

# Game Design Document: Iron Vines

**Setting:** Ancient Israel (c. 1100 BC – The Period of the Judges to the United Monarchy)

**Platform:** Mobile (Offline/Airplane Mode Optimized) **Genre:** Strategy / Simulation / RPG **Core**

**Mechanic:** The Triple Track System (Elder, Farmer, Commander)

## I. Core Systems

### A. The Heartbeat: The Hebrew Calendar & Water

The game progresses in turns representing **half-months** (24 turns per year). The Calendar dictates the "Luck" modifiers, Water availability, and Seasonal Tasks.

#### The Seasonal Cycle:

1. **Tishrei - Cheshvan (Early Rains):** *Yoreh* rains. Plowing begins. High prayer requirement. Water cisterns begin filling.
2. **Kislev - Tevet (Winter):** Heavy rains (hopefully). Mud prevents military movement. High calorie consumption.
3. **Shevat - Adar (Late Winter):** Almonds bloom. Livestock birthing. *Malkosh* (late rains) determine final yield.
4. **Nisan - Iyar (Spring):** Barley harvest. Passover. Campaign season for armies begins.
5. **Sivan - Tammuz (Dry Season):** Wheat harvest. Water management becomes critical.
6. **Av - Elul (Summer Heat):** Grape/Fig/Olive harvest. No rain. High risk of drought/fire.

#### Water Mechanic:

- **Global Stat:** **Water Reserves.**
- Every action costs Water.
- **Elder:** Must allocate water between People and Agriculture.
- **Farmer:** Must decide when to irrigate vs. pray for rain.

- **Commander:** Troops suffer attrition in the desert; must control springs.

## B. The XP System: "Legacy"

To keep it accessible but deep, XP is called **Legacy**.

- **Thresholds:** Level up every 1,000 Legacy Points (LP).
- **Visual:** A "Menorah" progress bar that fills up.
- **Accumulation:**
  - *Minor Action (Daily task):* +10 LP
  - *Major Success (Good Harvest/Battle Win):* +100 LP
  - *Seasonal Milestone:* +250 LP
  - *Historic Feat:* +500 LP

### Rewards:

- **Level 1-5 (Clan Member):** Unlocks basic tools/units.
- **Level 6-10 (Tribal Leader):** Unlocks Iron technology.
- **Level 11+ (Legend of Israel):** Unlocks "Prophet" advisors.

## II. Historical Progression (The Eras)

The game spans roughly 100 years, divided into three technological/political ages.

### Stage 1: The Age of Judges (Bronze Era)

- **Time:** 1100 BC - 1050 BC.
- **Tech:** Bronze tools (break easily), soft copper weapons.
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- **Threat:** Canaanite raids, Midianites.
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- **Politics:** Building Jerusalem/Central Capital. Taxation introduced.
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### **Apply to All 3 Tracks (8)**

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- 32. **The Prophet Arrives:** Samuel/Elijah figure gives a quest. *Reward: Massive Legacy XP.*
- 33. **Earthquake:** Damages Infrastructure (Elder), Terraces (Farmer), and Forts (Commander).
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## IV. Track Stages & Goals

### 1. The Elder Track

*Focus: Resource Management, Diplomacy, Infrastructure.*

#### Stages & Choices:

- **Stage 1 Choice: The Judge** (Focus on Law/Morale) OR **The Merchant** (Focus on Wealth/Trade).
- **Stage 2 Choice: The Isolationist** (Hilltop defense) OR **The Federationist** (Uniting tribes).

#### Goals:

- *Main:* Build a walled city with a Stone Water Tunnel.

- *Secondary*: Educate 50% of population (Scholar faction).
- *Bonus*: Accumulate 10 Talents of Gold.

#### **Progression Thresholds:**

1. **Tent Encampment**: Manage < 50 people.
2. **Village Elder**: Build a Silo.
3. **City Governor**: Build a Wall and Gate.

## **2. The Farmer Track**

*Focus: Agronomy, Meteorology, Crafting.*

#### **Stages & Choices:**

- **Stage 1 Choice: Dry Farmer** (Grains/Olives - Low risk, low reward) OR **Irrigator** (Vegetables/Dates - High water cost, high reward).
- **Stage 2 Choice: Toolsmith** (Focus on Iron smelting/crafting) OR **Exporter** (Focus on Wine/Oil processing for sale).

#### **Goals:**

- *Main*: Successfully cultivate all "Seven Species" simultaneously in one season.
- *Secondary*: Replace all bronze tools with Iron.
- *Bonus*: Survive a 3-year drought without losing population.

#### **Progression Thresholds:**

1. **Subsistence**: Feed family.
2. **Surplus**: Build Barns/Presses.
3. **Tycoon**: Trade routes to Egypt/Tyre.

