quietly)
So be it, Lord.

DAVID gets to his feet, and is about to move away when he notices something O.C. A pause.

LOW ANGLE: GOLIATH'S sword lies submerged in the shallow stream in F.G. DAVID moves towards it, kneels down and stares at it a moment. He begins to tremble, very slightly, like the onset of SAUL'S sickness. Suddenly he plunges both hands into the water, grips the hilt and lifts the massive weapon into the air.....

LOW ANGLE: GOLIATH'S head in F.G., his eyes closed. DAVID suddenly looks up, the sword raised. He throws back his head with a cry.....

DAVID
So be it!

As the cry echoes about his ears, DAVID brings the sword sweeping down through F.G. towards us....

SHARP CUT TO:

There is now considerable excitement among the ISRAELITE SOLDIERS lining the edge of the plateau.

JOAB
(incredulous)
It's not possible.....

JONATHAN stands a short distance away, alone by the tent. A great cheer suddenly rises from the SOLDIERS further along the plateau.

The area by the campfire is crowded with SOLDIERS, all jostling for a better view. There is a confusion of words and rumour from those in F.G., unable to see for themselves: "Goliath....he's killed Goliath!" - "...the boy...make way for the boy...stand back!" The SOLDIER'S form a narrow channel, allowing us an unobstructed view of the path's approach.

LONG FOCUS: The cheering breaks into wild acclamation as DAVID slowly rises into view at the top of the path, his face glistening with sweat. As he reaches the clifftop, GOLIATH'S massive head rises into SHOT level with his waist, giving the brief illusion that he is following him. But while DAVID continues to materialize, GOLIATH'S body terminates at the neck.

WIDER SHOT: DAVID walks between the lines of cheering SOLDIERS, carrying GOLIATH'S head by the hair in one hand, the great sword in the other. His eyes are cold yet steadfast, devoid of all emotion. CAMERA PANS as he passes, CRANING UP to embrace the two lines of cheering SOLDIERS that have formed between the main camp and SAUL'S tent.

JONATHAN stands a few feet away from SAUL, ABNER and JOAB as the end of the two lines, watching DAVID as he approaches.

SAUL

Before we sing your praises
may we know your name?

DAVID

I am David.

SAUL

Whose son are you?

DAVID

Jesse of Bethlehem, sir.

SAUL

And you have served with
my soldiers?

DAVID

No, sir - I'm just a shepherd.

DAVID remains kneeling, his voice dry, his eyes rooted to the ground. SAUL regards him quizzically. He smiles at an irony.....

SAUL

(nodding)

A king who has slain his
thousands.....

SAUL bends down on one knee, placing his hand on DAVID'S which still grips the hair of GOLIATH....

....kneeling before a shepherd
boy.....

SAUL gazes at DAVID a beat, then suddenly grips the hair of GOLIATH, wielding it in the air.

This is taken as a signal for jubilation by the entire ARMY. SAUL turns back to DAVID, gives him a reassuring smile as ISHYO suddenly calls out, O.C.....

ISHYO (O.C.)
The Philistines.....look!

All turn to look out across the valley, where the PHILISTINE CAMP can be seen in panic and turmoil.

ABNER
(to Saul)
We must pursue them!

SAUL
Pursue them, pursue them.

A pause. SAUL looks down at DAVID.

SAUL
You shall ride with me, David.

SAUL turns and walks with ABNER, ISHYO and MALCHISHUA back to the tent. DAVID remains kneeling, his back to CAMERA, watched by JONATHAN. O.C. we hear the call to arms, followed by the clamour of SOLDIERS rushing to their posts.

DAVID begins to shiver. JONATHAN removes his own scarlet robe, drapes it over DAVID'S shoulders, then kneels before him. A long pause.

JONATHAN
You must be the Lord's anointed,
and for the future of Israel I
would give thanks.....but that
I mourn for the poet in you.

DAVID looks up, and for the first time we see that his eyes are brimming with tears. He gazes at JONATHAN a moment, then suddenly grips his hand and holds it to his face, streaked with tears and blood.

As JONATHAN helps DAVID to his feet in L.S., ISRAELITE SOLDIERS begin pouring down the slopes in pursuit of the PHILISTINES.

NATHAN (V.O.)
And the soul of Jonathan was
knit with the soul of David
that day. Each loved the
other as dearly as himself. And
Saul sent word to Jesse, saying
"Let David remain in my service,
for I love him dearly, and he has
found favour in my sight."

55A. EXT. VALE OF ELAH. BOTTOM OF SLOPE. DAY.

55A.

ISRAELITES approach the PHILISTINE camp.

NATHAN (V.O.cont'd)
Thus the Lord delivered Saul
of his adversary, not by the
sword but by a shepherd's sling,
that all the earth might know
that there is a god in Israel....

55B. EXT. PHILISTINE CAMP. DAY/NIGHT.

55B.

NATHAN'S dispassionate V.O. continues as the ISRAELITES
plunder the PHILISTINE camp in a montage that merges
from day into night....

NATHAN (V.O.,cont'd)
And when the Philistines saw
their champion slain, they fled
the field of battle. And the
men of Israel and Judah rose up
with a great shout, and plundered
their camp, and pursued them even
to the gates of Telaim, strewing
the roadside with their dead.

14. INT. PHILISTINE SHRINE. TELAIM. NIGHT.

14.

UPSHOT: The carved images of five heathen gods -
Sharar, Shalem, Dagon, Moloch and Sedek - silhouetted
against the altar window of a small shrine. The flames
of the burning town can be seen through the window
beyond.

A brief pause, then - then to the SOUND of axes and
mallets O.C. - the images begin to sway, totter and
finally crash to the ground.

15. EXT. SHRINE & STREET. TELAIM. NIGHT.

15.

ISRAELITE SOLDIERS carry the fallen idols from the
shrine, depositing them onto a huge bonfire blazing
in the street outside.

CAMERA PANS from the fire onto the street beyond,
where the final stages of the Hebraic "Ban" are
being put into effect. Men, women and children are
herded away to the fate prescribed for them in
Deuteronomy 20: 10-18, buildings razed to the ground,
etc. etc.

SAMUEL and NATHAN approach the ruined town. The prophet's
eyes blaze with anger at the sight and SOUND of the sheep
and cattle being herded into pens near the town walls.

(SC.16 DELETED)

SAUL is seated at one end of the black, goat-skin tent: massive, austere, resplendent in his hour of victory. He is flanked by his Commander-in-Chief, ABNER, and his three sons, ISHYO, MALCHISHUA, and JONATHAN.

The wretched PHILISTINE KING kneels at the far end of the tent, chained between TWO GUARDS. At a table in the centre sit TWO NEGOTIATORS: one a PHILISTINE, the other an ISRAELITE, who also acts as an interpreter. Various maps, scrolls and documents are laid out on the table in front of them.

DAVID is seated in a corner of the tent, away from the main group.

NEGOTIATOR
(reading)

....800 she-goats, 90 he-goats,
700 ewes, 80 rams, and 250 milch-
camels with their young. In
addition, all Philistine lands
between Edom and Shalak to be given
to Israel, together with a ransom
payment of 100,000 talents.

While the ISRAELITE NEGOTIATOR reads, we hear the strident voice of SAMUEL, overlapped O.C.

SAMUEL (O.C.)
....I am here to see Saul.

SOLDIER (O.C.)
I'm sorry, sir, but he's engaged
in the affairs of state.....

SAMUEL (O.C.)
Since when have the affairs of
state taken precedence over the
affairs of God?

SAUL'S reaction to the arrival of SAMUEL is that of a grown son still intimidated by his father, but not wishing to seem so in the presence of his peers. He rises to his feet as SAMUEL sweeps into the tent, seething with rage.

SAUL
We welcome you, Samuel -
with God's blessing our
victory has been complete.

SAMUEL

Is this how you show Him
your gratitude?

SAMUEL holds back the tent-flap, pointing across at
the cattle compounds on the opposite side of the
valley.

....By looting the
Philistines of their
women and cattle?

SAUL cowers as the whirlwind figure of SAMUEL strides
over.....

...I curse the day I
anointed you king!
Time and again I warned
you. Who are you to
challenge His word?

SAUL

I assure you.....

SAMUEL

(pointing at AGAG)
Then why are you holding
the Philistine king in
captivity?

SAUL

(faltering)
We were just discussing
the terms...the possible terms
of a treaty....a ransom....

SAMUEL positively explodes with rage....

SAMUEL

(shouting)
Treaty?.....Ransom?.....
(with sudden calm)
Why Saul, for this you have
ransomed your own soul in
the sight of God.

SAMUEL suddenly grabs the hilt of SAUL'S sword, drawing
it from its scabbard as if to kill him...

....His words brooked no
ambiguity...no misunderstanding...

SAMUEL turns and marches with slow menace towards the
kneeling figure of AGAG....

SAMUEL

"I am resolved to blot out
all memory of the Philistines
from the face of my earth.
Therefore send for my servant
Saul, and tell him to go now
and smite the Philistines...."

SAMUEL raises SAUL'S sword...

....and utterly destroy all
that they have. Spare nothing
from the sword - NOTHING!

With a sweep of the sword, SAMUEL decapitates AGAG,
the PHILISTINE KING, then advances on SAUL, carrying
AGAG'S head by the hair.

SAMUEL

(continuing, quieter)
...When our tribes clamoured
for a king, "to make us like
other nations", I answered them,
"We are not like other nations
-- the Lord of Hosts is both
our God and our King. He led
us out of Egypt. He brought us
to the Promised Land -- why do
you now reject Him?" But the
people said "No, we want a king
we can see, a king of our own
flesh and blood."

SAMUEL turns on the assembly, holding AGAG'S head high
in the air for all to see....suddenly flaring up....

....Here are your kings of flesh
and blood -- here is a king you
can see!

SAMUEL swings the head round, then lays it in the dust
at SAUL'S feet. A long pause. SAUL hangs his head
low with remorse. He looks up at SAMUEL, his eyes shot
with panic, then suddenly crumples forward on his knees
beside the fallen head of AGAG at SAMUEL'S feet.

SAUL

I beg you, ask God to forgive
me. He is merciful. He is
compassionate.....

SAMUEL falters a moment, looking down at the pathetic
figure at his feet, then raises his head to heaven as
if seeking divine judgement. A long pause. All eyes
turn to SAMUEL, awaiting his response. At last he speaks,
looking down at SAUL.

SAMUEL

This is the word of the Lord:
"As you have rejected my
commandment, so do I now
reject you, Saul, as my
anointed king."

SAMUEL turns and walks towards NATHAN, who has stayed by the tent opening with the boy. SAUL remains kneeling in the dust, like one who has just received the death sentence. Suddenly his body begins to shudder and quake as if he were suffering from an epileptic fit; the next moment he is on his feet, his hand grasping a nearby javelin:.....

SAUL

(bellowing)

I.....AM.....KING!

SAUL is about to hurl the javelin at SAMUEL when JONATHAN springs forward to stop him....

JONATHAN

Father.....no!

JONATHAN'S action deflects the javelin from its mark; it misses SAMUEL by inches and tears through the side of the tent. SAMUEL observes the tear without moving, then turns back to SAUL, who remains trembling where he stands.

SAMUEL

(quietly)

This day has the Lord torn
the kingdom of Israel from
the House of Saul.

ANGLE on DAVID, reacting to the prophet's words.

.....You shall remain king
until the day you die. But
without His Divine blessing
and love, you stand alone.
Utterly alone.

SAMUEL turns and strides out of the tent, followed by NATHAN and the boy.

TIGHT SHOT: SAUL stares after SAMUEL, his frame beginning to tremble - slowly at first, then with gathering force as we CUT TO:

18. EXT. CITY WALL & COUNTRYSIDE. TELAIM. NIGHT.

18.

TIGHT ZOOM, SHOOTING from the other side of the valley. as SAMUEL, NATHAN and the BOY leave SAUL'S tent and make their way down the valley slope, we hear an unearthly wail of anguish and desolation - the cry of SAUL, sundered from his God. CAMERA PULLS BACK, as if recoiling from the scream, which gradually dissipates.

56. EXT. GIBEAH & APPROACH. DAY.

56.

The walled citadel of Gibeah in high summer. A SHEPHERD BOY moves his flock across the F.G. plain, while, from behind CAMERA, we continue to hear the monotonous tramp of an approaching ARMY.

While the CAMERA ZOOMS SLOWLY in on the main gates of the town, a third SOUND swells, OVERLAPPING the marching feet and drowning the frail remnants of DAVID'S THEME beneath a babble of high-pitched voices, running feet, cymbals and tambourines. As the CAMERA TIGHTENS on the gates, they suddenly burst open like a ruptured dam, unleashing a throng of jubilant GIRLS upon us....

HIGH SHOT, SHOOTING DOWN from the ramparts: the girls pour forth from the gates below us. CAMERA PANNING UP with them as they fan out across the plain to welcome the returning Israelite Army in L.S.

TRAVELLING SHOT: The troops are led by SAUL, riding a gilded chariot with DAVID at his side. ABNER, ISHYO, MALCHISHUA and JONATHAN lead a small Cavalry division of mules, followed by the main body of Infantry - including JOAB, ELIAB, ABINADAB and SHAMMAH - and supply wagons.

The GIRLS reach the chariot and swarm round it on DAVID'S side, festooning him with flowers and cries of "David! David!". It is evidently their first glimpse of the hero, and he does not disappoint them. Little attention is paid to SAUL and his sons and though JONATHAN is clearly proud of DAVID'S glory, ISHYO and MALCHISHUA display a degree of aloof resentment.

LOW ANGLE: SAUL'S chariot passes through the town gates, escorted by the entourage of chanting, dancing girls. Two girls are waving and cheering from one of the windows; a third, MICHAL, stands between them, watching the procession with regal hauteur. She is a dark-eyed beauty of 17, who bears a marked resemblance to JONATHAN. Once the chariot has passed through the gate, the two GIRLS hurry away from the window to see it emerge on the far side. MICHAL remains a moment longer, then follows them from view.

SAUL'S chariot comes into the stronghold, lined with citizens clamouring to glimpse DAVID. As the procession approaches the courtyard gates, the two GIRLS run along the verandah to keep up with it, followed by MICHAL at a more leisurely pace.

The chariot stops outside the gates and the crowd surge forward with cries of "David, Slayer of Goliath, Champion of Israel!" SAUL seems to share JONATHAN'S pride in DAVID, encouraging him to show the crowd what they crave to see. DAVID bends down, picks up GOLIATH'S head from the floor of the chariot and holds it up to the crowd.

As SAUL steps down from the chariot, the words of a refrain rise above the general clamour, sung like a chant by the girls in the crowd -

GIRLS

"David, Slayer of Goliath,
Champion of Israel."

SAUL pauses as he crosses the courtyard, reacting to the refrain that has now been taken up by the crowd as a whole. He looks back at DAVID, watches him a moment with the slightest betrayal of jealousy.

MICHAL (O.C.)

Father.....!

SAUL turns to see MICHAL standing on the stronghold steps. She runs to him, throws her arms around him in a spontaneous, affectionate embrace.

SAUL smiles benignly, strokes her hair in a preoccupied manner. MICHAL watches DAVID over SAUL'S shoulder with a look that is part fascination, part disdain. DAVID catches MICHAL'S look, returns it with a gaze of unequivocal captivation. She remains watching him a moment longer, then turns and follows SAUL inside the stronghold. DAVID gazes after her, oblivious to the jubilant crowd.

The ISRAELITE ARMY is marching through a barren landscape. SAUL rides alone, solemn, pre-occupied.

NATHAN (V.O.)

David fought in the army of
Saul, where he proved himself
valiant in the sight of the
people, so that Saul made David
his Captain over a Thousand.

58A. Continued.

58A.

DAVID, like SAUL and JONATHAN, is mounted on horseback. JONATHAN moves his horse alongside DAVID'S. DAVID is now around 20 years old, his boyishness almost, but not quite, gone.

DAVID

It was my brothers who always wanted to be soldiers. All I ever wanted was to be a shepherd.

JONATHAN

Aren't we all just farmers?
(He gestures to the TROOPS around them)
.....Most of our men are still fighting with pitchforks....but with my father's leadership - and God's help - we have reconquered half our lands.

DAVID

The God I must serve is not the God I know.
(He indicates the sword by his side).

JONATHAN

Who is your God?

A pause. Perhaps the question of definition has not occurred to DAVID before.

DAVID

He's so many things to me --
my soul, my strength, my refuge.

ANGLE CUTS to a REVERSE SHOT, showing that the ARMY is approaching a huge, walled city.

....Without Him, we're just
bone and flesh striving after
wind.

58B. EXT. CAMP. DUSK.

58B.

The covered supply wagons of the ISRAELITE ARMY are drawn up in a circle. GUARDS are posted, campfires lit. The walls of the city to be besieged can be seen in the distance.

SAUL'S tent is in the middle of the encirclement.

58C. INT. TENT. DUSK.

58C.

The tent is gloomy. Small oil lamps supplying some light. SAUL ambles about, morose. JONATHAN, ISHYO and ABNER exchange a glance, unsure how to deal with him.

ISHYO

There's no sense in waiting
any longer, father. Samuel
will not come. He's not
come since Telaim.

SAUL

(a vacant monotone)
This time he will come.

ISHYO

No, father, he's.....

SAUL

(bellowing)
He will come!
(quieter)
We shall not mount this
attack without his blessing.

ABNER steps forward.

ABNER

My Lord, if we delay, the
Ammonites' allies will
arrive and attack us here.
We will be.....

ISHYO

Abner's right, father.
Our army would be trapped.

SAUL

I am aware of that...but
what was his name?

ISHYO

(confused)
Abner?

SAUL

(impatiently)
The man who wrestled with me
till daybreak.

ABNER looks mystified, but JONATHAN perceives that
SAUL'S mind is beginning to wander and moves towards him.

ABNER

What man, my Lord?

SAUL

(vacantly)
Deep calls unto deep in the
roar of His cataracts.....

58C. Continued.

58C.

JONATHAN
(to Saul, gently)
It was only a dream, father.

SAUL
Then send in my musician and
let me dream on.

JONATHAN
You dismissed him last night...

SAUL
(with sudden rage)
Then find me another!

JONATHAN
You've heard them all, father.
There's no other to be....

JONATHAN breaks off, reacting to a passing recollection.

58D. INT. TENT. NIGHT.

58D.

CAMERA pulls back from a CU DAVID, who is standing before
SAUL. SAUL, still disturbed, stares at him quizzically.

SAUL
Have you seen him face to
face?

DAVID
No, sir.

SAUL
I saw him once. He smiled
at me. But at daybreak he
was gone.

SAUL gestures to DAVID to begin. DAVID raises his harp
and plays the first chords. SAUL begins to relax into
some cushions. Before leaving the tent, JONATHAN
notices that the effect on the King is all that he dared
hope for. SAUL'S eyes begin to close as he drifts into
sleep, the trace of a smile on his lips.

DAVID
The Lord is my Shepherd, I
shall not want.
He lies me down in quiet
pastures,
He leads me beside still
waters,
He restores my soul....

58D. Continued.

58D.

DAVID

He guides me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.
For though I walk through the
valley of the shadow of death,
I fear no evil.....

.....I fear no evil --
(eyes raised)
For you are with me, Lord....

58E. EXT. CITY WALLS. DAY.

58E.

The ISRAELITE SLINGERS let a barrage of stones fly at the DEFENDERS on the walls. This is followed by a volley of arrows.

Using their shields across their backs as protection, ISRAELITE SOLDIERS then carry their scaling ladders to the walls. Missiles are rained down on them from the defenders, but the constant barrage of stones and arrows is making the defence difficult.

SAUL calmly controls the operation from horseback. He has a team of RUNNERS to convey messages to his various COMMANDERS, and a TRUMPETER by his side, who is used to signal various phases of the attack.

One group of MEN, heavily defended, rush in with piles of brush and pile it at the base of the huge, wooden doors of the city. They are followed by OTHERS who set it on fire.

The SOLDIERS mounting the scaling ladders are being severely beaten. Too few are reaching the top to be able to make any impact on the DEFENDERS. Both DAVID and JONATHAN climb the ladders and fight their way to the top of the city walls. Once there, they defend themselves with sword and shield. Other ISRAELITE SOLDIERS reach the top of the wall, and, as the scene ends, the battle is clearly won.

(SCS.59-63 DELETED)

64. INT. SAUL'S STRONGHOLD. COUNCIL ROOM & CHAPEL. NIGHT. 64.

CUT from the NOISE of battle to the silence of SAUL'S deserted council room, which is in almost total darkness. CAMERA HOLDS awhile on the empty throne, then begins to TRACK BACK as SAUL'S whispered voice is heard emanating from behind CAMERA.

SAUL (O.C.)

He is brave. He is honourable.
He is beautiful. He is good.

