

2 Samuel 1

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[0 : 00] Again, that's 2 Samuel chapter 1 on page 240. You may remain seated for the reading of God's word. After the death of Saul, when David had returned from striking down the Amalekites, David remained two days in Ziklag.

And on the third day, behold, a man came from Saul's camp with his clothes torn and dirt on his head. And when he came to David, he fell to the ground and paid homage.

David said to him, Where do you come from? And he said to him, I have escaped from the camp of Israel. And David said to him, How did it go? Tell me. And he answered, The people fled from the battle, and also many of the people have fallen and are dead.

And Saul and his son Jonathan are also dead. Then David said to the young man who told him, How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead? And the young man who told him said, By chance I happen to be on Mount Gilboa.

And there was Saul leaning on his spear. And behold, the chariots and the horsemen were close upon him. And when he looked behind him, he saw me and called to me. And I said, Here I am.

[1 : 12] And he said to me, Who are you? I answered him, I am an Amalekite. And he said to me, Stand beside me and kill me, for anguish has seized me, and yet my life still lingers.

So I stood beside him and killed him, because I was sure that he could not live after he had fallen. And I took the crown that was on his head, and the armlet that was on his arm, and I have brought them here to my Lord.

Then David took hold of his clothes and tore them, and so did all the men who were with him. And they mourned and wept and fasted until evening for Saul and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the Lord and for the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword.

And David said to the young man who told him, Where do you come from? And he answered, I am the son of a sojourner and a Amalekite. David said to him, How is it you were not afraid to put out your hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?

Then David called one of the young men and said, Go, execute him. And he struck him down so that he died. And David said to him, Your blood be on your head, for your own mouth has testified against you, saying, I have killed the Lord's anointed.

[2 : 24] And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and Jonathan his son, and he said it should be taught to the people of Judah. Behold, it is written in the book of Yashar.

He said, Your glory, O Israel, is slain on your high places. How the mighty have fallen. Tell it not in Gath. Publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon. Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice.

Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised exult. You mountains of Gilboa, let there not be dew or rain upon you, nor fields of offerings. For there the shield of the mighty was defiled, the shield of Saul not anointed with oil.

From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and the sword of Saul returned not empty. Saul and Jonathan, beloved and lovely, in life and in death they were not divided.

They were swifter than eagles. They were stronger than lions. You daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you luxuriously in scarlet, who put ornaments of gold on your apparel.

[3 : 32] How the mighty have fallen in the midst of battle. Jonathan lies slain on your high places. I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan. Very pleasant have you been to me.

Your love to me was extraordinary, surpassing the love of women. How the mighty have fallen, and the weapons of war perished. This is the word of the Lord.

Good afternoon. It's good to be with you in God's house with the opportunity to proclaim God's word.

Join me in prayer, please. Heavenly Father, we give thanks to you for your son, our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, our King.

We bless and we honor you, and pray that the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart through your word would be acceptable to you.

[4 : 37] Refreshing, encouraging, and a blessing to your people. It's my prayer in Jesus' name. Amen. Following the King.

For the last ten weeks, we have been tracing, as it were, the footsteps of the Lord's anointed. And we end our summer series today with David and his men mourning.

And the reason that they're mourning, it's because of the death of a king, King Saul. And we end our summer series. On last Sunday in chapter 28, we saw where Saul's death was predicted.

We found that in chapter 28 and verse 19, I believe it is. And this is what it says. Moreover, the Lord will give Israel also with you and to the hand of the Philistines.

And tomorrow, you and your son shall be with me. Samuel's speaking, speaking about with him in death. The Lord will give the army of Israel also and to the hands of the Philistines.

[5 : 56] This is what was predicted. And we see in chapter 1 of 2 Samuel, a mourning in view of that prediction having come to pass.

In addition to Saul's death, which is actually recorded in 1 Samuel 31, several interesting things have happened in the intervening chapters.

That is, between chapter 28 and chapter 31. In chapter 29, David, whom the Lord had chosen to replace King Saul, he was preserved.

Preserved yet again from doing what could have tainted his reputation as Israel's king in the future. In 1 Samuel chapter 29, verse 12, David was not allowed by the Philistine leaders to go into battle against Saul in Israel.

And this is what it says, and I'm trying to catch us up to where we are, and it's necessary just to give a few highlights in order to do that. Chapter 29, verse 4, The commanders of the Philistine said to him, that's one of the other commanders, Achish, Send the man back, that is David, that he may return to the place to which you have assigned him.