## **3. The Commander Track**

*Focus: Tactics, Drilling, Equipment.*

### Stages & Choices:

- **Stage 1 Choice: Guerrilla** (Ambush, Night raids, Slingers) OR **Phalanx** (Shield walls, Spearmen).
- **Stage 2 Choice: Charioteer** (Adopting enemy tech) OR **Siege Master** (Breaching enemy walls).

### Combat System (Risk-style):

- Turn-based on a hex/region map.
- **Terrain Modifiers:** High ground (+20% defense), Wadi (Risk of flood), Forest (Anti-Chariot).
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## V. Endings & Fallbacks

### Endings

The ending is determined by a score calculated from Population Survival + Wealth + Tech Level + Legacy XP.

1. **The Ashes of History (Failure):** The tribe is scattered or enslaved.
2. **The Remnant (Low Success):** You survived, but remain poor and weak.
3. **The Judge (Moderate Success):** You are a regional hero, safe and stable.
4. **The Crown of Iron (High Success/Commander):** You established a military dynasty.
5. **The Land of Milk and Honey (High Success/Farmer):** Unparalleled agricultural wealth.
6. **The Sage of Zion (High Success/Elder):** Cultural and religious victory.

## Fallback Paths (Salvaging Failure)

To prevent rage-quitting after a disaster:

- **The "Remnant" Mechanic:** If your army is wiped out or crops fail 100%, you trigger a "Remnant" event. You retreat to a cave in the desert (Adullam style). Resource costs drop to near zero. You switch to "Guerrilla/Survival" mode to slowly rebuild Legacy until you can retake your village.
- **Foreign Aid:** If bankrupt, you can take a loan from Tyre. Interest is high, but it keeps you alive.

## VI. Unlockables: Sandbox & Creative Modes

### How to Unlock:

1. **Sandbox Mode (The Scribe):** Unlock by completing the game once on *any* track with a "High Success" ending.
  - *Features:* Adjust rain levels, customize starting resources, toggle enemies on/off.
2. **Creative Mode (The Prophet):** Unlock by achieving the "Legendary" Legacy Level (Max XP) on all three tracks.
  - *Features:* Instant building, god-mode terrain manipulation, instant crop growth.
3. **\*\*\*"Very Easy" Mode (The Story**

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## B. The XP System: "Legacy"

To keep it accessible but deep, XP is called **Legacy**. The UI visualizes this as a **Seven-Branched Menorah**. As the player accumulates Legacy Points (LP), the branches light up, signifying progression from a local family head to a national legend.

### The 7 Tiers of Legacy

- **Tier 1: The Clan Member (0 - 500 LP)**
  - *Status*: Struggling to survive.
  - *Unlocks*: Basic actions (Sowing, Drilling, Bartering).
- **Tier 2: The Head of House (500 - 1,500 LP)**
  - *Status*: Managing a single extended family.
  - *Unlocks*: Hired labor, basic bronze tools, local trade.
- **Tier 3: The Village Dignitary (1,500 - 3,500 LP)**
  - *Status*: Influential in the local settlement.
  - *Unlocks*: Stone construction, specialized units (Archers/Vine-dressers), Council decisions.
- **Tier 4: The Regional Leader (3,500 - 7,000 LP)**
  - *Status*: Known by neighboring tribes.
  - *Unlocks*: **Iron Smelting (Key Tech)**, Fortifications, Regional Alliances.
- **Tier 5: The Tribal Chief (7,000 - 12,000 LP)**
  - *Status*: Controls a significant territory.
  - *Unlocks*: Royal Tax negotiation, Professional Army, Great Cisterns.
- **Tier 6: The National Hero (12,000 - 18,000 LP)**
  - *Status*: Famous from Dan to Beersheba.
  - *Unlocks*: Unique "Prophet" Advisors, Wonder construction (Palace/Temple wings).
- **Tier 7: The Legend of Israel (18,000+ LP)**
  - *Status*: Written into history.
  - *Unlocks*: The "Creative Mode" for future playthroughs.

### Track-Specific XP Gains & Unlocks

| Track            | Minor Action (+10-50 LP)                              | Major Success (+200-500 LP)                                  | Unique Unlocks at Tiers 3 & 4                                                                             |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Elder</b>     | Mediating disputes, collecting taxes, trade deals.    | Building a City Wall, Negotiating Peace, Surviving a Plague. | <b>Tier 3:</b> Scribe School (Tech speed up).<br><br><b>Tier 4:</b> Trade Route to Tyre (Passive Income). |
| <b>Farmer</b>    | Pruning vines, repairing terraces, feeding livestock. | Harvesting all 7 Species, Surviving Locusts, Bumper Crop.    | <b>Tier 3:</b> Iron Plowshare (+50% Yield).<br><br><b>Tier 4:</b> Aqueduct Technology (Water transport).  |
| <b>Commander</b> | Drilling troops, scouting, repairing armor.           | Winning a Battle (<10% casualties), Capturing a Chariot.     | <b>Tier 3:</b> Spy Network (See enemy moves).<br><br><b>Tier 4:</b> Iron Weapons (Attack +50%).           |

## II. Historical Progression (The Eras)

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## V. Endings & Fallbacks

The ending is calculated based on: **Final Legacy Tier**, **Primary Track Success**, and **Population Survival**.