CAMERA continues to TRACK BACK, bringing SAUL into F.G., C.S. He is kneeling in a small chapel adjoining the council room, lit by the glow of a single candle, and evidently addressing his thoughts to God.

SAUL

My people love him. You love him. I love him.

(pause)

Why, then, do I want him dead?

(pause)

He has brought me victory over my enemies, pride in my army. He has even brought me a little peace.

CAMERA slowly CRANES UP in front of SAUL.

SAUL

Am I jealous? Perhaps. But not for the people's love of him.

(looks up into CAMERA)

It is your love that I crave for! His state of grace in your eyes is unendurable to me!

SAUL turns away. A pause, then he shakes his head.

SAUL

No, he's too young to die. Death at his age would be a gift..... To die before the years draw near when we see no purpose in them. Why should he die, and sleep in Sheol at peace, while I am left here to drag this chain of life about?

(pause, looks up)

Very well. Let him live.....

As SAUL continues on V.O., we see a diffused, surreal and silent MONTAGE of DAVID'S marriage to MICHAL. The courtyard is festooned with flowers. SAUL, JONATHAN, and other members of SAUL'S family line the verandah, while DAVID'S family - including JESSE, JOAB and the three BROTHERS - are gathered in the courtyard below with the other guests.

The CITIZENS of GIBEAH crowd the roofs and windows of the houses on the far side of the street as well as the wall above the courtyard gate and the street itself, cheering in silence. GIRLS dance, MUSICIAN'S play, a CHOIR sings: all in silence. Only SAUL'S voice is heard over the scene of jubilation:

SAUL (V.O.)

Let him live long, let him be prosperous. Let him know glory, and honour, and fame, as I have known them. Grant him wives, and lovers, and sons.....

MICHAL, her face veiled, is brought before DAVID, resplendent as a young prince. A PRIEST joins their hands together, blesses them.

SAUL (V.O.)

Bless him with riches: silver, and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings, as you have blessed me. Give him all that a man could want -- except one thing. Peace of mind.....

CAMERA MOVES IN on SAUL, watching DAVID with cold, impassive eyes as he leads his BRIDE into the stronghold.

SAUL (V.O.)

Bind up his heart with you, O Lord, and then - then forsake him utterly, as you have forsaken me!.....

SAUL stands aside as DAVID leads MICHAL out onto the verandah overlooking the courtyard.

SAUL (V.O.)

Acquaint him with anguish, madden him with grief until he cries out for death as an end to all his worldly suffering, as I cry out to you!

SAUL takes DAVID by one hand, MICHAL by the other, and presents them to the guests below and the crowd beyond. NORMAL SOUND returns as the CROWD go wild with delight, with cries of "Long live David!". DAVID can scarcely conceal his happiness, but MICHAL'S feelings are masked behind her veil.

FULL SHOT: DAVID in L.S. waves to the cheering GUESTS in the courtyard and the CITIZENS lining the wall in F.G.

The jubilant tumult of the wedding ceremony CUTS to the relative silence of a darkened bridal chamber, at present empty. From beyond the shuttered windows comes the muted SOUND of revelry and celebration.

Presently a door opens, O.C., and DAVID enters the room with MICHAL, followed by SAUL, his QUEEN, JONATHAN, and MICHAL'S two HANDMAIDENS. All have a look of solemnity as if they were about to attend a funeral. The two HANDMAIDENS move forward and lift back a dark gauze curtain, revealing the bridal bed beyond. MICHAL turns to SAUL, kisses him, then joins her HANDMAIDENS beyond the veil.

DAVID, JONATHAN, SAUL and his QUEEN wait in silence. From their POV, MICHAL can be seen dimly on the far side of the veil, being prepared for her wedding night by the two HANDMAIDENS.

DAVID catches JONATHAN'S eye; JONATHAN smiles reassuringly at him. The two HANDMAIDENS reappear, carrying MICHAL'S wedding gown and indicating with a gesture that all is ready. DAVID hesitates, then moves forward with evident trepidation and enters the sanctum.

SAUL, JONATHAN and the QUEEN wait in silence. From their POV, DAVID can be seen in dim silhouette beyond the veil as he finishes disrobing and mounts the bed. The preliminary sounds of DAVID'S love-making cause not a flicker of response from SAUL or his QUEEN, but from JONATHAN they elicit a look of pained discomfort. MICHAL lets out a sudden cry of physical pain, O.C. The QUEEN looks at SAUL with a brief, satisfied nod and turns to go. CAMERA HOLDS A BEAT longer on JONATHAN, then he too turns and follows SAUL and the QUEEN from the room, closing the door behind them.

SAUL and JONATHAN cross the courtyard towards the main reception hall, where the NOISE of revelry can be heard.

ABNER (O.C.)
Saul.....?

SAUL turns to see ABNER hurrying towards him. ABNER glances at JONATHAN, beckons SAUL to one side and talks to him in hushed, urgent tones. SAUL listens a moment, then calls to JONATHAN:

SAUL
Come with us.

JONATHAN, his curiosity aroused, follows SAUL
and ABNER.

68. INT. SAUL'S STRONGHOLD. BRIDAL CHAMBER. NIGHT.

68.

DAVID lies next to MICHAL in the bridal sanctum, her
face turned away from him, stroking her hair lovingly,
adoringly. No response. DAVID turns MICHAL to him,
tries to kiss her, but she pulls away.

DAVID
Michal.....?
(no response)
Did I hurt you?

MICHAL
(contemptuously)
You may own my body, but
never my heart.

DAVID looks at her in utter bewilderment.

DAVID
(faltering)
But if you don't love me,
then why.....?

MICHAL
(pause)
Because I am your reward
for Goliath's head!

MICHAL turns abruptly away, closes her eyes as if to
sleep.

DAVID
I wanted no prize. I married
you because I loved you. If
you don't love me, then I
don't want you.

MICHAL
You've married a princess -
isn't that enough, shepherd-
boy?

DAVID
(not listening)
Did you hear me?

MICHAL gives a bored sigh. Suddenly DAVID grips her by
the arm, forcing her to look at him....

DAVID

I don't want you -- I don't
want you -- I don't want you!

MICHAL suddenly sweeps her hand across DAVID'S face.

69. INT. SAUL'S STRONGHOLD. COUNCIL ROOM. NIGHT.

69.

The sweep of MICHAL'S hand CUTS to the sweep of a javelin being hurled across the council room. It strikes the far wall within inches of JONATHAN'S head, embedding itself in the stone.

SAUL

(bellowing)

You son of a perverse and
twisted mother.....Get out
of my sight!

SAUL stands trembling before his throne, flanked by ABNER, ISHYO, MALCHISHUA, and the one-eyed Edomite, DOEG, who was seen previously at SAMUEL'S anointing of DAVID.

JONATHAN

(indicating DOEG)

You would take the word of
an alien gentile in place
of my own? David is
innocent in the sight of
God.

DOEG oils forwards but SAUL ignores him.

DOEG

I assure you, sir, there was
no mistake. I saw the prophet
Samuel anoint him myself.

While DOEG talks, SAUL bears down on JONATHAN with quiet menace.

SAUL

You have chosen the son of
Jesse to your own confusion,
and to the confusion of your
mother's nakedness.

The very ambiguity of SAUL'S words causes a brief silence. He slowly draws his sword, turns to ISHYO and MALCHISHUA:

...So long as he is alive,
neither I, nor you, nor the
crown shall be safe.

70. INT. SAUL'S STRONGHOLD. CORRIDOR & STAIRS. NIGHT. 70.
SAUL strides along one of the darkened corridors, flanked by ISHYO , MALCHISHUA and several GUARDS.
71. INT. SAUL'S STRONGHOLD. COURTYARD. NIGHT. 71.
SAUL and his entourage sweep up the main stairs and along another corridor. JONATHAN follows a short distance behind them, then pauses at the top of the stairs reacting to something on the verandah beyond.
72. INT. STRONGHOLD. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE CHAMBER. NIGHT. 72.
One of SAUL'S GUARDS hammers on the door.

 GUARD
 Open up, in the name of
 the King!

No response. SAUL waves the GUARD aside, raises his foot and kicks open the door.
73. INT. SAUL'S STRONGHOLD. BRIDAL CHAMBER. NIGHT. 73.
The door flies open, eliciting a startled cry from beyond the gauze veil. SAUL stands in the doorway a moment.

 MICHAL (O.C.)
 Who is it?

SAUL marches slowly across the room, towards the bridal sanctum. Again MICHAL calls out, her initial shock turning to anger.

 MICHAL (O.C.)
 Who is that?

TIGHT SHOT, SHOOTING within the bridal sanctum: MICHAL sits up naked in bed, clasping a blood-flecked sheet to cover her breasts and trying to peer through the veil.

 MICHAL
 How dare you enter this....

MICHAL breaks off in terror as SAUL rips the veil aside - only to find that MICHAL is alone.

JONATHAN stands with DAVID in the basement, gripping him by the arms.

JONATHAN
(urgently)

As the Lord lives, there is
but a step between you and
death. You must leave at
once. Come, I'll show you
a way, through the cistern
tunnel.....

DAVID
(flatly)

What have I to live for?

JONATHAN

Do the people of Israel count
for nothing in your eyes? Your
life is no longer your own....
it belongs to Israel. My duty
is to save it. Yours is to
live it.

JONATHAN grips DAVID'S hand without further argument,
removes the circular cistern cover.

(SCS.75-81 DELETED)

MICHAL huddles in the corner of the bed, cowering
from SAUL who towers over her.

SAUL

Where have you hidden him?

MICHAL
(terrified)

I don't know where he is!

SAUL suddenly grabs MICHAL by her hair, hauls her from
the bed and lifts her to his own height.

SAUL

Don't lie to me!

MICHAL
(desperately)

I swear I don't know! When
I woke up, he was gone.....

SAUL reacts as if this were a sudden revelation.

SAUL

Gone?

82. Continued.

82.

SAUL'S eyes glaze over, his anger draining away. He discards MICHAL onto the bed, as if she were a piece of clothing, turns to the window and gazes out.

SAUL

Ah, yes....at daybreak He was gone.

MICHAL perceives the shift in her father's mind, quickly slips away. SAUL takes no notice of her. He draws closer to the window, staring out at nothing.

SAUL

At daybreak He was gone....
(smiles)
But He never gave His name.

83. EXT. CAVE MOUTH & JUDEAN HILLS. NIGHT.

83.

JONATHAN emerges from the entrance to a cave, partly hidden behind bushes, and looks cautiously about the moonlit valley. The walls of Gibeah are visible beyond the rocky outcrop above the cave entrance, silhouetted against the sky. JONATHAN turns to give DAVID a hand as he emerges from the cave, wet and grimy.

JONATHAN

You must go at once to the
Sanctuary at Balaath. Ask
for the High Priest Ahimelech
and show him this.

JONATHAN removes the scarlet amulet from his arm, hands it to DAVID, who looks at it abstractedly.

DAVID

Won't you come with me?

A pause. JONATHAN turns slowly to DAVID.

JONATHAN

You and I have sworn a
Covenant of Friendship, David.
If, one day, someone whom you
loved were to ask you to break
that Covenant, would you do so?

DAVID

A Covenant is sacred in the eyes
of God.

JONATHAN

(gently)

And what of the Covenant of honour between a son and his father?

(pause)

I would lay down my life for you, willingly, but I will not break faith with my father, as I will not break faith with you.

A pause.

DAVID

Forgive me.

JONATHAN

You have the love of one far greater than I to care for you, but my father has no-one

(pause)

And I do love him. Not for what he is, but for what he once was - and for what he tried to be. Spare a thought for him when you become King.

DAVID turns to JONATHAN, his eyes filled with tears, puts his arms round him and embraces him.

DAVID

May the Lord be with you, and may His light shine within your heart, even as you shine within mine.

LONG SHOT: DAVID and JONATHAN stand together a moment, then DAVID breaks away and starts running: faster and faster, without ever once turning to look back.

JONATHAN remains standing in front of the cave, watching DAVID'S receding figure running towards the hills. Only when he is finally out of sight does JONATHAN allow his emotions to break through. No tears; just a look of infinite loss. He turns slowly back to the cave and is gone.

(SC.84 DELETED)

FADE BLACK INTO:

85/86. EXT. BARRACKS. GIBEAH. DAY.

85/86

A CAPTAIN takes the roll-call of a PLATOON OF SOLDIERS standing outside their barracks.

CAPTAIN

(reading from a list)

Otheniel Ben-Caleb?

OTHENIEL
Present, sir!

CAPTAIN
Eliab Ben-Jesse?

Silence. The CAPTAIN puts a mark against his name.

CAPTAIN
Abinadab Ben-Jesse?

Another silence. The SOLDIERS glance about their ranks, evidently as surprised as the CAPTAIN at the absence of the two brothers.

CAPTAIN
Shammah Ben-Jesse?.....

The third absence causes a whispered stir among the SOLDIERS.

SAUL is watching the roll-call, flanked by ABNER, ISHYO, MALCHISHUA, and the obsequious DOEG. A pause.

SAUL (to JONATHAN)
Can you perhaps enlighten us
as to the present whereabouts
of David's brothers?

JONATHAN
No, father.

SAUL
And your young friend David --
are we to presume a similar
ignorance?

JONATHAN
It is my belief that he will
have gone to Bethlehem.

SAUL
(surprised)
To Bethlehem? Indeed.
(indicating Doeg)
Then we have been most
shamefully misinformed.

DOEG
(quickly)
No, sir -- David Ben-Jesse has
been at the Sanctuary of Balaath
for the past two days. My
informant is of the highest
reliability.

SAUL raises an eyebrow, but JONATHAN betrays no discernible reaction.

SAUL
We shall see for ourselves.
(to ABNER, brusquely)
Prepare four divisions to
leave for Balaath immediately.

JONATHAN
To what purpose?

A pause. SAUL narrows his eyes.

SAUL
To smile on him once more.

87. EXT. SANCTUARY OF BALAAATH. DAY.

87.

In L.S. the Sanctuary is seen to be perched on a mountain top.

88. EXT. SANCTUARY OF BALAAATH. DAY.

88.

DAVID sits cross-legged, in shade, in the courtyard, listening to an ELDERLY PRIEST, AHIMELECH, reading from a scroll. Other PRIESTS are seen in the background.

AHIMELECH
(reading)
"So Jacob was left alone, and
a man wrestled with him there
till day-break. The man said,
'Let me go, for day is breaking,'
but Jacob replied, 'I will not
go unless you bless me.' The
man asked, 'What is your name?'
and Jacob told him. The man
said, 'Your name shall no longer
be Jacob, but Israel,' - which
means 'God strove'; 'You strove
with God and with men, and
prevailed.' Jacob called the place
Peniel, which means 'the face of
God', 'because,' he said, 'I have
seen God face to face and my life
has been spared.'"

AHIMELECH lays down the scroll and looks at DAVID, who seems lost in his own thoughts.

DAVID
If only I too could see Him --
face to face.

A pause, then AHIMELECH holds out his hand to DAVID.

AHIMELECH
Come with me.

(SC.89 DELETED)

LOW ANGLE: a door opens at the top of a darkened stone staircase and AHIMELECH appears, followed by DAVID. They descend the staircase into the musty antechamber of a crypt, lit by a single oil-lamp.

AHIMELECH
(lowered voice)
Guardian?

GUARDIAN (O.C.)
Who goes there?

AHIMELECH
The High Priest, Ahimelech.

A LEVITE PRIEST - the Guardian of the Ark of the Covenant - emerges from the shadows of the crypt.

AHIMELECH
Please wait here.

The GUARDIAN gives a slight bow in deference to AHIMELECH, then steps aside, glancing briefly after DAVID as he follows behind AHIMELECH.

AHIMELECH leads DAVID into the main crypt, lit only by the glow of the oil-lamp in the antechamber. At one end is a small altar, with 12 loaves laid before it. At the other end is a three-sided scarlet curtain, concealing something beyond. AHIMELECH moves towards the curtain, directs DAVID to approach within a few feet, then motions him to stop. With modest solemnity, AHIMELECH draws back the front of the curtain to reveal a gold casket, barely visible in the gloom. It is surmounted by two golden cherubims facing each other, their wings folded to form a shroud over the lid. A pause.

AHIMELECH
Are you aware of the presence
you are in?

DAVID looks at the casket, intrigued but mystified.

DAVID
A coffin?

AHIMELECH
It embraces no death, no
decay. You are looking upon
the presence of the living
God.

DAVID'S eyes widen in wonder and amazement....

DAVID
(a whisper)
The Ark of the Covenant....?

AHIMELECH
The Ark of the Divine Presence.

While AHIMELECH continues, DAVID kneels before it, his
eyes shining as if indeed in the presence of God.

AHIMELECH
(mainly O.C.)
The ten commandments lie
within -- written on tablets
of stone by the Finger of
God Himself.

91. EXT. SANCTUARY OF BALAATH. DAY.

91.

The priest, NATHAN, walks across the main quadrangle
of the Sanctuary, followed by a MESSENGER.

92. INT. CRYPT. BALAATH. DAY.

92.

The GUARDIAN in the antechamber peers cautiously
through the curtain into the crypt, straining to
hear what is being said.

Still kneeling before the Ark, DAVID glances about
the lugubrious crypt.

DAVID
But why is the Ark kept here
in this tomb? It should be
enthroned on high.

AHIMELECH
For three hundred years it has
awaited such a home.

C.U. DAVID. His expression, one of resolve. Then
he closes his eyes, lowers his head.

92. Continued.

92.

NATHAN (O.C.)
(guardedly)
There's a "messenger" here
to see David.

A beat, then DAVID opens his eyes in response to
NATHAN'S words.

93. EXT. SANCTUARY OF BALAATH. DAY.

93.

SHAMMAH sits on the ground with his head between his
legs, evidently exhausted.

DAVID (O.C.)
Shammah.....!

SHAMMAH looks up, hurriedly getting to his feet as
DAVID comes over from the crypt, followed by
AHIMELECH and NATHAN.

SHAMMAH
(urgently)
Prince Jonathan says that.....

SHAMMAH breaks off as AHIMELECH and NATHAN approach,
regarding AHIMELECH with suspicion.

SHAMMAH
(to AHIMELECH)
Who are you?

AHIMELECH
I am the High Priest Ahimelech
.....and this is the priest
Nathan.

SHAMMAH
Where is the Guardian of the
Ark?

AHIMELECH
At his station in the crypt.

94. INT. CRYPT. BALAATH. DAY.

94.

The GUARDIAN presses against the grill door, trying
to see and hear what is being said.

SHAMMAH (O.C.)
(barely audible)
Prince Jonathan says the
Guardian sent word to the
King that you're here. Joab
and our brothers have escaped
to the Caves of Adullam.....

94. Continued.

94.

Without further explanation, AHIMELECH hurries back to the crypt.

(SC.95 DELETED)

96. INT. CRYPT. BALAATH. DAY.

96.

As AHIMELECH opens the door at the top of the steps, he sees the GUARDIAN scurrying back to his post inside the crypt. AHIMELECH pauses, feels for a sacrificial knife inside his robe.

The GUARDIAN stands by his post in front of the curtain screening the Ark. He glances towards the antechamber, sees AHIMELECH standing in the entrance, watching him. The GUARDIAN averts his eyes from AHIMELECH'S penetrating gaze.

AHIMELECH
Draw back the curtain.

The GUARDIAN draws back the curtain, revealing the Ark behind.

.....Kneel before the Ark.

The GUARDIAN hesitates a moment, then kneels falteringly as AHIMELECH walks over and stands behind him.

...Now swear to me in the
sight of God that you have not
betrayed your holy office.

The GUARDIAN responds with a look of dread. He gazes up at the Ark a moment, then hangs his head.

GUARDIAN
I cannot.

97. EXT. SANCTUARY OF BALAATH. DAY.

97.

The Sanctuary is seen in L.S. SAUL and his MEN pass in foreground, the hooves of their horses and donkeys kicking up a vast amount of dust.

98. INT. CRYPT. BALAATH. DAY.

98.

AHIMELECH rolls up the twelve loaves of shrew-bread in the white linen altar cloth and ties them in a bundle, then kneels and extracts a long object, wrapped in scarlet cloth from under the altar.

98. Continued.

98.

As AHIMELECH carries the two items from the crypt, CAMERA TRACKS away from him in LOW ANGLE, bringing the GUARDIAN into SHOT. He lies with his eyes open, his head lolled back, his throat slit.

99. EXT. SANCTUARY GATES & POV OF HILLS. DAY.

99.

DAVID, SHAMMAH and NATHAN wait outside the gates of the Sanctuary. SHAMMAH keeps an anxious eye on the road to the west, leading towards the distant hills.

The door of the gate opens and AHIMELECH emerges, carrying the bundle of loaves and the lengthy object wrapped in scarlet cloth. He hands the bundle to DAVID.