[7 : 17] He shall not go down with us to battle, lest in battle he become an adversary to us. For how could this fellow reconcile himself to his Lord?

Would it not be with the heads of the men here? In other words, he would have ingratiated himself to Saul had he turned against the Philistines, even as he would be going out to battle with them.

In chapter 30, David continued to be on the rise in spite of the opposition and the challenge that he was facing.

1 Samuel, chapter 30, verse 6, says that David strengthened himself in the Lord his God. And having done that, David then inspired, inquired of the Lord.

And notice again, and we've seen a lot of contrast in 1 Samuel. The Lord was not answering Saul, chapter 28, but the Lord was answering David, chapter 29, after David had inquired of the Lord.

[8 : 24] The Lord answered him. Look at chapter 30, verses 7 through 9. And David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, bring me the ephod.

So Abiathar brought the ephod to David, and David inquired of the Lord, shall I pursue the band? Shall I overtake them? And he answered him, pursue, for you will surely overtake and shall surely rescue.

This was after the Amalekites had taken the families of David's soldiers from Ziklag. At the same time that David was being victorious over the Amalekites, bringing back all that was taken, we see in chapter 30, Saul was being defeated by the Philistines, just as had been predicted in 1 Samuel, chapter 28, verse 19.

And 1 Samuel, chapter 31, records the battle with the Philistines, where Saul, and this is what he did, in chapter 31, he entered into the battle under the sentence of death.

It had been predicted of him. A tragic, horrible death. It was the death of the king. And according to chapter 31, the battle that day on Mount Gilboa was very, very fierce.

[9 : 52] Three of Saul's sons, including Jonathan, had fallen in battle. And also his armor bearer, he also put himself to death.

That is, he fell on his own sword just as Saul had. Could not bring himself to kill his master, but nonetheless died with him in battle.

A horrible, horrible scene that summarized in chapter 31, verse 6, and this is what it says. Thus Saul died, and his three sons, and his armor bearer, and all his men on the same day together.

Israel's army, in that battle with the Philistines, it was decimated. What a horrible, horrible scene, and a horrible, tragic end to the first king of Israel.

So, what's so interesting about what we see in chapter 31 is that we saw the same thing earlier in 1 Samuel, where a leader in Israel, that is Eli, and his sons, on the same day, they were killed facing God's judgment.

[11 : 13] What we see earlier in the book, chapter 4, we see here at the end of the book in chapter 31. where Saul and his sons have fallen. At the end of the book, Saul had failed to lead Israel in helping them to see that the Lord indeed was king over the nation.

And as the Lord anointed, he was supposed to represent God's interest in the nation. The situation ultimately had not changed.

The Philistines were still ruling. Their dominance had remained. There was a failure of leadership in the kingship of Saul.

Israel and her king needed to understand that God's king was to function as God's servant for God's purposes in God's world.

That was the role of the king in Israel, ruling under God, serving God's purposes in God's world. That's the role of the king then, and even so, with our king, Jesus.

[12 : 27] And so we come to chapter 1 of 2 Samuel. Notice there, the division is relatively clear.

You have a report of the king's death in verses 1 through 10, and then you have the response to the king's death in verses 17 through 27.

The report of the king's death, and then the response to the king's death in the verses that remain. Notice there in chapter 1 that the report came three days after David had returned to Ziklag with his victory over the Amalekites.

The presence of the Amalekites, and we see that here in the closing chapters of 1 Samuel, the presence of the Amalekites here in chapter 30 and in here in chapter 1 of 2 Samuel, they remind us of Saul's failure to execute God's judgment upon them early in his reign.

That's what he was supposed to do, 1 Samuel chapter 15. That did not happen. David, on the other hand, is on the threshold of going into his position as God's anointed, as the king, and he then is an instrument of judgment against the Amalekites.

[13 : 57] He was that in chapter 30. And here we see it. He's an instrument of God's judgment here in 2 Samuel chapter 1 where Saul had failed.

David was succeeding. Here was the report of the Amalekite. And the report that we see in 2 Samuel chapter 1 differs from the report that we see in 1 Samuel chapter 31.

But we see that there is a parallel account also in 2 Chronicles chapter 10 and both record this, that Saul, a wounded Saul, he was wounded by the Philistines, but he died by his own hands by falling on his sword.