#### Elder Track Endings

**1. The Broken Cistern (Failure):**

- *Condition:* Zero Water reserves for 3 consecutive turns, Population < 10%.
- *Outcome:* The tribe disperses into the desert. You are remembered only as a cautionary tale of poor management.

**2. The Quiet Village (Survival / Low Success):**

- *Condition:* Survived to the Monarchy era, but failed to build a Wall or achieve Level 6 Legacy.
- *Outcome:* Your people survive as a small, insignificant hamlet. You pay tribute to others, but you are alive.

**3. The Merchant Prince of Canaan (High Success - Wealth Focus):**

- *Condition:* High Gold reserves, Trade Route to Tyre established, "Merchant" path chosen.
- *Outcome:* Your city becomes a hub of commerce. You are wealthy and comfortable, though the priests grumble about foreign influence.

**4. The Sage of Zion (Max Success - Wisdom Focus):**

- *Condition:* High Scholar population, "Federationist" path, Tier 7 Legacy.
- *Outcome:* You become a key advisor to the King. Your name is written in the chronicles, and your city becomes a center of law and justice.

## **Farmer Track Endings**

**5. The Dust Bowl (Failure):**

- *Condition:* Crop failure for 3 straight years, widespread famine.
- *Outcome:* The land vomits out its inhabitants. You are forced to sell your land and become a hired servant.

**6. The Sharecropper (Survival / Low Success):**

- *Condition:* Survived, but never upgraded to Iron Tools.
- *Outcome:* You feed your family, but the work is backbreaking. You have no surplus to sell and live season to season.

**7. The Iron Plowman (High Success - Tech Focus):**

- *Condition:* Full Iron toolset, "Toolsmith" path, Terraced farming mastered.

- *Outcome:* Your yield is legendary. Other farmers come to learn your techniques. You essentially start an agricultural revolution.

#### 8. **The Land of Milk and Honey (Max Success - Nature Focus):**

- *Condition:* All Seven Species cultivated simultaneously, "Exporter" path, Tier 7 Legacy.
- *Outcome:* A golden age of plenty. Your wine and oil are famous even in Egypt. Your family becomes the wealthiest nobility in the land.

### **Commander Track Endings**

#### 9. **The Captive (Failure):**

- *Condition:* Lose the final critical battle or have 0 troops remaining.
- *Outcome:* The Philistines conquer your village. You end your days grinding grain in a Gaza prison.

#### 10. **The Fox in the Caves (Survival / Low Success):**

- *Condition:* "Guerrilla" path, Main Goal (Expel Philistines) not achieved.
- *Outcome:* You maintain independence in the high hills, raiding for survival, but the valleys belong to the enemy. A life of constant war.

#### 11. **The Sword of the Lord (High Success - Tactics Focus):**

- *Condition:* Won against 3:1 odds, "Phalanx" path, Morale high.
- *Outcome:* You are hailed as a mighty Judge like Gideon. You bring 40 years of peace to the land through sheer military deterrence.

#### 12. **The Crown of Iron (Max Success - Authority Focus):**

- *Condition:* "Charioteer" path, captured enemy Chariots, Tier 7 Legacy.
- *Outcome:* You don't just win; you dominate. The new King appoints you Commander of the Host. You establish a military dynasty that lasts for generations.

### **Fallback Paths (Salvaging Failure)**

To prevent rage-quitting after a disaster:

- **The "Remnant" Mechanic:** If your army is wiped out or crops fail 100%, you trigger a "Remnant" event. You retreat to a cave in the desert (Adullam style). Resource costs drop to near zero. You switch to "Guerrilla/Survival" mode to slowly rebuild Legacy until you can retake your village.
- **Foreign Aid:** If bankrupt, you can take a loan from Tyre. Interest is high, but it keeps you alive.

## VI. Unlockables: Sandbox & Creative Modes

### How to Unlock:

1. **Sandbox Mode (The Scribe):** Unlock by completing the game once on *any* track with a "High Success" ending.
  - *Features:* Adjust rain levels, customize starting resources, toggle enemies on/off.
2. **Creative Mode (The Prophet):** Unlock by achieving the "Legendary" Legacy Level (Max XP) on all three tracks.
  - *Features:* Instant building, god-mode terrain manipulation, instant crop growth.
3. **"Very Easy" Mode (The Storyteller):** Available from the start but disables Achievements/High Scores.
  - *Features:* Water never runs out, crops never blight, enemies deal 50% damage.