AHIMELECH

Shrew-bread. The law forbids
anyone but a priest to partake
of it. May God forgive us
both.

DAVID smiles at AHIMELECH'S audacity.

SHAMMAH points to the west, where a thin cloud of dust rises from the hills in E.L.S. DAVID turns back to AHIMELECH, embraces him.

DAVID

May the Lord bless you for
your kindness. I fear I've
placed you in much danger on
my account.

AHIMELECH

(gently)

On His account.

SHAMMAH (O.C.)

David, come on.....!

SHAMMAH all but drags DAVID away from AHIMELECH, who waves him on. DAVID glances back along the road to the west, then turns and runs with SHAMMAH in the opposite direction, towards the closer foothills of QUMRAN to the east.

AHIMELECH turns pointedly away, as if not wishing to know the direction of their flight.

NATHAN

We must bar the gates.

NATHAN turns to AHIMELECH, then spots the faint trace of blood on AHIMELECH'S robe. Their eyes meet.

AHIMELECH
(calmly)
Return to the crypt and stand
guard over the Ark.

100. EXT. QUMRAN FOOTHILLS & POV OF SANCTUARY. DAY.

100.

DAVID and SHAMMAH scramble up the steep slopes of the Qumran with the agility of mountain goats. They reach a gully that leads through to a valley beyond, and pause for breath. DAVID turns to look back.

DAVID'S POV: the Sanctuary of Balaath lies far below, a shimmering white oasis in an otherwise parched and desolate valley. The cloud of dust is now moving steadily across the valley from the far side, though it is still some distance from the Sanctuary.

DAVID gazes down with a look of dark foreboding. SHAMMAH watches him for a moment, touches him gently on the shoulder, indicating that they must move on. A pause, then DAVID gets up and both of them start running down the gully towards the lower valley beyond. The clear, defiant voice of AHIMELECH singing LAPS OVER answered by a chorus of PRIESTS:

AHIMELECH (V.O.)
It is good to give thanks to
the Lord,

PRIESTS (V.O.)
For His love endures for ever!

101. EXT. SANCTUARY OF BALAAATH. DAY.

101.

AHIMELECH and his LEVITE PRIESTS stand in the quadrangle of the Sanctuary, singing their anthem of praise and completely ignoring the approaching SOLDIERS, now visible beyond the open gates.

AHIMELECH
Declare it, people of Israel -

PRIESTS
His love endures for ever!

AHIMELECH
Give thanks to the God of gods -

101. Continued.

101.

PRIESTS
His love endures for ever!

As the anthem continues, SAUL rides through the gates in his chariot, followed by ABNER, ISHYO, MALCHISHUA, DOEG, and a further THIRTY SOLDIERS on mules.

102. INT. CRYPT. BALAATH. DAY.

102.

NATHAN covers the GUARDIAN'S body with the scarlet cloth, then takes GOLIATH'S sword and stands on guard. The anthem can be heard continuing at a distance, O.C.

AHIMELECH (O.C.)
He made the great lights -

PRIESTS (O.C.)
His love endures for ever!

AHIMELECH (O.C.)
The sun to rule by day -

SAUL
(bellowing)
Quiet!

NATHAN reacts to the sudden boom of SAUL'S voice, followed by silence.

103. EXT. SANCTUARY OF BALAATH. DAY.

103.

SAUL is on horseback. ABNER, ISHYO and MALCHISHUA remain in their saddles, but the other SOLDIERS - including DOEG - have dismounted. A long pause as SAUL glares down at AHIMELECH, who meets him eye to eye.

SAUL
Where is David Ben-Jesse?

AHIMELECH
He is no longer with us.

SAUL
Where is he?

AHIMELECH
I do not know.

SAUL
You're lying.

AHIMELECH

A priest does not lie.

SAUL

He was here, wasn't he?

AHIMELECH

He was here.

SAUL

When did he leave?

AHIMELECH

Some time ago.

SAUL

In what direction?

AHIMELECH

I did not see.

SAUL hesitates, trying to suppress his anger in the face of so many onlookers.

DOEG

(prompting)

The Guardian Priest of the Ark, my lord....He will know.

SAUL

(to AHIMELECH)

Where is this Guardian?

A pause.

AHIMELECH

He too is no longer with us.

SAUL is on the verge of losing his temper, but again checks himself. He turns to ABNER.

SAUL

Abner? I want these priests killed. Slowly, one by one, until their High Priest decides to co-operate. Then the killing will stop.

AHIMELECH and his PRIESTS display no reaction, but ABNER and those SOLDIERS who have heard the order look horrified.

ABNER

(lowered voice)

No soldier would carry out such an order. These priests are Levites, they.....

SAUL'S temper snaps.

SAUL
(screaming)
These priests are traitors!
(turns to soldiers)
And so is any soldier who
refuses to carry out the
King's command.

The SOLDIERS falter at their own predicament. SAUL
picks up a javelin, aims it at one of them - ZABAD.

SAUL
You!

ZABAD hesitates, glances at the others for reassurance,
then shakes his head.

ZABAD
I cannot, sir.

SAUL hurls the javelin, pinning ZABAD to the ground,
then takes a second and aims it at another soldier,
SOLDIER --

SAUL
You!

SOLDIER trembles with fear, but resolutely shakes his
head. SAUL is about to hurl the javelin when ISHYO
manages to grasp his wrist.

ISHYO
No, father.....!

SAUL wrenches himself from ISHYO, but retains the
javelin in his hand, surveying his SOLDIERS with
incredulity.

SAUL
Will no-one obey the
King's command?

The SOLDIERS stand firm in their resolve. A long
pause, then DOEG walks up to SAUL.

DOEG
I will, sir.

SAUL looks down at him a moment, smiles at the irony.

SAUL
So. Two divisions of Israelite
soldiers - and it takes a gentile
to carry out the King's command.
(A brief nod to Doeg)
Begin. One by one.

104. INT. CRYPT. BALAATH. DAY.

104.

NATHAN tries to peer through the tiny holes in the door at the top of the stairs, but can evidently see nothing to indicate what is going on. Presently he hears AHIMELECH'S voice resuming the anthem.

AHIMELECH (O.C.)
It is good to give thanks to
the Lord -

PRIESTS (O.C.)
His love endures for ever!

NATHAN looks puzzled, but assumes all is well and turns to walk back down to the crypt.

105. EXT. SANCTUARY OF BALAATH. DAY.

105.

DOEG stands before the first PRIEST, puts one arm round his waist and runs him through with a short sword. AHIMELECH and the other PRIESTS continue singing without the slightest sign of fear.

AHIMELECH
He brought Israel out of Egypt -

PRIESTS
His love endures for ever!

AHIMELECH
He struck down mighty kings -

PRIESTS
His love endures for ever!

106. EXT. QUMRAN REGION. DAY.

106.

The anthem continues on V.O. as DAVID and SHAMMAH keep running, never pausing for breath, despite the inhospitable terrain.

AHIMELECH (V.O.)
He gave their land to Israel -

PRIESTS (V.O.)
His love endures for ever!

107. EXT. SANCTUARY OF BALAATH. DAY.

107.

The SOLDIERS look on in horror as DOEG continues his task: horror at the slaughter of the PRIESTS and revulsion at the KING who has ordered it.

107. Continued.

107.

AHIMELECH
He raised up mighty leaders -

PRIESTS
His love endures for ever!

AHIMELECH
To slay our heathen foes -

PRIESTS
His love endures for ever!

The pace of CUTTING becomes tauter and more stylized,
INTERCUTTING between SAUL, the SOLDIERS, the PRIESTS,
and DAVID on the run --

108. EXT. QUMRAN REGION. DAY.

108.

In succeeding CUTS, CAMERA MOVES IN TIGHTER and TIGHTER
on DAVID as he runs, INTERCUT with the massacre as if
he is fleeing from the bloodshed.

AHIMELECH (V.O.)
And now His Shepherd of Israel
stirs -

PRIESTS (V.O.)
His love endures for ever!

AHIMELECH (V.O.)
His Lamp of Judah glows -

PRIESTS (V.O.)
His love endures for ever!

109. EXT. SANCTUARY OF BALAATH. DAY.

109.

As DOEG nears the end of his work, so the strength of
the PRIEST'S response grows less - though not their
spirit. AHIMELECH sings out his own lines with
increasing vigour as DOEG draws closer -

AHIMELECH
No King shall bring him low -

PRIESTS
His love endures for ever!

110. EXT. QUMRAN HEIGHTS & WILDERNESS. DAY.

110.

DAVID and SHAMMAH reach the edge of the Qumran plateau,
where a steep path zig-zags down the side of the cliff.

110. Continued.

110.

AHIMELECH (V.O.)
No enemy shall strike him down -

PRIESTS (V.O.)
His love endures for ever!

DOWNSHOT: as DAVID and SHAMMAH scramble down the rocky path, CAMERA PANS UP to reveal the Qumran Wilderness beyond: an arid expanse of desert stretching towards the Heights of Adullam on the far side.

111. EXT. SANCTUARY OF BALAATH. DAY.

111.

SAUL has largely ignored the words of the anthem so far, but as AHIMELECH continues, the King begins to tremble with uncontrolled fury and resentment. He raises his javelin, levels it at AHIMELECH as DOEG murders the last of the PRIESTS:

AHIMELECH
For the Lord has sworn to
His servant David --

As the defiant cry of "DAVID" echoes in the brief silence that follows, all eyes are on SAUL as he holds the javelin above him, then hurls it at AHIMELECH with all his strength. There is an audible gasp from the SOLDIERS.

TIGHT SHOT: AHIMELECH'S eyes remain open; he smiles at SAUL -

AHIMELECH
(a whisper)
His love for him endures
for ever.....

A pause, then his head slumps forward. In the silence that follows, the faint sound of a breeze stirring.

(112/113 DELETED)

114. EXT. QUMRAN WILDERNESS. DUSK.

114.

L.S.: DAVID and SHAMMAH run out across the wilderness towards the setting sun, the SOUND of the breeze continuing over --

115. EXT. SANCTUARY OF BALAATH. DAY.

115.

The door of the crypt opens and NATHAN emerges. He glances cautiously about the deserted alley, then crosses it to enter the quadrangle beyond.

As NATHAN rounds the corner into the quadrangle, he stops short, reacting to the spectacle before him.

SAUL and his SOLDIERS have gone. The bodies of the slaughtered PRIESTS remain, strewn about the quadrangle in the dying light.

116. EXT. QUMRAN WILDERNESS. DUSK.

116.

E.L.S.: DAVID and SHAMMAH are now mere specks in the arid wilderness.

117. EXT. WILDERNESS VALLEY. DAY.

117.

LONG FOCUS: DAVID'S head rises over what appears to be the brow of the same ridge, only now the sun is behind him, casting him in silhouette. As he mounts the ridge, we see that he is riding a mule at the head of a small band of OUTLAWS, returning from a raiding party.

NATHAN (V.O.)

David remained in the wilderness six years where Saul sought him day after day. And everyone that was in distress, and everyone that was in debt, and everyone that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him - and he became a Captain over them.

As the light catches DAVID'S face, we see that he has aged by several years, and now wears a light growth of beard. His outlaws include JOAB, JESSE, ELIAB, ABINADAB and SHAMMAH, as well as many of the SOLDIERS seen at the Balaath massacre.

117A. EXT. MIDIANITE ENCAMPMENT. NIGHT.

117A.

A Midianite trading group is camped for the night. Their wagons drawn up in a circle. They have campfires inside the ring of wagons and numerous GUARDS posted.

Some distance away, behind a ridge, DAVID and a small group of his followers (i.e. the 30 he trained in guerilla warfare and who formed the basis of his army commanders throughout his Kingship) are waiting. DAVID looks up at the moon. He waits until it goes behind a cloud bank, then raises his right arm.

117A. Continued.

117A.

Immediately, trumpets are blown and he and his MEN charge forward at the wagons. A few on horses, some on donkeys, and some running.

The MIDEANITE GUARDS rush to the side where they heard the trumpet blasts and peer into the night. They turn as other trumpets blow behind them, and then yet more to both sides. They are confused and unsure which section of the wagon circle to defend.

A cutaway shot shows that on one side DAVID'S forces consist merely of three MEN blowing trumpets.

A number of the wagons catch fire as DAVID'S men shoot flaming arrows.

The MIDEANITE camp is overwhelmed as DAVID and his small but well disciplined group storm through the defenses. Their screaming and clanging of swords on shields adding to the noise, giving the impression of an attack far in excess of the actual numbers.

118. EXT. CAVES OF ADULLAM. DAY.

118.

DAVID and his men wind their way up a steep, rocky path leading to the Caves of Adullam: a massive cliff-face, peppered with a warren of caves.

NATHAN

(V.O., cont'd)

And David took unto himself two wives, Abigail the widow of Nabal, and Ahinoam of Jezreel. And Ahinoam bore David his firstborn son, whom he called Amnon, and Abigail bore him a second son, whom he called Absalom. And David loved Absalom with all his heart.....

119. INT. MANASSAH CAVE. ADULLAM. NIGHT.

119.

A taut group kneels before a stone altar, where a naked 8-day old baby boy lies gurgling at his mother, ABIGAIL. In the dim torchlight, she is all earth, and eyes, and jet black hair. DAVID kneels beside her, gazing intently at the baby, while NATHAN takes up his position in front of the altar.

LOW ANGLE, with the baby in F.G. NATHAN puts his hand inside his grubby white robe and takes out a gleaming sacrificial knife, similar to the one used by AHIMELECH to dispatch the Guardian.

DAVID squeezes ABIGAIL'S hand -- NATHAN lowers the knife with dark solemnity -- the BABY smiles, then contorts in the silent freeze of pain -- a thin drop of blood on the white sleeve of NATHAN'S robe -- DAVID flinches at the howl -- ABIGAIL betrays nothing.

NATHAN

O Lord, High God of Israel,
King of the Universe, we have
circumcised the flesh of this
child, Absalom Ben-David, that
he may enter into the Covenant
of Abraham.....

DAVID'S second wife, AHINOAM, sits with the rest of the clan further back in the cave, breast-feeding her year-old baby boy, AMNON. She is a plainer woman than ABIGAIL but has the superior air of one secure in the knowledge that her boy is the elder of DAVID'S two SONS.

NATHAN

(cont'd. O.C.)

O Lord, God of our Fathers,
preserve this child. Let his
father David rejoice in him
that came forth from his loins,
and let his mother Abigail be
glad with the fruit of her womb.
Even as Absalom has entered
into the Covenant so may he enter
the Law.

ABSALOM'S scream grows louder and louder, drowning NATHAN'S words.

(SCS.120/121 DELETED)

122. INT. DAVID'S CAVE. ADULLAM. NIGHT.

122.

The howl of pain cuts abruptly to the silence of another cave, where DAVID lies asleep with ABIGAIL. A pause, then a low whistle, O.C. DAVID opens his eyes to see ABINADAB standing at the entrance to the cave, breathless and eager, beckoning him to hurry.

123. EXT. RIDGE OVERLOOKING GORGE. NIGHT.

123.

DAVID and JOAB lie flat on their stomachs, looking down into a large gorge several hundred feet below while ELIAB, ABINADAB and SIMEON (the SOLDIER who refused to carry out SAUL'S order at Balaath) wait behind a nearby rock.

JOAB
(pointing)
The Teberinth cave.....

DAVID peers down into the gorge, where several
SOLDIERS can be seen guarding the entrance to a
cave with a Teberinth tree growing outside.

DAVID
How many are in there?

JOAB
About sixty - with another
sixty in the cave beyond.

DAVID
And Saul?

JOAB indicates the presence of a cave directly beneath
them.

JOAB
The Hour-glass Cave. Abner
and his men are in the front
cave....Saul's asleep in the
back.

DAVID
....Stay here until I return.
All of you.

JOAB
Where are you going?

DAVID
To visit Saul.

DAVID turns and runs off into the night.

JOAB
David.....!

DAVID runs up to an outcrop of rock, pushes a bush to
one side at the base revealing a small entrance hole.
He is about to worm his way inside when JOAB catches
up with him.

JOAB
David - he has over a
hundred soldiers in those
caves.

DAVID
The Lord did not anoint me
to die at the hand of Saul.

124. Continued.

124.

Without awaiting a response, DAVID slides through the entrance and is gone. JOAB pauses a moment then rejoins ELIAB, ABINADAB and SIMEON.

125. INT. CAVE SHAFT. NIGHT.

125.

DAVID worms his way down the narrow, twisting 'shaft' - a geological pot-hole in the rock, barely large enough to accommodate him.

(SCS.126 & 127 DELETED)

128. INT. CAVE SHAFT. NIGHT.

128.

DAVID continues on down the shaft, which now angles towards the horizontal. He pauses, reacting to the faintest glow of light discernible some twenty feet ahead of him.

(SC.129 DELETED)

130. INT. HOUR-GLASS CAVE. NIGHT.

130.

DAVID emerges through a tiny entrance into a narrow V-shaped 'tunnel' that curves towards another opening at the far end.

131. EXT. WADI & GORGE. NIGHT.

131.

JOAB halts his men in the wadi, then creeps forward to the mouth, where he can see into the main gorge.

Looking north along the gorge, JOAB can see the glow of fires at the entrance to the Hour-glass cave and the two caves opposite, previously seen from the ridge. All three caves are guarded by soldiers.

132. INT. HOUR-GLASS CAVE. NIGHT.

132.

DAVID kneels in the narrow bend between the tunnel and cave beyond, leans cautiously forward and peers round the corner.

LOW ANGLE: DAVID creeps into the cave, where three sleepers lie beneath sheepskin blankets. Beyond this cave lies another, separated by a narrow, curved gap, where SOLDIERS can be heard talking in low voices. DAVID glances about, sees the great figure of SAUL lying asleep by the wall, his head turned away, one hand clutching a sword.

(SCS.133 & 134 DELETED)

135. INT. HOUR-GLASS CAVE. NIGHT.

135.

LOW ANGLE: SAUL sleeps in C.S., his dark, ashen face lying like the fallen head of a stone statue. This indeed is the shattered visage of an Israelite Ozymandias: his skin granite-grey, his huge baleful eyes more hunted than ever, even when closed. DAVID kneels beside "the decay of that colossal wreck", gazing at his sleeping adversary with a look of fear, love, and infinite pity.

DAVID'S attention shifts from SAUL to the sword in his hand, which bears the royal insignia on the ornate, bejewelled hilt. DAVID leans cautiously over him, blows very gently on the clenched fist around it. SAUL stirs but still retains his grip on the sword....

(SCS.136, 137 & 139 DELETED. SC.138 INCLUDED IN SC.135)

140. INT. HOUR-GLASS CAVE. NIGHT.

140.

TIGHT SHOT: DAVID plucks a hair from his own head, CAMERA PANNING with his fingers as they move towards the hand grasping the sword. The hair begins to tease the taut knuckles, back and forth.....

(SCS.141, 142, 143, 145 DELETED)

146. EXT. GORGE. WADI & POV OF CAVES. DAWN.

146.

Although still dark in the gorge, the dawn has now begun to break. JOAB and SIMEON peer towards the caves, watching SAUL'S MEN putting on their arms, preparing for battle. JOAB looks around at DAVID'S thirty MEN, not thinking much of their chances.

SIMEON

David.....?

JOAB shrugs and looks back towards the cave entrance, his expression betraying his fear for DAVID'S safety.

(SCS.147 & 148 DELETED)

149. INT. HOUR-GLASS CAVE. DAWN.

149.

ABNER bends over SAUL, touches his arm. SAUL opens his eyes, sits up with a sudden movement, listens a beat to the noise outside.

ABNER
We're ready, sir. They
won't escape us this time.

SAUL grips ABNER by the arm.

SAUL
He was here. Close to me.
I felt him.

ABNER
That's impossible -- I guarded
you myself.
(with polite caution)
Perhaps you were dreaming?

SAUL looks vacantly at ABNER...

SAUL
A dream? Ah, yes - a dream
....for at daybreak he was
gone...

(SC.150 DELETED)

151. EXT. WADI & POV OF GORGE. DAWN.

151.

DAVID'S MEN -- JOAB, SIMEON, ELIAB and ABINADAB have watched the preparation of SAUL'S TROOPS.....

ELIAB
We must attack them now.
Once they are fully prepared
we stand no chance.

SIMEON
We have none anyway. We
must wait for DAVID.

ABINADAB
David is captured - or killed.

JOAB reluctantly nods.

JOAB
Take ten men and return to the
caves. Move the women and
children. We can at least delay
them.

He signals to his own men to assemble for a charge
along the gorge.

152. EXT. GORGE. CAVES & RIDGE. SUNRISE.

152.

LONG FOCUS: SAUL'S MEN look up in astonishment as JOAB and his MEN hurl themselves along the gorge in L.S. towards them, brandishing their weapons.

ABNER
(calmly, O.C.)
Stand by.