But guess what we have here in this chapter? The Amalekite, Amalekite, he cast himself as a hero in the picture in likely hopes of garnering favor or perhaps even receiving a reward from David in the process.

That's what his hopes were. But notice in chapter 1 here in verse 10 what his report was. He's saying something different of what we see in 1 Samuel chapter 31 and 1 Chronicles chapter 10.

[15 : 13] So I stood beside him and killed him. Notice the eyes that prevail. Again, he's giving himself the credit because I was sure that he could not live after he had fallen.

And notice again, I took the crown that was on his head and the armlet that was on his arm and I have brought them here to my Lord. Rather than making himself look good in the eyes of David, he was actually doing just the opposite.

Because he was speaking to this man who in 1 Samuel chapter 24 his heart had struck him just because he has cut off the tip of Saul's robe.

And David's words to his own men in chapter 26 of 1 Samuel was this, don't destroy him, that is Saul, who can put his hand against the Lord's anointed and be guiltless.

So he thought he was doing maybe the king a favor and was going to get rewarded according to that. But not so here. The Amalekite, in essence, with this report, had signed his own death warrant.

[16 : 23] Isn't that the nature, friends, of opportunism? The opportunist is often mindless and thoughtless, sometimes claiming merit and credit in honors and degrees not earned, accomplishments not achieved, papers not written.

And here is a warning to those who would be opportunists and overly ambitious among us. Beware. Sometimes we think that we're doing ourselves a favor and sometimes we're shooting ourselves in the foot or even sometimes in the heart by the very things that we do.

Here was the report, friends, that had come to King David. The king is dead! That is Saul. And I had a hand in it.

That was the report of the Amalekite. While it was likely an empty boast that he was making, isn't there a measure of truth for us as it concerns the death of the Lord Jesus Christ?

You and I were not there on Mount Calvary, but nonetheless we could say that I had a hand in the death of Christ.

[17 : 51] Huh? We weren't there, but the innocent Son of God was crucified for guilty people just like you and me. You and I had a hand in the death of Christ.

Behold, the man upon the cross, my sin upon his shoulders. Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice call out among the scoffers.

It was my sin that left him there until it was accomplished. His dying breath, that is of Christ, has brought me life.

I know that it is finished. Huh? We had a hand in the death of Christ and being right with the God of heaven demands that you and I acknowledge our role in this death, our confession confession, that we are sinners in need of a savior, our acknowledgement that it was my sin, and did you hear what Luke confessed on today?

That without the mercy of God, there is no mercy for us. Huh? We weren't there, but there's a sense in which we had a hand in the death of Christ.

[19 : 13] here's the report that came from the Malachite. King is dead. And I had a hand in it. What about the response?

Look at verses 11 through 27. Tell me this, friends, how would you respond if you heard that the person who had stalked you and had threatened you and sent you threatening emails and text messages and all that, how would you respond?

Until the person who had chased you all over Hyde Park or Chicago and you read that they were dead. Would you have a sigh of relief?

Would you say to yourself, boy, it's finally over? That's not what David did here. Why did David not do that?

Because this tension that he was involved in with Saul, it ultimately was not about David. It was about God's will and God's purposes and yes, about God's anointed.

[20 : 22] And notice what David did in the text here. In verse 11, he took hold of his clothes and tore them and so did all the men who were with him.

David and those who were with him were struck with the combination of both grief and horror at what had happened to Saul and his sons and to the armies of Israel.

And also, friends, recall what had happened when in 1 Samuel chapter 4, when the word had come from the battlefield that Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of Eli, were dead.

And not only that, but the ark of God had been taken and the name for Hophni's son, Ichabod, the glory, has departed. Huh?

No, the same kind of grief that gripped Hophni's wife and then that had gripped Eli to the point that he fell over dead. Here it is. It's gripping Saul and his men.

[21 : 24] And so, slain on Mount Gilboa, were Saul, the king, and his sons, the princes of Israel. And thus, David appropriately led the way in weeping and grieving.

What was the response? There were two responses that we can see. The first is this. There was condemnation and not commendation for what had happened. Oh, the Amalekite messenger thought that he was going to get a pause and perhaps a reward, but that was not the case.

His deeds were not applauded or praised or rewarded. Rather, they were condemned and eventually led to his death. Verse 15, execute him.

Huh? That's what it led to. The report of the Amalekite, the king is dead. And I had a role in it. The response of David, the Lord's anointed is dead and you must pay for it.