CAMERA PULLS slowly back, to reveal three ranks of SOLDIERS in F.G. spanning the width of the gorge, all equipped with long bows. ABNER stands outside the Hour-Glass Cave, while SAUL can be seen lurking in the shadow within.

ABNER
Take your positions.

The SOLDIERS kneel, arrows nocked, bow-strings half drawn.

....Take aim -

The front line of SOLDIERS take aim at the pathetic band of men running towards them, though still several hundred yards away. In the brief silence that follows, a clear voice rings out from high above, echoing through the gorge.....

DAVID (O.C.O)
Saul!

The SOLDIERS waver, glancing up at the clifftop far above them, where DAVID stands alone, lit by the first rays of the sun. He holds SAUL'S sword with both hands high in the air, the sunlight flashing on the blade.

It is your son, David Ben-
Jesse, whom you once loved!

JOAB and his MEN slow down, reacting to the surreal spectacle of DAVID, bathed in sunlight above the dark gorge.

152A. EXT. COLONY OF CAVES & POV OF RIDGE. SUNRISE.

152A.

ELIAB and his men have now reached the cave colony where the women and children are gathering together.

DAVID (O.C.)
Saul.....!

ELIAB and the clan react in astonishment to the distant echo. From their POV, DAVID is just visible in E.L.S., standing on the ridge overlooking the gorge beyond -

153. EXT. GORGE. CAVES & POV OF RIDGE. SUNRISE.

153.

DAVID calls down from the ridge, his words echoing in the gorge -

DAVID

Can you not answer me, Saul?

TIGHT SHOT: SAUL stands in the shadow of the Hour-Glass Cave, blocking his ears against the reverberating echo of his own name. ABNER glances at SAUL, steps forward and calls up to DAVID.

ABNER

Who are you, David Ben-Jesse,
to shout down at the King of
Israel?

DAVID

Who are you, Abner Ben-Ner, to
call yourself Commander of the
King's Army? Why did you not
keep watch over my lord the
King while he slept? Where is
the King's sword that was by
his side?

A murmur of speculation stirs among the SOLDIERS, as well as the growing anticipation of JOAB and his men, who have now halted their charge several hundred yards from certain death.

DAVID

Here is his sword - in the
hands of the man he calls his
enemy!

ABNER'S embarrassment is acute indeed.

ABNER

It's a lie!

154. EXT. RIDGE & POV OF GORGE. SUNRISE.

154.

The word 'lie' echoes up to DAVID, who stands at the edge of the ridge overlooking the gorge.

DAVID

Then stand aside and allow
me to return it to my King.

DAVID holds the sword by its hilt, aiming the blade down into the gorge....

155. EXT. GORGE. CAVES & POV OF RIDGE. SUNRISE.

155.

The SOLDIERS disperse in panic as DAVID hurls the sword down into the gorge. It twists in space, flaring briefly in the sunlight, then plunges as a black streak through the dark shadows of the valley before impaling itself in the earth within a few feet of ABNER.

ABNER and his SOLDIERS gaze in bewildered wonder at the sword, now buried to the hilt in the soil. SAUL moves slowly forward towards it as one in a trance.

DAVID (O.C.)

The Lord delivered you into
my hands this day and I spared
your life. Why must you keep
pursuing me? What have I done,
that you should hunt me as a
hare over the hills?

SAUL kneels down in front of the sword, his head lowered.

(SC.156 DELETED)

157. EXT. GORGE. CAVE & POV OF RIDGE. SUNRISE.

157.

SAUL wraps his arms about himself, slowly looks up, his eyes filled with tears.

SAUL

May the Lord bless you, David,
my son.

(loudly)

Let all Israel witness how the
King loves David. He has held
my life precious this day, and
I shall never seek to harm him
again.

SAUL turns to the SOLDIERS...

...Put down your arms. We return
to Gibeah.

ABNER

(protesting)

But I.....

SAUL

(interrupting loudly)
The King has spoken!

157. Continued.

157.

Further along the gorge, JOAB and his men let up a cheer as they see the SOLDIERS preparing to leave.

158. EXT. COLONY OF CAVES & POV OF RIDGE. SUNRISE.

158.

The echo of the MEN'S cheering carries across the caves, where ELIAB waits with ABIGAIL, AHINOAM, and the OTHERS.

SIMEON
(calling)

They're going.....! The
soldiers are going.....!

The cheering is now taken up by the men, women and children standing on the ledge outside the caves. Only ELIAB greets the news with evident skepticism.

159. EXT. RIDGE & POV OF GORGE. SUNRISE.

159.

DAVID watches the SOLDIERS striking camp with a similar lack of elation. SAUL remains standing outside the Hour-Glass Cave; he turns and looks up at DAVID O.C.

160. EXT. RIDGE. POV FROM GORGE. SUNRISE.

160.

LOW ANGLE UPSHOT: SAUL'S (cheated) POV of DAVID in M.L.S., his face bathed in sunlight, gazing down towards CAMERA.

161. EXT. GORGE. POV FROM RIDGE. SUNRISE.

161.

HIGH ANGLE DOWNSHOT: DAVID'S (cheated) POV of SAUL in M.L.S. He stares up into CAMERA, his face in deep shadow, his tears gone. A pause, then he turns and moves away, CAMERA HOLDING a beat on the sword, still buried in the earth beyond.

162. EXT. NORTH RAVINE & GORGE. DAY.

162.

DAVID rejoins JOAB and his men. He embraces JOAB warmly. A pause, then JOAB'S expression changes as he looks over DAVID'S shoulder, sees the last of the SOLDIERS recede from view.

JOAB
(quietly)
He'll be back.

DAVID
I know.

HOLD a beat on DAVID'S look of weary resignation.

(SC.163 DELETED)

164. EXT. NORTH RAVINE. DAY.

164.

As DAVID and his BAND prepare to leave the caves,
the first couplet of the Psalm "O Lord, My God,
Give me Refuge" is sung by DAVID on V.O., accompanied
by a haunting solitary theme played on the harp.

DAVID (V.O.)
O Lord, my strength, give me
refuge,
Let me shelter in the shadow
of your wings....
Even the sparrow finds a home,
And the swallow has her nest...

(SCS.165/7 DELETED)

168. INT. MANASSAH CAVE. DAY.

168.

DAVID carries his son ABSALOM from the cave, followed
by ABIGAIL. AHINOAM follows behind with her son,
AMNON.

DAVID (V.O.)
But I am become as a desert-owl,
As a lizard that lives in the
earth.....

(SC.169 DELETED)

170. EXT. COLONY OF CAVES. DAY.

170.

Still carrying his BABY SON, DAVID leads the entire
Clan of MEN, WOMEN and CHILDREN up the steep central
ledge towards the hills behind....

DAVID (V.O.)
O that I had the wings of a dove,
To fly away and be at rest!

(SCS.171/3 DELETED)

174. EXT. HIGH PLATEAU. LATE AFTERNOON.

174.

DAVID and CLAN make their way across a high, rocky
plateau. The WOMEN and CHILDREN are beginning to
tire but there is no letting up of the urgent pace.

174. Continued.

174.

DAVID (V.O.)
I should wander far away,
And find a sanctuary of peace...

(SC.175 DELETED)

176. EXT. PLATEAU CRAGS. DUSK.

176.

DAVID leads his CLAN down a craggy slope, pitted with caves, overlooking the great Negeb wilderness beyond.

DAVID (V.O.)
I am but a stranger here on
earth,
You are all that I have in
the land of the living....

(SC.177 DELETED)

178. INT. CAVE OVERLOOKING NEGEB. SUNSET.

178.

DAVID sits by the entrance to the small cave, gazing out at the wilderness, O.C. ABIGAL and AHINOAM are visible beyond him, settling their sons down to sleep.

TIGHT SHOT: DAVID, with the light from the setting sun reflected in his eyes...

DAVID (V.O.)
How long must I wander this
thirsty land,
With no rest for the sole of
my foot?

179. EXT. POV OF NEGEB WILDERNESS. SUNSET.

179.

DAVID'S POV of the vast Negeb wilderness as the sun sinks below the horizon..

DAVID (V.O.)
How long must you hide your
face from me?
How long, O Lord, how long?

The sun dips out of sight, the deep blue of twilight.

FADING TO BLACK.

END OF PART ONE

FADE IN: One of the five great cities of Philistia. Although only a few miles from the border with Israel, Gath boasts an air of prosperity and cultural sophistication distinctly lacking in Israelite towns. Here, wealthy MERCHANTS conduct their business in the main square under silk awnings; WOMEN in coloured clothes move freely, without apology for their sex, while the richer CITIZENS of both sexes are conveyed in litters carried by NUBIAN SLAVES.

IN F.G.: a PHILISTINE WOMAN stands in front of a stall which sells effigies of Dagon, god of corn, available in a variety of shapes and sizes. She is distracted by the moans and cries of a BLIND MAN, who is being led through the square by a BOY OF SIX, beating on a goat-skin drum. Both are dressed in white robes, the MAN'S being smeared with grime and dust. He acts like a madman, slobbering into his grey beard and whimpering between loud staccato cries, while the BOY appears to be towing him by a piece of string tied about his waist.

BOY

Make way for the mad!
Make way for the blind!

The PHILISTINES regard both MAN and BOY with mild curiosity and amusement.

The MAN and his BOY approach the gates where two PHILISTINE SOLDIERS stand guard:

BOY

(banging drum)

Make way for the mad!
Make way for the blind!

The SOLDIERS glance at each other. One of them waves the BOY away with a gesture and a few incomprehensible words. But the BOY takes no notice and walks boldly up to the SOLDIER.

BOY

My Master wishes to see
Achish, King of Gath.

The SOLDIER doesn't understand and calls to another SOLDIER - PALASTU - who emerges from the guard-house.

PALASTU

(foreign accent)

What do you want, child?

BOY

My master wishes to see
Achish, King of Gath.

PALASTU eyes the MAN with suspicion.

PALASTU

He is Israelite?

The MAN foams at the mouth.

BOY

He is mad.

PALASTU

Therefore mad?

The BOY ignores the jibe.

BOY

My Master has a message for
the King.

PALASTU

From who?

Uncertain of the answer, the boy turns again to the
MAN, who raises his eyes to heaven. The BOY turns
back to PALASTU...

BOY

(bluntly)

God.

182. INT. PALACE OF GATH. GALLERY. DAY.

182.

TIGHT SHOT: ACHISH, King of Gath is supervising four
COURT PAINTERS who are working on a mural. He is a
man in his late 60's, and has the air of an elder
statesman of breeding and culture. He says something
in a foreign language to PALASTU, who is standing by
an open door with the MAN and his BOY. PALASTU replies
briefly, turns and goes.

ACHISH approaches the MAN and notices something
disconcerting about him, peers closely at his blue
eyes.

ACHISH

I was reliably informed that
they were brown.

ACHISH tips a brush with a spot of blue, moves to the base of the mural and alters the colouring in the eyes of his rendition of David, who is gazing up at Goliath. Although David is unarmed, a dozen Israelite Soldiers are seen to be lurking in the bushes behind him, their arrows aimed at Goliath.

ACHISH

(while painting)

I apologise for the necessity of your performance, but in our country madmen are held to be sacred. The people fondly believe that the gods give utterance through the mouths of lunatics. Grasp that and you have, perhaps, grasped the very essence of religion.

While ACHISH speaks, DAVID removes his white hood, rubs some of the dirt from his face. ABSALOM does likewise, revealing his mane of dark hair.

DAVID

Have the Philistine Lords reached a decision?

ACHISH

We understand that Saul has made your life a hazardous affair for you and your outlaws.

DAVID

That is why we seek your protection.

ACHISH

And yet you will not help us defeat the man who stands between you and the throne?

DAVID

I will not raise my hand against the Lord's anointed King.

ACHISH

But I take it you would not object to others raising their hands on your behalf? Philistine hands, for instance?

DAVID

If you wage war against Saul,
you will be doing it in your
own interest, not mine.

ACHISH stands with DAVID near the beginning of the mural, indicating a white-bearded man - Abraham - who holds a dove in one hand while the other is placed under the thigh of a Philistine king - Abimelech. The two men stand between two halves of a slaughtered ram, lying on the ground.

ACHISH

I cannot vouch for the
physical resemblance but
this represents your
illustrious forefather,
Abraham. And this is one
of my predecessors - Abimelech.
You will notice that Abraham's
hand occupies a somewhat curious
position under Abimelech's
thigh. Do you know what that
signifies?

DAVID

The pledging of an oath.

ACHISH

A rather quaint practice, now
happily obsolete. But an oath
nonetheless, undertaken by
Abraham to keep faith with the
Philistines in return for the
hospitality he received from
them.

DAVID

As a work of art, it's most
impressive, but as an historical
record it's a travesty.

DAVID points to the archers crouching behind in the bush in the rendition of his combat with Goliath.
ACHISH smiles:

ACHISH

Dramatic licence has always
favoured a plausible lie to
an implausible truth.

DAVID

Does this dramatic licence
extend to portraying our
people as barbarians? Did
an oath between Abraham and
the Philistines give you the
right to plunder our lands
and deny us the right to fight
back?

ACHISH raises an eyebrow at DAVID'S outburst, then
points to the section of blank tapestry at the end
of the mural.

ACHISH

The unpainted canvas of the
future. What colours do you
see? The blood red of our
two peoples, or the olive green
of peace?

DAVID

Treat us like vermin and we'll
behave like vermin, but respect
what is ours, and we shall keep
faith with you.

ACHISH

Do I have your sacred oath upon
it?

DAVID hesitates, smiles.

DAVID

You have my sacred oath.

(SCS.183 to 187 INCORPORATED IN ABOVE &/OR DELETED).

188. INT. SAUL'S PALACE. JONATHAN'S QUARTERS. NIGHT. 188.

A SMALL BOY of ABSALOM'S age, MEPHIBOSHETH, sits
cross-legged on the floor, playing on a transverse
flute. He has neither ABSALOM'S beauty nor his charm,
and is a frail, rather pathetic sight. A pair of
wooden crutches are propped against a chair nearby.

A door opens O.C. and MEPHIBOSHETH looks up to see
the brooding figure of his grandfather, SAUL, standing
in the doorway.

SAUL

Where is your father?

MEPHIBOSHETH cowers at the presence of SAUL, who sways menacingly under the influence of drink.

SAUL
Are you simple too? I
said where is your father?

MEPHIBOSHETH indicates a door leading to another room.

SAUL
(calling)
Jonathan?

A pause, then JONATHAN enters from the other room. He has aged considerably since we last saw him - and not merely from the passing of the years.

JONATHAN
Yes, father?

SAUL looks at him for a moment with an air of disdain.

SAUL
The Philistines have
challenged us to battle at
Gilboa....and David Ben-Jesse
rides with them.

JONATHAN
David will not raise his hand
against you. If you don't
yet know that, you don't yet
know him.

SAUL is briefly checked, then suddenly explodes with
impotent anger...

SAUL
I know him to be a traitor.....
to his God, his King and his
country....and if you don't
yet know that, then your head
is as sick as your heart!

MEPHIBOSHETH cowers in terror at SAUL'S outburst.
JONATHAN calls to a woman in the adjoining room -

JONATHAN
Merab? Take 'Bosheth to
his room.

JONATHAN'S WIFE, MERAB, enters but SAUL screams at her....

SAUL
No! Let him hear, poor
crippled wretch! Let him
learn how the son of my
flesh conspired with.....
(faltering)
.....with the son of my
heart.....to my own confusion
and downfall.....

SAUL breaks down, sobbing uncontrollably. While
MERAB shepherds MEPHIBOSHETH from the room, JONATHAN
puts an arm around his father.

SAUL
(barely audible)
He was the one great gift
that God ever granted me.

JONATHAN
He loves you too. That is
why he will not fight against
you.

SAUL
Dear God that he would! The
pain is too great for any man
to bear. Lord, I beg of you...
let it end soon!

JONATHAN holds his father tight in his arms.

(SC.189 OMITTED)

190. EXT. ZIKLAG AND DESERT. DAY.

190.

The crumbling remains of Ziklag rise up from a
vast desert expanse. A cloud of dust moves towards
it in L.S. - the sand whipped up by the wheels of
a chariot and its escort.

191. EXT. ZIKLAG. SQUARE & GATES. DAY.

191.

DAVID'S CLAN are now housed in goatskin tents amid
the ruins of Ziklag: a once prosperous town that is
now little more than a skeleton of crumbling walls
and streets half-buried beneath drifts of sand. The

town wall has been partially renovated by DAVID'S MEN, who can be seen working atop sections of wooden scaffolding.

ACHISH'S chariot stands in the square, his ESCORT waiting by it, while DAVID presents his family to ACHISH. JOAB, ELIAB and ABINADAB have already been introduced, while AMNON (now aged 7), ABSALOM (6) and ABSALOM'S sister TAMAR (4) are clustered round their respective mothers, AHINOAM and ABIGAIL.

DAVID
My eldest son, Amnon.

AMNON has developed into a somewhat morose and sullen child, with none of ABSALOM'S beauty to redeem his character. He shuffles awkwardly, looking down at his feet, while DAVID indicates AHINOAM.

DAVID
His mother, Ahinoam.
(moving on)
Absalom I believe you know.

ABSALOM grins from somewhere beneath his shock of black hair, which has grown considerably.

ABSALOM
I'd love to go for a ride
in your chariot. I've never
seen one before.

ACHISH
You don't have them in Israel?

ABSALOM
We hardly have horses in Israel!

ACHISH raises an eyebrow in DAVID'S direction.

ACHISH
I dare say your father will
rectify the matter before long.

There is a note of fatality in ACHISH'S tone. He looks at DAVID a moment, then calls out in his own language to one of his ESCORT, XANIEL, standing by the chariot. XANIEL approaches as DAVID continues...

DAVID (O.C.)
Absalom's sister, Tamar....
and their mother, Abigail.

TAMAR smiles at ACHISH. She is a girl of softer beauty than her brother but has the same flowing black hair.

ACHISH
(To Abigail)
Your children would fetch
a high price in Gath, madam.

ABIGAIL
(lightly)
I shall bear it in mind, sir.

ABSALOM
Mother!

XANIEL comes over - a veritable peacock in green
armour and feathered head-dress, like all Philistine
soldiers. ACHISH exchanges a brief word with him,
turns to ABSALOM.

ACHISH
Xaniel will take you for
a ride.
(to Amnon)
Would you like to ride too?

AMNON shakes his head sheepishly.

TAMAR
(brightly)
Can I go with Absalom, sir?

ACHISH looks at DAVID for his approval; ABSALOM
turns to him...

ABSALOM
Oh, please, father...let
Tamar come too.

DAVID
(nodding)
But take good care of her.

ABSALOM and TAMAR rush off to the chariot, followed
by XANIEL.

DAVID
(to Achish)
If Absalom were to go
through fire, Tamar would
be sure to follow.

AMNON watches DAVID'S evident pride in ABSALOM with a
resentful eye.

While XANIEL gives ABSALOM and TAMAR an exhilarating
ride around the desert, DAVID and ACHISH watch them
from the ruined gateway.

ACHISH

Tell me. This nameless god
of yours. Do you really
believe that he's the only god
in the universe?

DAVID

There may be other gods, but I
think there can only be one
Creator. Do you really believe
in so many gods?

ACHISH

We are all gods in my view.
(reflectively)
Saul and I may have travelled
different roads, but they shall
soon lead us both to that land
of gloom....a land of gathering
shadows.

(pause)

Still....I daresay our rival
gods will enjoy their little
game of seeing who wins.

DAVID'S attitude towards the impending battle is
clearly ambivalent.

XANIEL brings the chariot to a halt a short distance
away, calls out to ACHISH while ABSALOM and TAMAR
jump down.

ACHISH

I wish we could have spent
more time together. We might
have solved a riddle or two.

DAVID

We shall do.

ACHISH smiles.

ACHISH

Goodbye, David.
(half turns)
Take a word of advice from an
old king. A man should be wise.
But not too wise....for the more
a man knows, the more he must
suffer.

ACHISH starts to walk back to his chariot, then DAVID
suddenly runs to him.

DAVID
My lord Achish.....
(pause)
If it should lie within your
power, deal gently with the
King's son, Prince Jonathan.
For my sake.

ACHISH considers DAVID'S intensity a moment.

ACHISH
If it lies within my power.

A pause, then ACHISH mounts his chariot, taking
over the reins from XANIEL.

L.S.: ABSALOM and TAMAR run back to DAVID while he
watches ACHISH ride off across the desert, followed
by his ESCORT.

(SC.192 PART DELETED)

193. EXT. MOUNT GILBOA. ISRAELITE CAMP. DAWN.

193.

An ox-cart laden with slaughtered cattle stands at
the edge of a steep cliff overlooking a narrow
vale. The vale runs into a valley at right-angles,
the far side forming the lower slopes of Mount
Gilboa, where the lights of the Philistine Camp
shimmer in the early dawn. The Israelite Camp
is set back from the cliff: a paltry collection
of tents compared to the evident size of the
Philistine host. SOLDIERS move about the camp,
preparing themselves for battle, while others assist
in stacking more carcasses atop the sacrificial pyre.

194. INT. SAUL'S TENT. MOUNT GILBOA. DAWN.

194.

SAUL stands in his tent, listening to ABNER while
his ARMOUR BEARER dresses him in gleaming armour.
He shows no sign of anxiety: on the contrary, he
has rarely displayed such an air of calm. ISHYO,
MALCHISHUA and JONATHAN are also present, dressed
for battle.

ABNER
My Lord, I earnestly beg
you to reconsider. The
Philistines outnumber our
forces by over fifty divisions:
Let us withdraw now while we
still have the chance.

SAUL ignores ABNER, glances down at his leg-plate.

SAUL
(to his Armour Bearer)
It's tarnished at the edge.
Polish it again.

The ARMOUR BEARER kneels to polish the offending plate.

ISHYO
Our scouts have confirmed that
David Ben-Jesse is not among the
enemy, father, so your honour
is not at stake. But the lives
of our men are.

MALCHISHUA
Please, father....take Abner's
advice.

SAUL
(without looking up)
At sunrise I shall ride out to
meet the Philistines. If I
ride alone, so be it.
(to his Armour Bearer)
Now polish the other one.

A SOLDIER enters the tent.

SOLDIER
The Prophet Nathan is ready
to offer up the sacrifice, my
lord.

SAUL
I know of no Prophet.

ISHYO
Since the death of Samuel
the priest Nathan has been
declared Prophet of Israel.

SAUL shrugs off the information.

SAUL
(flatly)
There is to be no sacrifice.

ABNER, ISHYO and MALCHISHUA look astounded. Only
JONATHAN remains detached and seemingly unconcerned.

ISHYO

This is madness, father - our
men will not fight without the
Prophet's blessing.

SAUL

The victory I seek requires no
prophet's blessing.
(to the soldier)
Tell him to leave the camp.

SOLDIER

Yes, my lord.

THE SOLDIER, equally shocked, leaves the tent.

ABNER

The order of sacrifice is
not a matter in which we may
interfere, my lord. It is.....

ABNER breaks off as a blaze of light flares up in the
distance, accompanied by the massed VOICES of the
SOLDIERS, O.C.

SAUL

(screaming)

I said there was to be
no sacrifice!

SAUL pulls away from his ARMOUR BEARER and strides
towards the tent opening.

195. EXT. ISRAELITE CAMP. MOUNT GILBOA. DAWN.

195.

The vast pyre of slaughtered animals is now ablaze,
fired with brushwood stacked under the cart. NATHAN
stands before it, leading the ISRAELITE SOLDIERS in
a rousing anthem of praise.

NATHAN

Rouse yourself in anger....

SOLDIERS

Lord God of Vengeance!

NATHAN

Lay nations at our feet....

SOLDIERS

Lord God of Vengeance!

NATHAN

Whet your flashing sword....

SOLDIERS

Lord God of Vengeance!

NATHAN

Make your arrows drunk with
blood.....

SOLDIERS

Lord God of Vengeance!

SAUL forces his way through the SOLDIERS, his sword
raised in defiance. He strides up to NATHAN:

SAUL

(screaming)

No sacrifice, do you hear me?!

To the utter astonishment of the soldiers, SAUL
grips NATHAN by his robes and hurls him to one side.
He turns to the blazing pyre, throws back his head
and screams out to the skies...

SAUL

I am your sacrifice, Lord!

The SOLDIERS stand with gaping mouths as SAUL bends
his great frame against the two shafts of the cart,
the flames from the pyre burnishing his armour in a
blaze of light. Then, like Samson possessed, he
starts to push it towards the edge of the cliff.
ABNER, ISHYO and MALCHISHUA run forward to intervene,
but he flays them aside with his arms.

As the great cart trundles towards the edge of the
cliff, JONATHAN materializes by SAUL'S side, pitching
in his own strength....

196. EXT. VALE OF GILBOA. DAWN.

196.

UPSHOT: the cart topples over the edge of the cliff,
spewing out a cascade of blazing carcasses as it
plunges down the side.

197. EXT. ISRAELITE CAMP. MOUNT GILBOA. DAWN.

197.

NATHAN staggers up to SAUL, still kneeling with
JONATHAN by the edge of the cliff, gazing down at
the smouldering remnants in the vale below.

NATHAN

This day you will surely die
for such blasphemy!

SAUL

(quietly)

Then my prayer is to be
answered at last?

NATHAN

The Lord scorns your prayers.
He has utterly rejected you....
and your sons.

SAUL

(nodding)

And Samuel too. And Abraham,
and Isaac, and Moses. Even
David will be forsaken at the
end, for in death we are all,
finally, cut off from God's
care. What purpose then in
serving Him? He wrestles with
man for the night-time of his
life....but at daybreak He is
gone.

SAUL smiles at the irony while gazing O.C. in the
direction of the Philistine tents.

198. EXT. DESERT LANDSCAPE. DAVID'S POV. DAWN.

198.

HIGH ANGLE: A measureless void of desert, silent and
still. The western horizon is barely discernible
beneath the cool, dark purple of the early dawn.
The SHOT HOLDS for a bare five seconds...

199. EXT. MOUNT GILBOA. ISRAELITE CAMP. DAWN.

199.

SAUL continues to gaze O.C., giving the impression that
the previous desert SHOT relates to some premonition
in his mind. JONATHAN notices NATHAN talking to some
of the SOLDIERS, who then begin to disperse.

JONATHAN

They're beginning to desert.

SAUL looks round, rises to his feet.

SAUL

Who marches with the King?

The SOLDIERS exchange shifty glances of indecision, but
no-one speaks. JONATHAN stands up beside his father.

JONATHAN
Who marches with the King
and his son?

JONATHAN'S evident reconciliation causes a murmur of
comment among the SOLDIERS. He looks towards ABNER...

ABNER hesitates, then turns to the SOLDIERS:

ABNER
I march with the King and his
son.

ISHYO and MALCHISHUA move towards Saul:

ISHYO
And his sons.

Other SOLDIERS now respond with declarations of "I
march with the King!", escalating into a general
affirmation of loyalty to SAUL.

200. EXT. DESERT LANDSCAPE. DAVID'S POV. SUNRISE.

200.

HIGH ANGLE: The desert void, from the same CAMERA
position as Sc.198, only now the sky is a vast expanse
of deep blue, lit by the sunrise BEHIND CAMERA.

201. EXT. MOUNT GILBOA. SUNRISE.

201.

SAUL rides his chariot down the graded slope into the
vale followed by his SLINGERS, ARCHERS, INFANTRY and a
CAVALRY of no more than TWENTY SOLDIERS ON HORSEBACK.
They move down the vale towards the main valley where
the PHILISTINE TROOPS are massed atop the slopes of
Mount Gilboa on the far side. The PHILISTINES now
begin to move their ARCHERS forward down the slope,
followed by the INFANTRY.

202. EXT. DESERT LANDSCAPE. DAVID'S POV. DAY.

202.

HIGH ANGLE: The desert expanse: hot, white, naked,
shimmering under a molten sun. Slowly, almost
imperceptibly, the CAMERA ZOOMS in towards the desolate
horizon.

203. EXT. MOUNT GILBOA. VALLEY. DAY.

203.

SAUL and his ARMY stand in position half way up the
vale, facing the PHILISTINE RANKS arrayed along the
slopes.

ABNER sounds the ram's horn, answered by the PHILISTINE
COMMANDER. SAUL then gives the signal for the SLINGERS
and ARCHERS to attack. They rush forward into the main
valley, take up their positions and fire a volley of

203. Continued.

203.

stones and arrows into the PHILISTINE RANKS. The PHILISTINES respond with a weak assault of arrows, giving the ISRAELITES ample opportunity to reload and launch a second volley. To the surprise of SAUL and ABNER, the PHILISTINES start retreating back up their own slope.

204. EXT. DESERT LANDSCAPE. DAVID'S POV. DAY.

204.

HIGH ANGLE: The clash of arms CUTS sharply back to the silence of the desert. The ZOOM continues to creep forward towards the horizon through the palpitating heat of noon.

205. EXT. MOUNT GILBOA. DAY.

205.

As the ISRAELITE SLINGERS and ARCHERS pursue the PHILISTINE RANKS up the far slope, ABNER gives the order for the rest of their MEN to follow them.

SAUL and his SONS lead the main charge down the access valley and out into the main valley towards the far slopes.

SHOOTING along the main valley: ACHISH moves into F.G., watching the ISRAELITE ARMY start to scale the slope. He sounds a horn, charges forward. Only now do we see that he is riding a chariot - indeed is leading a whole Chariot Division, now emerging from behind a large escarpment.

The Chariots - each carrying TWO ARCHERS in addition to the CHARIOTEER - ride up the slope and through the ISRAELITE RANKS. As the main body of PHILISTINE INFANTRY cascades down the slope from above, the sound of a transverse FLUTE gradually LAPS OVER: a wistful lonely lament, reminiscent of JONATHAN'S crippled son.

206. EXT. DESERT LANDSCAPE. DAVID'S POV. DAY.

206.

(FLUTE THEME OVER) HIGH ANGLE: The ZOOM stops, and we now hold in LONG FOCUS as a tiny plume of dust appears above the horizon.

207. EXT. ZIKLAG. RUINED GATEHOUSE. DAY.

207.

(FLUTE THEME OVER): DAVID sits alone in the ruined gatehouse above the town gate, gazing out at the horizon. Only now do we realise that the preceding desert SHOTS have been his POV.

DAVID leans forward, reacting to the thin plume of dust while shielding his eyes against the glare of the sun....

208. EXT. MOUNT GILBOA. VALLEY. DAY.

208.

(FLUTE THEME OVER): The ISRAELITES put up a desperate fight against the PHILISTINES, despite their vastly superior numbers. From the elevated position of his own chariot, SAUL hacks out with his sword, while JONATHAN displays extraordinary bowmanship at his side, firing arrows into the enemy ranks with quite incredible rapidity. But the ISRAELITE INFANTRY is no match for ACHISH and his Chariots, and already the slopes are littered with their dead.

As the battle continues, DAVID'S lament is heard to the Theme of the Flute, half spoken, half sung:

DAVID (V.O.)
How are the mighty fallen, and the
weapons of war perished!
The beauty of Israel lies slain upon
her high places!

209. EXT. DESERT LANDSCAPE. DAVID'S POV. DAY.

209.

(FLUTE THEME OVER). A tiny, black speck is now visible beneath the thin plume of dust.

210. EXT. ZIKLAG. RUINED GATEHOUSE. DAY.

210.

(FLUTE THEME OVER): DAVID starts to rise, never averting his gaze from the horizon, O.C. --

211. EXT. MOUNT GILBOA. VALLEY. DAY.

211.

(FLUTE THEME OVER): ISHYO and MALCHISHUA are both slain by the PHILISTINE CHARIOTEERS. ACHISH advances towards SAUL'S chariot. The ARCHER by ACHISH'S side aims at JONATHAN, but ACHISH stops him. JONATHAN turns to see ACHISH - fires an arrow and kills him...

DAVID (V.O.)
From the blood of the slain, the
bow of Jonathan turned not back,
And the sword of Saul returned not
empty.....

212. EXT. DESERT LANDSCAPE. DAVID'S POV. SUNSET.

212.

(FLUTE THEME OVER): The setting sun has now entered the POV, slowly sinking towards the horizon, where the figure of a boy running is barely discernible, emerging through the haze....

213. EXT. ZIKLAG. RUINED GATEHOUSE. SUNSET. 213.
(FLUTE THEME OVER): Still with his eyes fixed on the RUNNER O.C., DAVID rises to his feet, then suddenly turns and disappears inside the gatehouse.
214. EXT. MOUNT GILBOA. VALLEY. DAY. 214.
(FLUTE THEME OVER): ABNER calls out to SAUL, points back towards their own camp, indicating the need to retreat. SAUL ignores him, continues decimating the PHILISTINES either side of his chariot. ABNER hesitates a beat, sounds a general retreat on the ram's horn.

DAVID (V.O.)
You mountains of Gilboa, let there
be no dew upon you,
Neither let there be rain, nor fields
of offering....
215. EXT. DESERT LANDSCAPE. DAVID'S POV. SUNSET. 215.
(FLUTE THEME OVER): The figure of the BOY running towards us is now clearer, the desert dust rising up from his feet....
216. EXT. ZIKLAG. WALL AND TOWN GATES. SUNSET. 216.
(FLUTE THEME OVER): DAVID runs down the steps from the gatehouse.....
217. EXT. MOUNT GILBOA. VALLEY. DAY. 217.
(FLUTE THEME OVER): ABNER flees with the remnants of the ISRAELITE ARMY back across the valley, pursued by the main body of the PHILISTINE FORCE, leaving SAUL and JONATHAN with only a small band of SOLDIERS to fight on alone....

DAVID (V.O.)
For there the bow of Jonathan is
vilely cast away,
The shield of Saul as though he
had not been anointed with oil.
218. EXT. DESERT LANDSCAPE. DAVID'S POV. SUNSET. 218.
(FLUTE THEME OVER): The BOY running beneath the sinking sun.....

219. EXT. ZIKLAG. TOWN GATE. SUNSET.

219.

(FLUTE THEME OVER): DAVID running out through the town gate - ABSALOM sees him, runs after him, followed by others.....

220. EXT. MOUNT GILBOA. VALLEY. DAY.

220.

(FLUTE THEME OVER): SAUL'S chariot horse is killed, and he and JONATHAN are now forced to fight it out on foot. Most of the PHILISTINE FORCE have left the slopes in pursuit of the fleeing ISRAELITES, leaving only a small division to deal with SAUL, JONATHAN, and the few SOLDIERS who have remained with them.

DAVID (V.O.)

Saul and Jonathan were lovely and
pleasant in their lives,
And in their death they were not
divided:

They were swifter than eagles, they
were stronger than lions....

221. EXT. DESERT LANDSCAPE. SUNSET.

221.

(FLUTE THEME OVER): The CAMERA, - which has never altered its POV position - SLOWLY ZOOMS BACK as the BOY runs towards us in L.S. DAVID enters SHOT from below, racing out across the desert to meet him.....

222. EXT. MOUNT GILBOA. SLOPES. DAY.

222.

(FLUTE THEME OVER): The fighting on the slopes is now reduced to only a few SOLDIERS on either side. As SAUL raises his sword, a PHILISTINE slices into his arm from behind.

He drops his sword, sinks to his knees, clutching at his savaged limb. JONATHAN, some distance away, fires an arrow at the PHILISTINE, killing him before he can strike a second time....

DAVID (V.O.)

You daughters of Israel, weep over
Saul,

Who clothed you in scarlet, with
other delights.

How are the mighty fallen in battle!

JONATHAN runs towards SAUL, stumbling over the hurdle of corpses in his path.....

223. EXT. ZIKLAG AND DESERT APPROACH. SUNSET. 223.
(FLUTE THEME OVER): DAVID runs towards CAMERA, with ABSALOM and others streaming out of the gates beyond him, like the welcoming girls at Gibeah....
224. EXT. MOUNT GILBOA. SLOPES. DAY. 224.
(FLUTE THEME OVER): As JONATHAN runs towards us, CAMERA SLOW-ZOOMS in on him, shifting into slight SLOW MOTION:

DAVID (V.O.)
Jonathan lies slain upon Israel's
high places.....
225. EXT. ZIKLAG AND DESERT APPROACH. SUNSET. 225.
(FLUTE THEME OVER): SLOW-ZOOM in on DAVID as he runs towards CAMERA, also shifting into matched SLOW MOTION. The sound of the flute FADES OUT, and only DAVID'S voice is heard, gradually reducing to a whisper....

DAVID (V.O.)
I am distressed for you, my brother
Jonathan.....
226. EXT. MOUNT GILBOA. SLOPES. DAY. 226.
TIGHT SHOT: JONATHAN running, his face strained with effort....

DAVID (V.O.)
Very pleasant have you been unto me:
Your love to me was wonderful, passing
the love of women.....

JONATHAN'S face suddenly contorts - then relaxes, his eyes softening, his expression almost melting into a smile.....
227. EXT. ZIKLAG AND DESERT APPROACH. SUNSET. 227.
TIGHT SHOT: DAVID freezes, reacting to something O.C. -
228. EXT. MOUNT GILBOA. SLOPES. DAY. 228.
LOW ANGLE: JONATHAN slumps forward next to SAUL, blood welling from a large wound in the back of his head. A PHILISTINE SLINGER stands beyond him in L.S., briefly silhouetted against the sky. JONATHAN stretches out his hand towards SAUL, the amulet on his arm conspicuous in F.G. SAUL leans forward, clasps his hand -

228. Continued.

228.

DAVID (V.O.)
How are the mighty fallen and the
weapons of war perished!

JONATHAN smiles, closes his eyes.

229. EXT. ZIKLAG AND DESERT APPROACH. SUNSET.

229.

The RUNNER stands a short distance from DAVID, completely exhausted. In one hand he holds SAUL'S coronet, in the other JONATHAN'S amulet. He drops to his knees, lays them before DAVID....

230. EXT. MOUNT GILBOA. SLOPES. DAY.

230.

SAUL gazes at JONATHAN....utters a cry of despair..... draws his sword.....

231. EXT. ZIKLAG AND DESERT APPROACH. SUNSET.

231.

SAUL'S cry OVERLAPS with DAVID'S own as he stares down at the scarlet amulet, then draws his sword...

232. EXT. MOUNT GILBOA. SLOPES. DAY.

232.

SAUL leans forward on his sword, forcing the blade through his heart.....

233. EXT. ZIKLAG AND DESERT APPROACH. SUNSET.

233.

DAVID lifts his sword high in the air...the RUNNER closes his eyes in readiness...a beat of silence... then DAVID suddenly hurls the sword as far from his grasp as he can, sinks to his knees.....

234. EXT. MOUNT GILBOA. SLOPES. DAY.

234.

SAUL lies next to JONATHAN, his arm embracing him in the stillness of death. A pause, then a shadow falls across their faces.

LOW ANGLE: The Prophet NATHAN stands above them, contemplating their fate with a cold, unctuous gaze.

235. EXT. ZIKLAG AND DESERT APPROACH. SUNSET.

235.

LOW ANGLE: DAVID kneels in the desert sand, sobbing as he twists the scarlet amulet in his hands. His CLAN have assembled some distance away, waiting in silence. Suddenly ABSALOM runs forward and kneels beside his father. He puts his arm round him in a gesture of compassion: an action reminiscent of JONATHAN'S

235. Continued.

235.

empathy for DAVID after his defeat of GOLIATH. Without looking up, DAVID grips his hand, squeezing it tight in the temper of his grief.

236. EXT. MOUNT GILBOA. SLOPES. SFX. DAY.

236.

NATHAN remains standing beside SAUL and JONATHAN a moment longer, then turns and walks away from CAMERA, his pious voice intoning on V.O. --

NATHAN (V.O.)

Thus it came to pass that the
Lord destroyed Saul and his
sons, and transferred the
kingdom unto David, son of
Jesse.....

CAMERA CRANES slowly up to embrace the full carnage of the battlefields. The slaughter of the ISRAELITES has been total, and NATHAN represents the only visible image of life: a white-robed, phantom figure, weaving his way into L.S. down the bloody slopes of Gilboa.

NATHAN (V.O.,cont'd)

And the Elders of Israel came unto
David, and anointed him King over
Israel, according to the word of
the Lord given unto Samuel.....

As the CAMERA continues to CRANE UPWARDS, white petals begin to drift down through F.G., like flakes of snow (DISSOLVE SFX) accompanied by a background ORCHESTRAL PRELUDE that gradually surfaces through the foreground drone of NATHAN'S V.O.

NATHAN (V.O.,cont'd)

Then David went forth and smote
the heathen Jebusites, and took
from them the city of Jerusalem,
and dwelt therein. So David
waxed greater and greater, and
ruled with wisdom and strength,
for the Lord of Hosts was with him...

The shower of falling petals in F.G., is now so dense that the B.G. battlefield is completely lost from view. Imperceptibly, the CAMERA is no longer CRANING but PANNING UP through the petals, and as the ORCHESTRAL PRELUDE swells towards the MAIN THEME and CHORUS of "Lift Up Your Heads O You Gates", so we MIX THROUGH TO:

CAMERA continues PANNING UP through the cascade of petals until the ramparts above an open gateway come into SHOT, identified by the TITLE: "JERUSALEM, 9 YEARS LATER". The ramparts are flanked with GIRLS, showering the gateway with handfuls of petals drawn from baskets around their waists, while the central area is occupied by a CHOIR OF BOYS and LEVITE PRIESTS. CAMERA HOLDS in LOW ANGLE on the CHOIR as they burst forth in chorus -

CHOIR

Lift up your heads, O you gates,
And be you lift up, you everlasting
doors,
And the King of Glory shall come in....