Huh? And David's mind, listen to this friends, Saul was not simply an earthly king. He was the Lord's representative who represented the Lord's interest, heaven's interest on earth.

[22 : 39] And because David respected Saul and the office, he grieved over this. And even today, government authorities are God's servants whether they know it or not.

Romans chapter 13, 1 Peter chapter 2. For the punishment of evildoers, for the rewarding of those who do good, let me remind you to keep that in mind as you head to the polls in a few months.

As election day approaches, you and I had the privilege and responsibility, though making some choices as difficult as they may be and might be, they demand our participation, getting as best as we can tell the right people and the right places who can serve the purposes of God, whether they realize it, but not.

So do your homework. Give it your best shot. First response, condemnation, not commendation.

But there's a second response that we see in verses 17 through 27. Lamentation, not jubilation. The second response, the king is dead and mourning is proper because of this tragedy.

[24 : 02] In addition to the execution of the Amalekite reporter who had fabricated this story for personal gain, David then used his gift at verse and song and composed this lamentation.

It was a tribute to Saul and his son Jonathan. This king in waiting, friends, was not an opportunist, looking to seize the day, looking to cash in, looking to rush in, and the author here is very careful to help us to see David's genuine grief over the death of Saul, the one who had given him such a hard time.

And again, what a lesson this is for those who occupy offices in the land and who want to occupy those offices to replace those who are in them. Mudslinging and spear throwing are well underway in our day, in the political arena.

And how unfortunate it is that these kinds of things have become the norm. To paint the opposition with the darkest colors possible. And just think of what David could have written about Saul's ugliness.

Boy, he threw spears at me. He chased me high and low. He could have written all of those things. No, no, no. But David here, friends, and perhaps this is a lesson for you and me, he took the high ground and not only that, he wrote a song.

[25 : 38] In other words, he eulogized both Saul and Jonathan and designated that it could be taught to his tribal family, the tribe of Judah.

And the book of Jashar was likely a poetic collection about Israel's wars where people and events were commemorated and it was to be included in that. Huh? The theme of the lament.

We see that look at chapter 1 and verse 19. How the mighty have fallen. We see that repeated three times.

It's repeated in verse 25 and verse 27. How the mighty have fallen. And this particular song laments the deaths of Saul and Jonathan.

These glorious ones of Israel. You see that in verse 19. Your glory, O Israel, is slain on your high places, on the mountains.

[26 : 36] How the mighty have fallen. Oh, there's noticeable structure to this. The references, you see that reference to the high place in verse 19. But also, see the reference to the high place.

It's an inclusio. It begins with this and it's toward the end. You see it again in verse 25. Jonathan is slain on your high places.

It's a structure here. Notice also at the beginning, the daughters of the Philistines in verse 20. Tell it not in Gath. Publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised exult.

You see the daughters of the Philistines there, but also you see the daughters of Israel in verse 24. Again, it's sort of working to the middle where you have the main thing.

Again, there's a structure to this particular lament. And at the center of the lament in verses 22 and 23, it focuses on the two heroes of Israel, Jonathan and Saul.

[27 : 46] And there, notice how they're referred to. They are referred to as mighty warriors. They are courageous warriors. They are as swift as eagles.

They are as strong as lions. These mighty, this mighty fowl and this mighty animal. These intimidating kind of figures.

Yesterday, we were at Keith's football game and the huskies were playing against the wildcats. Again, these intimidating figures that demonstrate strength and might and power.

Again, that's how Saul and Jonathan were depicted here in this particular section here. He laments them. They're referred to in verse 27 as weapons of war.

Again, he is eulogizing them. Verse 24 brings Saul more specifically into view where he's credited with advancing the standard of living in Israel, at least for some of them.

[28 : 52] Look at verse 24. You daughters of Israel weep over Saul who clothed you luxuriously in scarlet, who put ornaments of gold on your apparel. That's how to raise the standard in the nation there.

And then verse 26 he gives tribute to his friend. His friend Jonathan. And notice there the extraordinary love that was mentioned.

I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan. Very pleasant you have been to me. Your love to me was extraordinary surpassing the love of women.

Huh? What was extraordinary about this love that Jonathan had for his friends? Dave mentioned somewhat in passing a few weeks ago in 1 Samuel chapter 18, those who search for same-sex attraction or same-sex love, they do so in vain.