HIGH SHOT from the CHOIR'S POV: The Great Square of Jerusalem lies below, filled with a vast CROWD brimming with anticipation. Serried ranks of LEVITE PRIESTS stand either side of a central aisle, leading from the gateway below CAMERA to a large purple tent at the far end of the square. The CITIZENS occupy every remaining inch of space beyond, as well as every window, ledge and roof in sight, and all eyes are now rooted on the open gateway below us.

TREBLE VOICES (O.C.)

Who is this King of Glory?

LOW ANGLE: FULL SHOT of the deserted gateway as the question is answered by a thunderous response, O.C. from above -

MALE VOICES (O.C.)

The Lord strong and mighty,
He is the King of Glory!

The echo of the response dies away, followed by a brief silence. Now the treble voices filter in, whispering the anthem in short, staccato beats, as if coaxing Him forth from the void beyond the gates.

BOY CHOIR

Arise, O God, and come to your
rest,
You and the Ark of your power.
For the Lord has chosen Jerusalem,
and desires it for His home.....

CAMERA SLOW-ZOOMS IN through the mist of white petals as the swirling, spiralling, surreal image of DAVID gradually emerges, rising up over the brow of the steep approach to the city. He is almost totally naked, except for a brief white cloth tied about his waist, and is dancing in frenzied exultation.

BOY CHOIR

Here will He establish David's
 throne,
 And light a lamp for His anointed
 King.
 His enemies will He clothe with
 shame,
 But on his head shall be a shining
 crown!

Beyond the wild, whirling figure of DAVID we see a solemn procession of PRIESTS, led by the prophet NATHAN, carrying the golden Ark of the Covenant, slung on staves. Their slow, funeral tread is in strange contrast to DAVID'S exotic dance, their white-bearded white-robed forms curiously juxtaposed with the sensual beauty of their King's glistening nakedness.

FULL SHOT: As DAVID dances through the city gates, the CROWD cry out in spontaneous adulation of their King, almost drowning the main CHORUS of the CHOIR:

CHOIR

Lift up your head, O you gates,
 And be you lift up, you ever-
 lasting doors,
 And the King of Glory shall come
 in!

DAVID stretches out his arms to the CHOIR OF BOYS above the gateway, enticing from them the question...

BOY CHOIR

Who is this King of Glory?

The CROWD augment the male choir with the response:

CROWD

The Lord strong and mighty,
 He is the King of Glory!

DAVID now leads NATHAN and the PROCESSION down a gauntlet of praise towards the purple tent: the Receiving Tent of the Ark of the Covenant, flanked by LEVITE PRIESTS. Though reminiscent of his reception following his defeat of Goliath, DAVID'S indulgent response to the CROWD'S adulation is in marked contrast to the displaced and anguished boy who knelt before SAUL. The choir accompanies his triumphal approach with a repeat of the anthem verse "Arise O God".

A Royal Enclosure has been erected in front of the King's Palace, and here, among the ROYAL GUESTS, we catch brief sight of JOAB (resplendent as Commander-in-

Chief of the Army). ELIAB, ABINADAB, JONATHAN'S widow, MERAB, and her crippled son MEPHIBOSHETH (now aged 16), AHINOAM and her son AMNON (dour, morose and 17): and ABIGAIL with her two children: TAMAR, aged 12, and ABSALOM - "the most beautiful youth in all Israel, without a flaw from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot." Now aged 16, ABSALOM'S dark beauty shines out like the black jet of the Thummim, his mane of raven hair flowing about this shoulders.

Although the CROWD'S adulation for DAVID seems unanimous, there are two who look on as cool observers: DAVID'S chief Councillor, AHITOPHEL and - standing some distance away from him - his niece, BATHSHEBA. AHITOPHEL means little to us: he is merely a face in the Royal Enclosure. But BATHSHEBA'S pale beauty is arresting. She stands next to her husband, CAPTAIN URIAH, but her attention is fixed on DAVID as he dances towards the purple tent. Once or twice she catches the eye of AHITOPHEL and some mutual understanding is evident between them.

NATHAN (V.O., cont'd)

David went up unto Gibeah with
the Levite brethren, and brought
from thence the Holy Ark of God.
And the Levites bore the Ark upon
their shoulders, and brought it
unto the City of David, even unto
Jerusalem....

LOW ANGLE: DAVID reaches the Receiving Tent, opens the front flap with a swift movement incorporated into his abandoned dance, then glides aside to make way for NATHAN and the PRIESTS carrying the Ark. CAMERA HOLDS on one of the palace windows above, where a familiar face watches DAVID'S performance with an air of faint disgust. It is MICHAL, who has aged considerably in the fourteen years that have elapsed since we last saw her at Gibeah.

CHOIR

Lift up your head, O you gates,
And be you lift up, you ever-
lasting doors,
And the King of Glory shall come
in!

Once again, DAVID turns to the CHOIR OF BOYS to entice from them the question....

BOY CHOIR

Who is this King of Glory?

NATHAN remains outside the tent as the Ark is carried within under the watchful eye of the priest ZADOK. DAVID turns to the entire crowd for the climactic response -

CROWD

The Lord God of Hosts,
He is the King of Glory!

Like MICHAL, NATHAN watches with an air of veiled contempt as DAVID flings open his arms to embrace the crowd, then turns and follows ZADOK inside the tent. DAVID remains standing outside for a moment, his arms outstretched towards the cheering THRONG, his glistening body bathed in sweat, then slowly sinks to his knees, his energy spent. Far above in the palace window, MICHAL turns away from the spectacle with a familiar look of disdain.

237A. INT. DAVID'S PALACE. CORRIDOR. NIGHT.

237A.

A small corridor within DAVID'S palace. The silence after the previous scene seems total, but gradually we discern the echo of NATHAN'S voice, no longer on V.O. but emanating from one of the rooms off the corridor.

NATHAN (O.C.)

And when Nathan the prophet
had set the Ark in the midst of
the tabernacle that had been
prepared for it, David gave to
everyone of Israel, both man
and woman, a loaf of bread,
and a good piece of flesh, and
a flagon of wine.

DAVID appears at the end of the corridor, walking towards the room in the direction of NATHAN'S voice.

237B. INT. DAVID'S PALACE. NATHAN'S ROOM. NIGHT.

237B.

NATHAN stands in a small, cloistered room, dictating to a SCRIBE while referring to his own notes.

NATHAN

And David delivered unto the
people this psalm, to praise
and thank the Lord:
(consulting notes)
Give thanks unto the Lord and
call upon His name. Make known
His deeds among the people.....

237B. Continued.

237B.

NATHAN breaks off as DAVID enters the room, pauses a beat, then turns to the SCRIBE.

NATHAN

We shall continue tomorrow.

The SCRIBE leaves the room, bowing to DAVID as he passes. His departure is followed by an awkward pause.

DAVID

Well?

(no response)

Has the Lord considered my request?

A pause.

NATHAN

If the earth itself cannot contain the King of Glory, is it not presumptuous to suppose that you may house him in a Temple, however magnificent?

DAVID

When I was in exile, I swore before the Lord that I would not rest until I had built Him a home for the Ark of the Covenant.

A pause.

.....When will you bring me a decision?

NATHAN

(without turning)

When it pleases the Lord God to give it.

NATHAN goes, leaving DAVID alone, frustrated and angry.

238. INT. DAVID'S PALACE. MICHAL'S ROOM. NIGHT.

238.

A darkened room with shuttered windows. The door opens, casting light onto a bed screened by a veil. MICHAL sits up in bed with a slight start.

MICHAL

Who is it?

DAVID stands in the doorway, wearing a scarlet robe and carrying a small oil lamp.

DAVID
Your husband.

MICHAL pauses, lies down again.

MICHAL
(coldly)
My husband is Paltiel Ben-Laish.
Your Majesty knows that well
enough.

DAVID moves towards the bed.

DAVID
You are my wife. My wife and
my Queen.

There is an emptiness in DAVID'S tone: a flat, matter-
of-factness, devoid of emotion.

MICHAL
I am the prisoner of your
pride.

As Saul did once, so DAVID now snatches back the veil to reveal MICHAL. She clutches the sheets around her with one hand, pulls out a knife with the other.....

MICHAL
If you touch me, I shall
kill myself.

DAVID hesitates. Whether he harboured any such thought is unclear.

DAVID
I have no such desire.

MICHAL
Then why are you here?

DAVID pauses.

DAVID
Today all Jerusalem praised
the Lord. All except you. By
your absence you insulted both
your God and your King.

MICHAL

If to insult God is to praise
him silently, in the quiet places
of the mind, then am I justly
rebuked....

(quietly)

How strange that you should have
become so like my father - the
man you hated so long.

DAVID

I never hated him. I loved him.
The Jonathan in him.

MICHAL

Is that what you loved in me?

DAVID

Perhaps. But the resemblance
was only ever skin deep. As
a man may fall in love at a
single glance, so he may fall
out.

MICHAL

Then let me go back to the
husband who loves me. You have
a score of wives and women to
love you, but he has only me.

DAVID stands by the door, on the point of leaving.

DAVID

I loved you once. I wept for
you. Did you show me any pity?

DAVID pauses briefly, then goes, leaving MICHAL alone.

(SCS.238A/B DELETED)

239. EXT. ROOF-GARDEN AND POV OF PALACE. NIGHT.

239.

DAVID'S palace, bathed in moonlight, and viewed from
the roof-top garden of a house nearby. A dim light
is visible in one of the higher rooms of the palace,
glowing through the beaded curtain of a doorway
leading out onto a verandah. The roof-garden is
adorned with ferns, and the spray of a small fountain
shifts through F.G. The sound of crickets pervades
the hot, sultry night air. Presently a shape moves
through F.G., too close to CAMERA to be identifiable.

(SCS. 240-42 DELETED)

243. INT. DAVID'S PALACE. KING'S BEDROOM. NIGHT. 243.
DAVID lies awake, trying to sleep despite the oppressive heat. He throws back the linen cover, lies naked awhile then reacts to the distant, familiar sound of a harp being played from somewhere beyond the verandah.
244. EXT. ROOF-GARDEN AND POV OF PALACE. NIGHT. 244.
SHOOTING UP from the roof-garden towards the palace verandah. The harp music emanates from somewhere close to CAMERA: a haunting, beckoning theme.
245. INT. DAVID'S PALACE. BEDROOM. NIGHT. 245.
DAVID ties a cloth around his waist, walks towards the beaded curtain as if drawn by the music....
246. EXT. PALACE VERANDAH AND POV OF ROOF-GARDEN. NIGHT. 246.
DAVID moves out onto the moonlit verandah, looks down towards the roof-garden of the house below, from where the music of the harp seems to emanate. A small fountain is visible, but most of the garden is obscured by bushes and ferns.
247. EXT. ROOF-GARDEN AND POV OF DAVID'S PALACE. NIGHT. 247.
DAVID'S palace is now viewed from a different position, partially obscured behind the branches of a large fern. The harp music comes from behind the CAMERA, hand-held, shifting its position in order to glimpse DAVID between the F.G. leaves, standing on the verandah. Presently the playing stops.
248. EXT. PALACE VERANDAH AND POV OF ROOF-GARDEN. NIGHT. 248.
DAVID peers down, but can see no-one. Mildly puzzled, he is about to go back inside when he hears the sound of splashing water.

He turns and looks down to see a woman - BATHSHEBA - filling a jug of water from the fountain. Apparently unaware that she is being observed, BATHSHEBA proceeds to divest herself of a thin raiment she is wearing, revealing a body so pale that, in the moonlight, she seems like a spirit of incandescent beauty. DAVID gazes at her in wonder, so perfect is her form, so graceful her movements as she pours the water over her body.

249. EXT. ROOF-GARDEN AND POV OF PALACE. NIGHT. 249.

BATHSHEBA stands in F.G., her ivory-white skin shimmering in the pallid moonlight, her long hair flowing in streams of liquid gold about her shoulders. Her face is in partial shadow, and her expression therefore difficult to gauge, but more than once she seems to dart her eyes towards DAVID, standing on the verandah in L.S., as if aware of his presence.

250. EXT. PALACE VERANDAH AND POV OF ROOF-GARDEN. NIGHT. 250.

DAVID leans forward, as if about to call down to her, but in the next instant she has vanished from his view. He waits long moments for the vision to reappear, but in vain. A bank of cloud moves across the moon, and the garden becomes a darkened void.

251. EXT. ROOF-GARDEN AND POV OF PALACE. NIGHT. 251.

As the shadows drift across the wall of the palace, DAVID turns reluctantly inside. CAMERA holding a beat on the F.G. web of branches, shifting in the sudden breeze. A distant moan of thunder LAPS OVER...

252. EXT. BACK STREET. JERUSALEM. DAY. 252.

Torrential summer rain pours down amid peals of thunder, turning a back street into a river of mud. A party of SOLDIERS on horseback make their way along the street, led by JOAB and DAVID'S elder son AMNON, who wears a hood to protect him from the rain. ABSALOM rides behind them, bareheaded, his raven hair spilling about his face and shoulders like rivulets of black ink. While AMNON'S morose gaze confines itself to the road ahead, ABSALOM absorbs the poverty about him, his deep, penetrating eyes ever probing and curious.

253. EXT. ENTRANCE TO PALACE COURTYARD. JERUSALEM. DAY. 253.

The riding party approach a side entrance to the palace courtyard, where a small CROWD OF PETITIONERS huddle against the rain, each holding a rolled-up scroll. A GUARD at the gate orders the CROWD back to allow the riding party through but, as AMNON and JOAB approach, ONE OF THE PETITIONERS seizes his chance and runs forward.

PETITIONER

Prince Amnon, sire.....!

GUARD

Out of the way!

PETITIONER

(to Amnon)

My Prince.....a petition for
His Majesty.....

The PETITIONER tries to hand up his scroll to AMNON, who looks confused and unable to handle the situation. JOAB intervenes, waving the PETITIONER aside with his whip.....

JOAB

Guard!

The GUARD moves the PETITIONER out of the way, allowing JOAB and AMNON to ride on through into the courtyard. ABSALOM has watched the incident in silence. He hesitates a moment, then rides over to the PETITIONER, holds out his hand...

ABSALOM

Give me the petition. I will
see that His Majesty reads it.

JOAB

(calling, O.C.)

Prince Absalom.....!

ABSALOM looks round to see that JOAB has turned back.

JOAB

(sternly)

Such matters are not your
concern, my prince...

ABSALOM looks at JOAB a beat, then takes the PETITIONER'S scroll.

ABSALOM

I will see that His Majesty
reads it.

ABSALOM smiles benevolently at the PETITIONER, then rides away as others try to rush forward with cries of "Prince Absalom!".

DAVID'S Chief Councillor, AHITOPHEL, stands by one of the windows of a small council room, overlooking the courtyard below. He watches ABSALOM follow JOAB into the courtyard, notes - in his apparently mild, unassuming manner - the CROWD'S cry of "Absalom! Absalom!"

DAVID walks down a staircase towards the Hall of Grievances on the ground floor.

ABSALOM (calling, O.C.)
Father.....!

DAVID
Absalom.....
(lightly)
You have a grievance against
me?

ABSALOM steps forward...

ABSALOM
On behalf of one of your
citizens, father.

While ABSALOM continues, AHITOPHEL joins them and spots a familiar face among the other PETITIONERS...

AHITOPHEL
(with apparent surprise)
Bathsheba.....?

DAVID catches sight of BATHSHEBA coming forward to greet AHITOPHEL. Although now modestly dressed, her beauty is irresistible to DAVID, and his attention is immediately distracted from ABSALOM as AHITOPHEL talks to her in hushed tones.

ABSALOM (O.C.)
He has an excellent case, father.
I have read his petition and feel
that he should be granted a royal
pardon.

AHITOPHEL escorts BATHSHEBA towards DAVID, who now sees that she is holding a scroll.

DAVID
You wish to speak to me?

BATHSHEBA kneels before him.

BATHSHEBA
I come into your presence,
sire, as into that of a god.

AHITOPHEL steps forward to introduce her.

AHITOPHEL
May I present my niece Bathsheba,
Your Majesty. She has a petition
that only you can pass judgement upon.

DAVID takes the scroll from BATHSHEBA, unseals it and glances through the contents.

ABSALOM
Father.....?

ABSALOM holds out his own petition to DAVID, who looks up distractedly.

DAVID
You say he has a good cause?

ABSALOM
An excellent case, father.

DAVID nods without taking the petition from ABSALOM..

DAVID
Very well.
(To Ahitophel)
Ahitophel - see that this man receives a royal pardon.

AHITOPHEL
Indeed, my lord.

DAVID resumes reading BATHSHEBA'S petition. ABSALOM looks at her warily; she returns his cool gaze of unspoken rivalry. A pause, then DAVID looks up at AHITOPHEL.

DAVID
Ahitophel, will you see to the other petitions?

AHITOPHEL
Certainly, my lord.

DAVID ushers BATHSHEBA towards an antechamber. A pause, then AHITOPHEL turns to ABSALOM.

AHITOPHEL
Perhaps you would be good enough to assist me, my prince?

AHITOPHEL'S obsequiousness - executed with understated finesse - mollifies ABSALOM'S ruffled pride.

DAVID stands by the window of a small antechamber, reading through the petition, while BATHSHEBA stands nearby.

DAVID
Your first husband was killed?

BATHSHEBA

During the Edomite campaign,
Your Majesty.

DAVID

And this Captain Uriah was his
brother?

BATHSHEBA

Yes, Your Majesty - which gave him
the right to inherit all my husband's
possessions, providing that he married
me and bore a child in his brother's
name.

DAVID

A Levirate marriage.....

BATHSHEBA

But he has not fulfilled his
Levirate duty, and because I've
remained without child, the people
suppose that I've sinned before
the Lord and have incurred divine
displeasure.

DAVID looks at BATHSHEBA, the word displeasure seeming
somewhat ironic in the context.

DAVID

How long have you been married
to Uriah?

BATHSHEBA

Two years, Your Majesty.....and
for two years he has scorned to
lie with me. He refuses even to
touch me....except with a whip.

DAVID

(disbelieving)

A whip?

BATHSHEBA exposes the top of her shoulder.....

BATHSHEBA

See for yourself, my lord.....

BATHSHEBA draws back her hair to exhibit a bluish streak
across the pale, white skin of her shoulder. DAVID looks
at it with a sense of outrage, tempered by the intoxicating
air of her presence. He lifts her hair a little higher,
ostensibly to examine the wound further, but his eyes
are drawn to the graceful curve of her neck.

DAVID

To defile beauty is to defile
the Lord, the prime Author of
all beauty.

(pause)

He shall be punished.

BATHSHEBA

A woman has no redress against
her husband in law, my lord.
It is the punishment all women
must suffer.

DAVID

Punishment...?

BATHSHEBA turns to DAVID, her voice as seductive as sleep...

BATHSHEBA

'And God said to woman, "I will
increase your groaning and pain,
and in the pain of labour you shall
bear children. You shall be eager
for your husband, and he shall be
your master....all the days of his
life."

(pause)

I can endure the groaning and pain,
but where are my children in return
for my suffering?

DAVID pauses, looking intently at BATHSHEBA.

DAVID

You shall have them.

DAVID closes in, as if about to kiss her, but BATHSHEBA
turns gracefully away.

BATHSHEBA

(ambiguously)

No, my lord.

(looks back at him)

Not while my husband lives.

Whether BATHSHEBA'S negative response refers to DAVID'S
advances or her child-bearing prospects is unclear.
But there is no ambiguity about the look of provocation
in her dark, seductive eyes.

(SC.257 DELETED)

258. INT. TENT OF THE ARK OF THE COVENANT. DAY.

258.

The Ark in C.S., SHOOTING UP towards the winged cherubims. A pause, followed by the familiar sound of the Urim and Thummim being spun, O.C.

NATHAN kneels before the Ark in the darkened tent, watching the Urim and Thummim spinning on the altar stone. It lands with the black jet of the Thummim facing upwards. NATHAN looks up towards CAMERA with the barest trace of satisfaction.

NATHAN

So be it, Lord.

258A. EXT. DAVID'S PALACE. GARDEN. DAY.

258A.

An ornamental garden at the rear of the palace, reminiscent of ACHISH'S garden at Gath.

TAMAR (calling, O.C.)

Absalom.....!

HIGH ANGLE, SHOOTING DOWN through the lower branches of a tree: TAMAR comes running through the garden, calling out for ABSALOM in a bright eager voice.

C.S.: TAMAR glances round the garden.....reacts to a red berry thrown down from the tree. Her face brightens as she runs towards it.....

TAMAR

Absalom.....?

As TAMAR runs under the tree, AMNON drops down from the branches above, landing directly in front of her and giving her an intentional fright....

TAMAR

Amnon!

(glancing round)

Where's Absalom?

AMNON

(tauntingly)

Am I my brother's keeper?

TAMAR

Half brother.

AMNON suddenly grips her by the wrist.

TAMAR

Let go!

AMNON

Why?

TAMAR

You're hurting me!

AMNON

You're hurting me. You've been
hurting me all my life.

TAMAR

(struggling)

Let go of me or I'll.....

AMNON

Go running to Absalom? He doesn't
care for you any more. But I care.
I'd care for you very much.

There is a suggestive menace in AMNON'S tone as he draws
her towards him.....

.....Do you know what the law
permits me to do with my little
half-sister?

AMNON tries to kiss her, but TAMAR lashes out, kneeing
him in the groin. AMNON lets go as he doubles up in
pain. TAMAR looks at him in sudden panic, then turns
and runs away, leaving AMNON moaning on the ground.

259. INT. DAVID'S PALACE. TEMPLE ROOM. DAY.

259.

LOW ANGLE UPSHOT (SFX): The Ark of the Covenant,
exactly as seen in the Tent of the Presence, as if from
NATHAN'S POV in the previous scene.

DAVID (O.C.)

.....the walls will be constructed
of finest cedar from the forests of
Lebanon, overlaid with red gold.
Over the inner shrine I shall place
two cherubims.....

As DAVID continues, CAMERA TILTS UP to include his face
and arms, appearing through the open roof like an apparition
of God Himself.

DAVID

....They will be carved out of
wild olive, and their outstretched
wings will meet to form a great
roof over the Ark of the Covenant.

DAVID steps back to allow NATHAN to see for himself.
The PROPHET peers down into the model of the inner
shrine with a look of condescending hauteur.

In WIDER SHOT we see that the Inner Shrine is part of a vast model of the proposed temple, only partially constructed, but with an eventual layout that will occupy some 2,000 square feet of a spacious gallery. Several CRAFTSMEN are working on the outer temple walls at the far end of the gallery, too far away to hear DAVID, who is standing with ABSALOM, AHITOPHEL and the architect of the work, CALEB.

DAVID

The cherubims must be overlaid with gold, but I have not yet decided whether it should be red gold or white.

(turns to Absalom)

What do you think?

ABSALOM shrugs in the vague, disinterested manner of youth.

ABSALOM

Does it matter?

DAVID

The temple must be perfect in every detail?

AHITOPHEL

I feel it should be red gold, Your Majesty.....to harmonize with the walls.

ABSALOM shakes his head.

ABSALOM

White.

DAVID reacts with enthusiasm to this spark of interest.

DAVID

White gold?

(reflecting)

Yes, I believe you're right.

(to Caleb)

White gold.

ABSALOM

Just plain white wood.

DAVID

Why?

ABSALOM

(a shrug)

Simplicity.

...../.....

DAVID
(musing)
The simplicity of God in His
own divine presence....
(to Caleb)
Absalom's right. White olive
wood.

While DAVID and ABSALOM have been talking, NATHAN has taken a cursory glance over the general layout, and now wanders back to them with a supercilious air. DAVID pauses.

DAVID
Well, Nathan?

NATHAN
(nodding)
Most impressive.

DAVID
Then the temple may proceed?

NATHAN
Once you have gone the way of
all flesh.

DAVID'S initial elation changes to one of incredulity.

DAVID
When I'm.....dead?

NATHAN
These are the words of the
Lord God of Israel: "My servant
David has achieved great things
in my name, and likewise have I
made his name great among the
nations of the earth. But he has
shed much blood in my sight, and
has waged great wars, and for this
he shall not be the one to build
my temple.....

DAVID listens in stunned disbelief as NATHAN continues:

....When his life ends, I will set
up one of his own sons to succeed
him. He shall be a man of peace, and
it is he who shall build a temple in
my name."

A long pause as DAVID gazes at the temple, shaking his
head in bewilderment.

DAVID
(a whisper)
Too much blood.....?
(to Nathan)
I am to be punished for
shedding too much blood?

NATHAN
(calmly)
We all have our duty to perform
in the execution of His grand
design. The Philistines still
occupy coastal lands.....

DAVID
(interrupting)
.....So now you would have me
break my sacred oath as well?

NATHAN
Your oath was with King Achish
- and he is long dead. Fulfil
your task, David. Wage war
against the heathen as Samuel
commanded you, and prepare the
kingdom for a time of peace,
in which your son may build His
temple.

DAVID nods vacantly, dismisses NATHAN with a vague
gesture of the hand. Ever the diplomat, AHITOPHEL
steps forward, indicates to NATHAN that they should leave.

As NATHAN follows AHITOPHEL from the room, CAMERA MOVES
in on DAVID. He leans forward, gazes into the inner
shrine of the Temple.

DAVID
(quietly)
What have I done that you should
deny me my dream? What have I
yet to gain for you? What have I
yet to lose?
(pause)
Has it all been for nothing that
I kept my heart pure, and washed
my hands in innocence?

C.S.: DAVID looks slowly up into CAMERA. HOLD A BEAT.

(SC.260 DELETED)

261. EXT. ISRAELITE CAMP & MOABITE TOWN. NIGHT. 261.
L.S.: A walled Moabite town, beseiged by the ISRAELITE ARMY. Presently a MESSENGER rides into view, galloping across the plain towards the black Israelite tents at the base of the wall.
262. EXT. BATHSHEBA'S HOUSE. NIGHT. 262.
L.S.: DAVID, wearing a cloak, stands outside the door of a house. The door is opened by a SERVANT, and DAVID goes inside, the door closing behind him.
263. EXT. JOAB'S TENT. ISRAELITE CAMP. NIGHT. 263.
The MESSENGER dismounts and enters one of the tents, carrying a scroll.
264. EXT. BATHSHEBA'S ROOF-GARDEN. NIGHT. 264.
A door opens and DAVID emerges onto BATHSHEBA'S roof-garden, the SERVANT shutting the door after him from the inside. He turns to see BATHSHEBA, reclining in the moonlight on a low divan, waiting for him.
265. INT. JOAB'S TENT. NIGHT. 265.
JOAB breaks open the seal on the scroll and begins to read. Several other OFFICERS are in his tent, engaged in their own conversation. JOAB'S expression changes to one of astonishment as he reads the scroll. A pause, then he looks across at the group of OFFICERS.
JOAB'S POV: One of the OFFICERS turns and catches our glance. It is URIAH, an intuitive, resigned look in his eye.
266. EXT. BATHSHEBA'S ROOF-GARDEN. NIGHT. 266.
C.S.: URIAH'S look is returned by BATHSHEBA, her eyes gleaming like the shimmer of dawn as DAVID moves towards her.....
267. EXT. RAMPARTS. MOABITE TOWN. NIGHT. 267.
High on the town ramparts, TWO MOABITE SENTRIES react to the SOUND of the ram's horn and battle-cry, O.C.....
268. EXT. MOABITE TOWN WALL. NIGHT. 268.
TIGHT ON URIAH as he leads an advance charge of SOLDIERS equipped with scaling ladders, hurling themselves towards the base of the town walls....

269. EXT. BATHSHEBA'S ROOF-GARDEN. NIGHT. 269.
TIGHT ON BATHSHEBA as DAVID makes love to her, his initial tenderness surging towards violent passion...
270. EXT. MOABITE TOWN WALL. NIGHT. 270.
URIAH and his MEN launch their ladders against the town wall, then begin to clamber up towards the ramparts...
271. EXT. BATHSHEBA'S ROOF-GARDEN. NIGHT. 271.
BATHSHEBA responds to DAVID'S passion....
272. EXT. RAMPARTS. MOABITE TOWN. NIGHT. 272.
Emaciated MOABITE SOLDIERS attempt to repel the ISRAELITE attack with a barrage of missiles as URIAH and his MEN scale the ladders towards them....
273. EXT. BATHSHEBA'S ROOF-GARDEN. NIGHT. 273.
BATHSHEBA'S eyes suddenly freeze, her lips open wide in a silent cry of ecstasy.....
274. EXT. RAMPARTS. MOABITE TOWN. NIGHT. 274.
TIGHT ON URIAH as he reaches the ramparts....a MOABITE fells him in the neck with an axe...he gives a brief, stifled cry....
275. EXT. BATHSHEBA'S ROOF-GARDEN. NIGHT. 275.
URIAH'S cry becomes BATHSHEBA'S passion: her face contorts, slowly subsiding into a soft glow of contentment. DAVID gazes at her, his own pleasure matching hers....
276. EXT. MOABITE TOWN WALL. NIGHT. 276.
LOW ANGLE: As the main force of ISRAELITE SOLDIERS swarms up the ladders, CAMERA PANS slowly down to the body of URIAH, his wide, bloodshot eyes gazing into ours. HOLD A BEAT.
277. EXT. DAVID'S PALACE. COURTYARD. DAY. 277.
FULL SHOT: ROYAL GUESTS begin to take their places in stands erected in the palace courtyard for the forthcoming wedding ceremony. It is evidently to be a sumptuous affair, reminiscent of DAVID'S marriage to MICHAL at Gibeah.

278. INT. DAVID'S PALACE. BATHSHEBA'S ROOM. DAY.

278.

BATHSHEBA stands before a looking-glass while a team of HANDMAIDENS make adjustments to the folds in her white wedding dress.

The HANDMAIDENS melt away as DAVID appears in the reflection behind her, resplendent in the scarlet attire of kingship. CAMERA TRACKS IN on their TWO-SHOT reflection as he lifts the crown from his own head, places it on BATHSHEBA'S. It is a lighthearted gesture on DAVID'S part, but for BATHSHEBA it signifies the very substance of her own ambition.

279. INT. DAVID'S PALACE. TAMAR'S ROOM. DAY.

279.

TIGHT SHOT: ABSALOM'S face, reflected in a small hand-mirror, gazing down at his own beauty as Narcissus might have done. TAMAR'S reflection appears behind him, smiles at his evident conceit....

TAMAR
(lightly)
Vanity of vanities.....

ABSALOM
(smiling)
There are baser things to
admire in life.....

ABSALOM is seated in a chair while TAMAR trims his flowing locks with a curved razor. Both are dressed for the forthcoming wedding, and both are equally striking: TAMAR in white, wearing a garland of flowers, ABSALOM in scarlet and black.

CAMERA SLOWLY REFOCUSSES onto a chink in the doorway beyond, where AMNON lurks in the shadows; watching TAMAR. Another door opens, O.C.

SERVANT (O.C.)
My Lord Ahitophel awaits you
Prince Absalom.

AMNON closes the chink in the door as ABSALOM gets up, brushing the hair from his shoulders. A SERVANT stands in another doorway, leading to the passage beyond. ABSALOM kisses TAMAR.

ABSALOM
Don't be long.

ABSALOM goes, leaving TAMAR alone. She waits a moment, then takes the mirror and goes to a small dressing table, leaving the razor on the chair.

280. EXT. DAVID'S PALACE. COURTYARD. DAY.

280.

CITIZENS jostle for position as the two gateways, straining for a better view of the proceedings within the courtyard. Most of the GUESTS have taken their places, and a CHOIR OF BOYS and LEVITE PRIESTS are now being assembled either side of an altar, erected in the centre of the courtyard and garlanded with flowers.

281. INT. DAVID'S PALACE. TAMAR'S ROOM. DAY.

281.

TIGHT SHOT: TAMAR'S reflection in the hand-mirror as she arranges a garland of flowers in her hair. Instead of AMNON appearing in the reflection behind her, where our attention no doubt awaits him, his hand enters SHOT from below CAMERA, holding the razor and raising it towards her. TAMAR'S eyes widen in terror as he suddenly gags her mouth with his arm, grasps a handful of her hair by the roots, then scythes through it as if slitting her throat.

282. EXT. DAVID'S PALACE. COURTYARD. DAY.

282.

ABSALOM stands with AHITOPHEL in the Royal Enclosure reserved for MALE GUESTS, who also include JOAB, ELIAB, ABINADAB, and MEPHIBOSHETH, as well as the rotund HIRAM, King of Tyre, and a number of other FOREIGN MONARCHS. The FEMALE GUESTS occupy their own enclosure on the far side of the altar, and include AHINOAM and ABIGAIL, who looks puzzled by the absence of TAMAR.

A loud, triumphant fanfare sounds from the verandah above as AMNON makes his way along the male enclosure and takes his place next to JOAB. ABSALOM looks at him, AMNON catches his gaze, looks away.

283. INT. PALACE. PASSAGE AND TAMAR'S ROOM. DAY.

283.

LOW ANGLE, SHOOTING from the passage outside TAMAR'S room through the half-open doorway. As a slow, ceremonial march follows the fanfare, O.C., so the CAMERA TRACKS slowly through the open doorway at floor level and into the room. The floor is strewn with locks of hair, scattered flowers, and fragments of the shattered mirror. CAMERA passes over them, slowly PANNING ROUND onto TAMAR, huddled into a corner in a catatonic state. Her hair is shorn away, her white dress ripped and splattered with blood. Though she makes no sound, her lips quiver in short, rapid movements, as if uttering a torrent of words, while her eyes dart aimlessly about the room. In her bird-like hands, she fondles a lock of ABSALOM'S hair as if it were a rosary. A tremendous cheer is heard from the crowd O.C., followed by the chorused chanting of "God Save the King!". TAMAR begins to giggle.

(SCS.284/5 DELETED)

286. INT. DAVID'S PALACE. BANQUET HALL. DAY.

286.

ABSALOM enters the Banquet Hall with AHITOPHEL and the other MALE GUESTS, where a sumptuous wedding feast awaits them. The FEMALE GUESTS enter from the other side, to be seated at their own table. AHINOAM is among them, but there is no sign of ABIGAIL or TAMAR. As ABSALOM scans the faces in search of them, he catches sight of AMNON, who gives him a disturbing, faintly ironic look of satisfaction. A PALACE GUARD approaches AHITOPHEL, talks to him in a hushed voice. AHITOPHEL glances at ABSALOM, moves over and whispers something to him.

AMNON watches ABSALOM'S shocked reaction, sees him hurry with AHITOPHEL from the room. A pause, then a fanfare O.C., announces the imminent arrival of the KING and his new QUEEN. All stand as the doors behind the main table swing open and DAVID and BATHSHEBA enter the hall, to be greeted by enthusiastic applause from all but AHINOAM.

287. INT. DAVID'S PALACE. TAMAR'S ROOM. DAY.

287.

ABSALOM arrives breathless to find TAMAR lying on a couch, attended by ABIGAIL and TWO SERVANTS. She is still in a state of catatonia, despite ABIGAIL'S efforts to soothe her.

ABSALOM stands in the doorway a moment, stunned, then walks over to TAMAR and kneels beside her. TAMAR looks at him, giggles vacantly.

TAMAR

He will marry me. He said so.

ABSALOM

Who? Who said so? Who did this thing?

ABIGAIL

Your brother, Amnon.

TAMAR

(sing-song)

Half-brother. Half-brother.
Half-brother may marry half-sister. He will marry me.
He said so.

TAMAR'S giggles suddenly turn to bitter weeping. AHITOPHEL stands beyond her in the doorway, watching the pathetic sight with cool detachment, measuring his next move.

(SC.288 DELETED)

289. INT. PALACE. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE TAMAR'S ROOM. DAY. 289.

AHITOPHEL paces slowly up and down the corridor, his hands behind his back, talking to ABSALOM in a quiet, sympathetic tone.

AHITOPHEL

Provided Prince Amnon agrees to marry her, the maximum punishment prescribed by law is a payment of thirty shekels to her father.

ABSALOM

Marry Tamar? It's unthinkable!

AHITOPHEL

You have my deepest sympathy.

As AHITOPHEL continues, he casually produces the razor and begins to toy with it in his hands...

.....In my view, such a bestial crime should be punished by death. But I doubt that His Majesty will share our view - particularly as Prince Amnon is the heir apparent.

(indicating razor)

Do you suppose he used this as his means of persuasion?

(pause)

No doubt he will deny it and claim that she gave her consent willingly.

Suddenly ABSALOM snatches the razor from his hand and races off down the corridor, leaving AHITOPHEL to contemplate his success.

290. INT. DAVID'S PALACE. BANQUET HALL. DAY. 290.

The banquet is now well under way. DAVID listens intrigued as BATHSHEBA holds a conversation in fluent Lebanese with her neighbour, the portly KING HIRAM of Tyre. She turns to DAVID:

BATHSHEBA

King Hiram wishes to know if you would prefer to trade food instead of gold for his cedar wood.....

DAVID

Tell King Hiram that.....
(glancing O.C. behind)
Why Absalom -

ABSALOM has appeared behind BATHSHEBA and DAVID.

ABSALOM
Forgive me, father.

DAVID
(lightly)
Have I ever not?

DAVID gestures him to join them, but ABSALOM has already started walking towards AMNON, who has spotted his approach and now shifts uneasily, ready to bolt. As he rises, ABSALOM hurls him back down, smashing his face onto the table top. JOAB leaps up but before anyone can prevent him, ABSALOM has drawn the razor across AMNON'S neck and slit his throat from ear to ear.

(SC.291 DELETED)

292. INT. DAVID'S PALACE. COUNCIL ROOM. DAY.

292.

NATHAN reads from the Law of Moses while DAVID listens with veiled anxiety. DAVID'S COUNCILLORS are present, including the ubiquitous AHITOPHEL.

NATHAN
"Wherever hurt is done, you
shall show no mercy: you shall
take eye for eye, tooth for tooth,
hand for hand, foot for foot,
burn for burn, bruise for bruise,
wound for wound....life for life."
(pause)
Prince Absalom must die.

DAVID
The law has long recognised a
brother's right to avenge his
sister's death.

NATHAN
But the Princess is alive,
she.....

DAVID
(flaring up)
She is dead. Mentally dead.
Spiritually dead.

DAVID'S sudden outburst causes a checked silence. He is close to tears, his eyes blazing with the challenge of opposition that none cares to meet. A pause, then he addresses the assembly with cool finality.

DAVID
By the King's sentence, Prince
Absalom shall be banished to
our estates in Hebron, there to
live in permanent exile for the
duration of his life.

(SCS.293/4 DELETED)

295. EXT. GATES OF JERUSALEM AND APPROACH. DAY.

295.

A day of bleak winds and bitter skies. A thin drizzle drifts across the landscape beyond the Jerusalem gate, reducing the view to varying shades of monochrome. DAVID stands with ABSALOM beside a covered wagon, flanked by a small ESCORT OF SOLDIERS.

TIGHT SHOT: DAVID gazes into the cold eyes of ABSALOM, barely able to speak.

DAVID

May the Lord be with you, and
may His light shine within your
heart, even as you shine within
mine.

DAVID embraces ABSALOM, but ABSALOM remains tight-lipped. He turns and mounts the wagon, where ABIGAL waits with TAMAR....a pathetic shadow of her former gaiety, gazing blankly ahead of her, still fondling the lock of ABSALOM'S hair in her hands. ABSALOM takes TAMAR from her, holds her like a child in his arms.

The wagon sets slowly off down the hill, escorted by the SOLDIERS. DAVID remains under the archway of the gate, watching the wagon until it is swallowed from sight in the drizzle and mist.

DISSOLVE TO:

296. EXT. DAVID'S PALACE. POV FROM ROOF-GARDEN. DAY.

296.

L.S.: DAVID stands in one of the doorways of the palace balcony, gazing down at the deserted roof-garden in F.G., now overgrown and strewn with autumn leaves.

297. INT. DAVID'S PALACE. ANTECHAMBER. DAY.

297.

TIGHT SHOT: DAVID remains leaning in the doorway a moment, then turns to NATHAN and AHITOPHEL, who are waiting with him in a small antechamber.

DAVID

(with quiet resolve)
Prince Absalom is my eldest
son, and so long as he lives,
he shall remain my heir.

NATHAN

The Lord has chosen Solomon to
be your successor. Absalom is
a murderer.

DAVID
(with irony)
Like his father?

NATHAN is temporarily checked and AHITOPHEL, ever the diplomat, takes over...

AHITOPHEL
My lord, it would be unwise to leave the matter of succession open to public debate. Perhaps this child will be a girl, in which case Absalom stands as your legal heir. But should it be a boy, then it will.....

Even as AHITOPHEL speaks, we hear the cry of a newborn baby from an adjoining room. DAVID reacts immediately and runs to the door, ignoring NATHAN as he calls after him....

NATHAN
(loudly)
He is a boy.....and the King will acknowledge him as his successor!

298. INT. DAVID'S PALACE. BATHSHEBA'S CHAMBER. DAY.

298.

BATHSHEBA lies on cushions next to a birth-stool, caressing her newborn BABY, while several MIDWIVES attend to her needs. She looks radiantly happy, with the glow of motherhood adding to her own translucent beauty.