It's not here. Huh? Matter of fact, it's quite the opposite of what we see here. Here was a brotherly love, strong cohesion that was more strong, that was superior to the sexual attraction, the natural sexual attraction that men and women have to one another.

[30 : 21] This is the kind of love of comrades, the kind of love that takes risk and makes sacrifices.

It's the kind of love that soldiers have on the battlefield, where one soldier at the risk of his life will fall on a grenade in order to save someone else.

Huh? In order to protect others. It's this kind of deep bond that will put a person in harm's way for another. Huh? It's loyal.

It's self-giving and sacrificial. And yes, it surpassed the love of women who may have sung David's phrases with their lips all the same thousand.

His ten thousands. Huh? But here was one love in action akin to what we see in John 15 and 13. Greater love has no one than this that a man lay down his life for his friends.

[31 : 25] Huh? When you lose a companion like that huh? And some of you may have lost a companion like that a friend or perhaps a loved one.

Grief is real. David's loss was twofold. There was a personal loss and there was a national loss. Huh? A loss for him but it was a loss for the nation.

The mighty had fallen and the king-in-waiting was grieved because of these losses. The report said the king is dead.

The response said the death of the king is a cause for mourning. Finally, as we head to the Lord's table on this afternoon, I want you to see in this particular account some remembrances of the death of our king, even the Lord Jesus Christ.

Some by way of contrast, some by way of comparison, but they're here. And as you and I come to the Lord's table that celebrates the death of the one who did not perish on Mount Gilboa, but the one who bore our sins on Mount Calvary, Saul was a rebellious king, and his death on Mount Gilboa was nothing less than tragic.

[33 : 07] His death was because of his own sin and his rebellion. On the other hand, Jesus was a perfect, humble, king.

And the death of Jesus on Calvary, on the one hand, it was likewise tragic, but it was tragic because it was for our sins, your sins and mine, that he died.

I should have been crucified. I should have suffered and died. I should have hung on the cross in disgrace. But Jesus, God's son, took my place.

He was wounded for our transgression. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him. And with his stripes we are healed, Isaiah wrote in 55 and 3.

David responded to the death of the king with eulogy and lamentation. And friends, the hymnody of the church through the centuries includes measures of lament, but we don't stop at lament over what happened on that good Friday.

[34 : 17] They celebrate also the saving power of Christ's death. Our king has been eulogized and memorialized through his work on our behalf and again and again, celebrated again and again.

David lauded the greatness of Saul and Jonathan. we do much more so the greatness of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Oh, the songwriters have done marvelous jobs over the years. The great English songwriter Isaac Watts said it well, alas and did my savior bleed and did my sovereign die?

Would he devote that sacred head in death for such a worm? as I were, was it for crimes that I had done?

He groaned upon the tree, amazing pity, grace unknown, and love beyond degree. There's a measure of lament in that, but also there's a measure of praise in that because of what he has done in his death.

[35 : 32] Oh, well might the sun in darkness hide and shut his glories in. When Christ the mighty maker died for man, the creature sin, huh?

It turns lament on its head even as we recognize the work and the worth of Christ for us, huh? What happened on Mount Calvary was tragic indeed, but the good news is that to the world is that his death means our life for all who embrace him.

And friends, these things for us demand sober reflection and faith-filled response and the Lord's table, friends, is an appropriate place for us to do that.

even as we look at the death of our King, the Lord Jesus Christ. The death of God's King, Jesus, must be respected, received, and soberly reflected upon.

The Lord Jesus must be seen as God's servant for God's purposes in God's world. He came into this world, as John said, he did not come to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.

[37 : 01] God's servant for God's purposes in God's world. And friends, listen, he, the greater son of David, whose footprints we have been following, he is indeed King of all kings, and he is Lord of all lords.

And as we think of that, as we exit this series, as it were, may we exit it, in a sense, in following him in an even greater kind of way, with a more full-blown dedication.

Saul was tragic in his living, and tragic in his death. David, though God's anointed king, and appointed king, was still an imperfect king, but in a sense, he foreshadowed the king that was to come, even Jesus, and may we be careful to follow him in his name.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we give you praise, and we're coming to your table now, Lord Jesus, and I pray that as we do so, we would not easily dismiss the bread that represents your body, and the blood, and the drink that represents your blood shed for us.

May we reflect anew. May we be grateful anew. May we reflect anew, and may we live newly.

[38 : 46] In Christ's name we pray. Amen.