DAVID kneels into SHOT beside her. A pause, then she turns to him, presenting him with the child:

BATHSHEBA
Solomon.....your son and heir.

DAVID takes the baby SOLOMON from her without any visible reaction to her words. He looks deep into the BOY'S eyes, smiles at him:

DAVID
Solomon.....The Builder of my Temple....

DAVID rocks the baby in his arms, with only the shadow of a doubt to betray his thoughts.

DAVID sits before NATHAN impatiently waiting for whatever it is the PRIEST has to say:

NATHAN

It concerns a wealthy merchant and one of his servants. The merchant has large flocks and hers, but the servant owned nothing but one small ewe lamb. He had reared it himself, and it grew up in his own home. It ate from his dish, drank from his cup, and slept in his arms. Not long ago, a traveller came to the merchant's house to dine with him. But the merchant was too selfish to take a sheep from his own flock to serve before his guest, so he took his servant's lamb, and killed it, and served that instead.

DAVID responds with predictable anger.

DAVID

As the Lord lives, the man who did this deserves to die!

NATHAN

(mildly)

He has broken no law.

DAVID

It makes no difference. He showed no pity on his servant, and I'll show no pity on him. Who is he?

NATHAN turns slowly to DAVID.

NATHAN

You are the man.

DAVID looks at NATHAN in astonishment.

NATHAN

This is the word of the Lord to His Servant, David: "I have blessed you with glory, and honour. I have given you silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings. Why, then, did you murder my servant Uriah and take his wife, his only wife, to be your own?"

DAVID'S initial reaction of protest has changed to one of stunned silence and guilt. He turns slowly back to the window.

298D. Continued.

298D.

DAVID
(very quietly)
I have sinned.

NATHAN
Because you have shown
contempt for the Lord's
commandment, you shall
never again have rest from
the sword.

NATHAN turns and goes, leaving DAVID stunned. He turns
to the window with a look of dark premonition.

298A. EXT. HEBRON. DAY.

298A.

HEBRON is a small provincial city. In L.S., the
walls and gates can be seen.

298B. EXT. HEBRON. DAY.

298B.

A city rooftop is covered with vines on trellises to
provide shade. A group of MEN are gathered - community
leaders. They are being addressed by ABSALOM. MICHAL,
DAVID'S first wife, is seated behind him, with her
husband, PALTIEL BEN-LAISH.

ABSALOM
....is his administration as
ideal as he claims? Philistine
raiders still attack our caravans,
our taxes have increased, petitions
are ignored. And there is the
influence of a woman who has no
right to the position she holds....

CU. MICHAL - silent, bitter.

301. INT. DAVID'S PALACE. TEMPLE ROOM. DAY.

301.

The model of DAVID'S temple is now almost complete,
and occupies the entire room. DAVID faces JOAB
and AHITOPHEL.

DAVID
Absalom is my son!
(at everyone)
Any man that dares call the
King's son a traitor without
the evidence to support such a
lie will himself meet the fate
of a traitor....by my own hand!

DAVID hurls the slate to the marble floor of the Temple,
smashing it to fragments. A pause.

JOAB

My lord, I am giving you the evidence.....

DAVID

"They say" is not evidence!

DAVID pauses, then turns back to JOAB, moderating his tone.

DAVID

You loved Absalom once. Why have you turned against him?

JOAB

(quietly)

Because I love my king above all others. And it breaks my heart to see yours so lost.

JOAB turns and leaves the room, followed by ELIAB and ABINADAB. A pause, then AHITOPHEL oils forward:

AHITOPHEL

My lord, I, too, have heard rumour of Absalom's activities in Hebron, but my sources have all spoken well of the Prince. They say he is critical about certain aspects of local government, but that his loyalty towards you remains as steadfast as ever.

DAVID looks at AHITOPHEL, startled as much by the bearer of the news as the news itself.

DAVID

Why did you not say this before?

AHITOPHEL

Because it is only rumour, and I have no wish to challenge the word of Commander Joab without evidence to support it.

DAVID hesitates, his eyes glowing with optimism. He slowly nods as the notion takes hold.

DAVID

You must go to Hebron at once. Immediately. Bring me back a full report as fast as you can.

AHITOPHEL

Very good, my lord.

AHITOPHEL turns away, leaving DAVID clutching at this sudden straw of hope.

(SC. 301A DELETED)

(SCS.302/3 DELETED)

303A. INT. ROOM. ABSALOM'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

303A.

TAMAR lies in a darkened room, gazing at her pathetic self in a hand-mirror while humming beneath her breath. ABSALOM sits beside her, stroking her hair in an abstract fashion, his eyes blazing with anger and incomprehension. He looks up at AHITOPHEL, standing in the shadows opposite him.

AHITOPHEL

By the morning of Passover,
Solomon will be the heir
apparent to the throne.....
we must act now.

ABSALOM considers a moment.

ABSALOM

How many men can you muster in
Jerusalem?

AHITOPHEL

More than sufficient to carry
out the task. The city is
virtually undefended, and Captain
Aran has assured me that his guards
will offer no opposition.

ABSALOM hesitates and AHITOPHEL kneels in front of him, grasping his hand.

AHITOPHEL

Strike now, my prince. Strike
now....or regret it for the rest
of your life.

AHITOPHEL delivers his final plea with all the urgency that he can muster. ABSALOM gazes down at TAMAR a moment, strokes her hair, then turns sharply back to AHITOPHEL with a look of hardened resolve.

311A. EXT. HEBRON. GATES. DAWN.

311A.

SHOOTING through the early morning mist towards the distant walls of Hebron. ABSALOM'S voice suddenly pierces the ghostly stillness:

ABSALOM (a cry,O.C.)

Jerusalem!!

The cry of "Jerusalem!" is taken up by the TROOPS, and as the echo dies, ABSALOM rides out through the city gates, leading them into the mists of dawn.

TIGHT SHOT: DAVID holds a white wooden seraphim in each hand, poised over the open roof of the Inner Sanctum, looks up into CAMERA.

DAVID

I cannot believe it.

DAVID'S POV: AHITOPHEL stands before him, flanked by JOAB, ELIAB and ABINADAB. His clothes are torn, his face streaked with dried blood.

JOAB

Absalom is a rebel and a traitor....and if what I say is untrue, may you strike this head from my body!

DAVID

It cannot be true....

AHITOPHEL

I tried to reason with him, my lord....and barely managed to escape with my own life. I was kicked, mauled, and held up to ridicule for being the servant of.....

AHITOPHEL breaks off.

DAVID

Go on.....say it.

AHITOPHEL

"The King who is governed by a prophet and a whore."

JOAB

Don't hesitate, my King. It has taken four hundred years to unite this Kingdom...but one traitor and a single moment of indecision is all it needs to divide it into civil war.

A pause.

DAVID

Go then. Do what you must do. But deal gently with the young man Absalom....for my life is bound up with him.

JOAB

My King, I cannot promise.....

AHITOPHEL interrupts JOAB with diplomatic reassurance.

312. Continued.

312.

AHITOPHEL

Of course, my lord. If it be possible, he shall be brought to you unharmed.

DAVID turns away, dismissing them with a silent gesture of the hand. AHITOPHEL, JOAB and NATHAN hurry from the room, leaving DAVID alone. He suddenly clutches his heart, steadying himself against the temple wall.

DAVID

(with dark foreboding)

Absalom.....

313. EXT. HILLS OF BETHLEHEM. DAY.

313.

ABSALOM rides his chariot at the head of his TROOPS, his black hair streaming in the wind. As they move out of SHOT along the road above Bethlehem, CAMERA HOLDS on a familiar skyline: the single tamarisk tree standing sentinel before a small cave. The SOUND of the wind moving through the harp strings FADES IN, developing into the plaintive THEME. "I Shall Lift Up My Eyes..."

314. EXT. GATES OF JERUSALEM AND APPROACH. DAY.

314.

(HARP THEME OVER) LOW ANGLE: The CAVALRY DIVISION pours out from the city gates under the command of JOAB, who rides in the King's chariot.

315. INT. THRONE ROOM. JERUSALEM. DAY.

315.

DAVID is alone, brooding. FIVE GUARDS enter and DAVID at first takes little notice of them. As they approach where he is seated, he looks up, sensing that something is wrong. With a cry of "For Absalom and Israel!" one of them hurls a javelin at DAVID. He moves swiftly to one side and it embeds itself in the throne. DAVID quickly draws his sword and in a brief, fierce fight, kills all five MEN.

In L.S., he stands exhausted, his sword dangling from his hand. The reality of the rebellion is at last driven home. HARP THEME BEGINS.....

DAVID (V.O.)

I will lift up my eyes unto the hills,
From whence comes my help.
My help comes only from the Lord,
Maker of heaven and earth.....

SOFT CUT TO:

315A. EXT. TERRAIN. TRAVELLING. DAY.

315A.

(HARP THEME OVER) TIGHT C.S.: ABSALOM as he rides, his eyes ablaze, his mane of black hair streaming in the wind.....

DAVID (V.O.)

He will not suffer your foot to
stumble,
For He that loves you will not
sleep....

SOFT CUT TO:

316. EXT. KIDRON VALLEY. DAY.

316.

(HARP THEME OVER) VISTA SHOT: ABSALOM leads his TROOPS along the winding shade of the vast Kidron Valley.

DAVID (V.O.)

He that is the Guardian of Israel
Neither slumbers nor sleeps.....

317. EXT. EPHRAIM WOOD. GLADE. DAY.

317.

(HARP THEME OVER): JOAB and his CAVALRY enter a wide glade, bordered by a wood of oak trees on either side. Here the CAVALRY divide into TWO SECTIONS, taking cover among the trees on both flanks.

318. EXT. KIDRON PLAIN AND EPHRAIM WOODS. DAY.

318.

(HARP THEME OVER): ABSALOM and his TROOPS follow the track up the valley slope, CAMERA PANNING with them as they ride away across the plain towards the distant woods.

DAVID (V.O.)

The Lord Himself is your Keeper,
The Lord is your Shade upon your
right hand.....

319. EXT. EPHRAIM WOOD. GLADE. DAY.

319.

(HARP THEME OVER) SHOOTING along the wide glade from the opposite direction of 317, we see that the glade narrows to a 'V', continuing on among the trees as a woodland track. ABSALOM enters the glade from the track with the rest of his TROOPS following behind.

DAVID (V.O.)

So that the Sun shall not strike
you by day,
Neither the Moon by night.....

ABSALOM reacts to the sight of AHITOPHEL in L.S., riding into the glade from the other end, where the two sides of the wood are widest apart. AHITOPHEL stops, waits for ABSALOM to ride closer to him, thus giving time for the rest of his TROOPS to enter the glade from the woodland track.

DAVID (V.O.)

The Lord shall preserve you from
all evil.
He shall guard your soul....

As ABSALOM reaches him, AHITOPHEL holds up his hand as if in welcome. Seconds later, JOAB'S CAVALRY spring their ambush, taking ABSALOM'S TROOPS completely unawares, and engulfing them on all sides. ABSALOM turns back to see his men being slaughtered.

DAVID (V.O.)

The Lord shall guard your going
out and your coming in,
From this time forth for evermore.

Both words and Theme are drowned beneath the tumult of the slaughter. His work done, AHITOPHEL rides off, but ABSALOM pursues him, felling him with a javelin as he passes. JOAB, riding his own heavier chariot nearby, sees the stricken AHITOPHEL fall from his horse. He charges towards ABSALOM, who makes for the widely spaced oak trees near the head of the glade.

ABSALOM races his chariot through the wood, weaving a perilous course between the low-hanging oaks. JOAB pursues him, gradually narrowing the gap between them. The trees become more dense. ABSALOM glances back at JOAB, only yards behind him, then suddenly leaps across the draft-pole and onto the horse, slashing through the chariot's harness with his sword. The abandoned chariot spins into the path of JOAB, who ploughs into it, snapping the axle of his own chariot and throwing him to the ground.

ABSALOM rides on alone, his hair streaming out like a sheet of black flame. He glances behind to see JOAB stumbling to his feet amid the wreckage of the two chariots, then turns back.....

ABSALOM'S POV: the gnarled, outstretched fingers of a branch sweep towards us, like the Hand of God.....

The branches of a low-hanging bough seize ABSALOM by the hair while the horse bolts free from under him. He lets out a cry of pain.....

JOAB reacts to the cry, sees ABSALOM in L.S., dangling from the oak tree.....

ABSALOM twists in agony, trying to grasp the branch and disentangle himself. He hears the sound of a sword being drawn, turns to see JOAB standing behind him. In a series of FAST CUTS we see ABSALOM'S look of stark terror - the smile in JOAB'S eye - the glint of the sword - the sweep of the blade.....

320. Continued.

320.

LOW ANGLE: ABSALOM'S body drops to the ground in F.G. JOAB sheathes his sword, turns and walks away, CAMERA CRANING slowly up as he goes, bringing the back of ABSALOM'S head int F.G. SHOT, still dangling from the tree. CAMERA HOLDS as it twists round towards us, until his beautiful glazen eyes are looking straight into ours.

321. EXT. JERUSALEM. GATEHOUSE. DAY.

321.

TIGHT C.S.: DAVID looks into CAMERA, reacting sharply to his POV...

322. EXT. DAVID'S POV. JERUSALEM APPROACH. DAY.

322.

DAVID'S POV: A MESSENGER rides up the approach road in L.S., from the valley below.

323. EXT. JERUSALEM. GREAT SQUARE AND GATEWAY. DAY.

323.

A large CROWD has gathered in the Great Square, awaiting news of the rebellion. DAVID appears from the door of the gatehouse, runs through the gateway to meet the MESSENGER as he reins his horse to a halt:

MESSENGER

Greetings, my lord....I bring
good news!

DAVID

(anxiously)

Is the young man Absalom safe?

The MESSENGER looks somewhat puzzled, then proclaims in a loud voice for the benefit of the CITIZENS beyond:

MESSENGER

All praise be to God, for He has
delivered you this day from all
those who rose up against you!

DAVID moves closer, speaks with slow deliberation.

DAVID

Is the young man Absalom safe?

A pause, then the MESSENGER replies in a chilling tone, partly as a warning to the CITIZENS:

MESSENGER

May all the enemies of my lord
the King be as that young man is.

(pause)

All praise be to God!

The CROWD takes up the chant, "All praise be to God!" while the MESSENGER turns his horse and rides off, leaving DAVID alone in the gateway. He stands absolutely still a moment, stunned, insensible to his own pain or the baying crowd.

When at last he speaks, it is in a low moan, an almost inaudible whisper:

DAVID

Oh my son.....Absalom, my son,
my son.....!

DAVID leans against the wall within the archway, slowly crumples in his despair. The CHANTING of the CROWD gradually subsides, the CITIZENS gazing in bewilderment at the KING'S grief.

DAVID

.....Oh my son Absalom....Would
God I had died for you....O
Absalom, my son.....my son.....

Now the pain sweeps through him in a gush of grief as he sobs uncontrollably, burying his face in his hands. The CROWD melts back as the PROPHET NATHAN approaches. He walks over to DAVID, looks down at him with anger and disdain:

NATHAN

Why does the King lie in the
dust like a beggar at his own gate?

DAVID half looks up, ignores him.

.....Why do you weep for your
enemies and scorn those who
serve you? When will you learn
to obey the Lord your God instead
of your own emotions?

A pause.

DAVID

(a whisper)
He has forsaken me.

NATHAN

(quietly)
It is you who have forsaken
Him, David.

(pause)

When Samuel anointed you, he
promised the Lord would never
forsake you, so long as you kept
His laws. But you have continually
questioned them, and have stubbornly

NATHAN (cont'd)
presumed to know His will better
than we, His prophets. Return
now to His ways, obey His commandments,
and He will not forsake you again.

DAVID has slowly responded to NATHAN'S words. He looks
up, nodding his head in dark resignation.

DAVID
I am beyond care. I shall go
to my grave mourning for my son.
I shall go to him, but he will
not come back to me.

He gets to his feet, his grief turning to vengeance.

SHARP CUT TO:

324. INT. DAVID'S PALACE. TEMPLE ROOM. DAY.

FULL SHOT: the outer walls and entrance arch to DAVID'S
gorgeous temple, shimmering and serene, as if bathed in
celestial light.

DAVID
(an echoed scream, O.C.O)
Kill.....!

The very walls seem to quake at the roar of DAVID'S
command. The gilded archway trembles and sways, then
collapses in SLOW MOTION before our eyes. Only now
do we see DAVID beyond it, wielding the sword of
Goliath and bent on destruction. In the stylized SLOW
MOTION sequence that follows, DAVID demolishes all
that he has created: marble walls are devastated,
colonnades collapse, the Inner Sanctum smashed to
pieces. The sound gradually recedes as NATHAN'S voice
intones on V.O. :

NATHAN (V.O.)
And behold, it came to pass that
David sinned no more. And the
Lord smiled upon His servant David,
and strengthened his hand, and gave
him victory wheresoever he went.
And David smote the Philistines, and
conquered them, and drove them into
the sea. And he went forth, and smote
the Moabites, and put them all to the
sword, and he smote the Ammonites, and
put them under harrows of iron.....

As NATHAN continues, DAVID unleashes his wrath on the last
remaining structure: the Inner Sanctum of the temple -
the Holy of Holies, containing the model replica of the
Ark of the Covenant:

NATHAN (V.O.)

And it came to pass that David ruled over Israel for forty years, and was a light unto his people like the light of the sun, and perfect in all his ways before God and man, for the Lord had given unto him a spirit of wisdom and understanding.

The destruction is now complete, the entire temple reduced to dust and rubble. DAVID hangs limp and exhausted, the sweat pouring down his face like blood, gazing at the Armageddon of his dream. In the midst of the debris lies the little model of the Ark, still untouched, the light gleaming on its cherubims of burnished gold. As NATHAN continues, the image begins to slowly DISSOLVE AWAY...

325. INT. DAVID'S PALACE. SMALL CHAMBER. DAY.

325.

The image DISSOLVES into the hazy POV of a small bed-chamber, seen from the LOW ANGLE POV of one lying on a bed of cushions, gazing at the familiar sameness around him. The shuttered windows. The closed door. The blank face of the solitary ATTENDANT. The jug of wine and the bowl of food untouched.

NATHAN (V.O.)

..And when David was old and stricken in years, he caused the Prophet Nathan to anoint Solomon his son King over Israel. And it came to pass that when he grew night unto death, David summoned his son Solomon unto him.....

As NATHAN continues, the door opens and SOLOMON enters, followed by the ageing BATHSHEBA and the white-haired Prophet NATHAN. CAMERA TRACKS away from the POV, PANNING ROUND with SOLOMON as he kneels beside his dying father.

A long pause as DAVID, now white-haired and sleepy with age, looks into the benign blue eyes of his tediously wise and wholesome son:

SOLOMON

Father?.....

DAVID

Yes.

SOLOMON

Why do you wish to see me?

DAVID
Forgotten.

DAVID closes his eyes.

SOLOMON
Is there anything you want?

DAVID
Water.

SOLOMON
(to the attendant)
Bring some water.

DAVID
(murmuring)
From the Well at Bethlehem....

The ATTENDANT brings a cup of water, gives it to
SOLOMON.

CUT TO

DAVID, as a boy, drinking from the Well at Bethlehem.
SHAMMAH calls "David!". DAVID looks up at him (See SC.31).

SOLOMON
Here, father.....fresh water.

DAVID
From Bethlehem?

SOLOMON
Jerusalem.

SOLOMON puts the cup to DAVID'S lips, but he shakes his
head, pushes it away. A pause.

SOLOMON
Is there anything else you
want?

A pause.

DAVID
To see his face again.

SOLOMON
Whose face?

A pause.

DAVID
Forgotten.

SOLOMON puts down the cup of water, leans forward to kiss DAVID'S hand.

DAVID
Saw Him once. Wrestled with
Him.....

SOLOMON
Who, father?

DAVID
.....But at daybreak He was
gone....

DAVID closes his eyes. SOLOMON pauses a moment, kisses his father's hand then leaves the room, followed by NATHAN.

The SOUND of the wind whispering through the harp gradually develops into the familiar THEME of "The Lord Is My Shepherd". CAMERA moves in on DAVID as he opens his eyes, gazing just above ours:

DAVID
(a whispered echo)
How long must You hide Your
face from me?
How long, O Lord.....How long?

DAVID closes his eyes for the last time. CAMERA continues to MOVE IN on him as the HARP THEME builds,

SLOWLY DISSOLVING INTO:

326. EXT. HILLS OF BETHLEHEM. SUNRISE.

326.

As if in answer to his prayer, DAVID is again brought face to face with the lion. He no longer has the wizened face of a dying King but the open countenance of the BOY DAVID, forever searching for a meaning in the deep, unyielding eyes of the beast. As they wrestle on, the image gradually

DISSOLVES AWAY INTO WHITE

T H E E N D