

II Samuel Lesson 01

II Samuel Chapter 1

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Memory verses for this week: *Deu 4:31 (For the LORD thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them..*

Introduction to II Samuel: The book of II Samuel is also known by the Hebrews as the second book of the kings. Though it is traditionally ascribed to Samuel, it is clear that Samuel could not have written the book for he was long dead. It is more likely that Nathan, the prophet, and Gad, the seer, were the writers thereof based upon I Chronicles 29:29. The book covers a period of about thirty-eight years.

Whereas I Samuel provided the background of David and God's providential preparation for him to be king, II Samuel records the history of David as king. During David's reign, Jerusalem became both the religious as well as political center of the nation. The book records such momentous events as the Davidic Covenant, David's great sin, the bitter harvest of David's sin, and the conclusion of his reign.

Overview of II Samuel Chapter 1: The first chapter of II Samuel presents the details of David hearing of Saul's death and his reaction.

I. Death of Saul

2 Sam 1:1 Now it came to pass after the death of Saul, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites, and David had abode two days in Ziklag;

2 Sam 1:2 It came even to pass on the third day, that, behold, a man came out of the camp from Saul with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head: and so it was, when he came to David, that he fell to the earth, and did obeisance.

The chapter begins with David hearing the news of Saul's demise. This was less than three days after David had returned to Ziklag, his home base after defeating the marauding Amalekites. We studied about this in chapter 30 of our earlier study of I Samuel (1 Samuel 30:17). One of the men from Saul's camp arrives and bows down to David and shows respect. The fact his clothes were rent and dirt was upon his head indicated he was in a state of distress.

2 Sam 1:3 And David said unto him, From whence comest thou? And he said unto him, Out of the camp of Israel am I escaped.

2 Sam 1:4 And David said unto him, How went the matter? I pray thee, tell me. And he answered, That the people are fled from the battle, and many of the people also are

fallen and dead; and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also.

2 Sam 1:5 And David said unto the young man that told him, How knowest thou that Saul and Jonathan his son be dead?

The messenger informs David of the defeat of Israel at the hand of the Philistines and of seemingly more importance, that Saul and Jonathan were dead. David presses this man to find out how he knew that Saul and Jonathan were dead.

2 Sam 1:6 And the young man that told him said, As I happened by chance upon mount Gilboa, behold, Saul leaned upon his spear; and, lo, the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him.

2 Sam 1:7 And when he looked behind him, he saw me, and called unto me. And I answered, Here am I.

2 Sam 1:8 And he said unto me, Who art thou? And I answered him, I am an Amalekite.

2 Sam 1:9 He said unto me again, Stand, I pray thee, upon me, and slay me: for anguish is come upon me, because my life is yet whole in me.

2 Sam 1:10 So I stood upon him, and slew him, because I was sure that he could not live after that he was fallen: and I took the crown that was upon his head, and the bracelet that was on his arm, and have brought them hither unto my lord.

The young Amalekite naively informed David of his chance encounter with the dying Saul. He thinks that David would be pleased with the news of Saul's death, so not only does he speak of it, but he has brought Saul's crown and bracelet as proof of his claims.

Some have claimed that there is a discrepancy between the account of Saul's death here and in I Samuel 31. What is recorded here complements and does not contradict the former record.

II. The Amalekite is put to Death.

2 Sam 1:11 Then David took hold on his clothes, and rent them; and likewise all the men that were with him:

2 Sam 1:12 And they mourned, and wept, and fasted until even, for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the LORD, and for the house of Israel; because they were fallen by the sword.

Rather than being delighted to hear of the death of his adversary, David immediately went into mourning. Saul had sought David's life so many times, but I believe all along that David had a love for the man who desired to kill him. Not only was David grieved over the loss of Jonathan, but also for Saul as well. Moreover, he grieved over the death of his own brethren, other Israelites, and the defeat of his homeland in battle. A great

leader is concerned about all of his people, and David was definitely a great leader. Although David not long before had been willing to fight with the Philistines against Saul, the reality of what had happened reminded him of his true loyalties.

This gives us insight into the righteous character of David. As I said earlier, David was a good man the vast majority of the time, and he was said to be a man after God's heart.

1 Sam 13:14 But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee.

Though Saul had been an unjust adversary to David, he remained God's anointed. The sobering reality of what had happened caused David to grieve for him and especially for Jonathan. David and Jonathan were close and dear friends, and had a true love one for the other.

2 Sam 1:13 And David said unto the young man that told him, Whence art thou? And he answered, I am the son of a stranger, an Amalekite.

2 Sam 1:14 And David said unto him, How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand to destroy the LORD'S anointed?

2 Sam 1:15 And David called one of the young men, and said, Go near, and fall upon him. And he smote him that he died.

2 Sam 1:16 And David said unto him, Thy blood be upon thy head; for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the LORD'S anointed.

David now turns his attention to the foolish Amalekite. This young man had not estimated David aright. He presumed that David would be delighted to know he had dispatched his mortal enemy. This man freely confessed that he had killed Saul. That was all that David needed to know. He ordered him executed for touching God's anointed.

David full well understood the significance of harming one whom God had placed into leadership. He would not tolerate one who in such a cavalier fashion had violated that sacred principle.

III. David's Lamentation for Saul and Jonathan.

2 Sam 1:17 And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son:

2 Sam 1:18 (Also he bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow: behold, it is written in the book of Jasher.)

2 Sam 1:19 The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places: how are the mighty fallen!

In this noble poem, David forgets all his injuries and considers only the good and pleasant things. If human love can impute only good to the object of its affections, what will not God's love in Christ impute to believers for whom He gave His precious life! He loved us even when we were dead in trespasses and sins.

David publicly mourned the loss of Saul and Jonathan. We have here presented the heartbreaking eulogy of David. Before recording his moving tribute, the writer makes mention. In verse 18, ***“Also he bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow: behold, it is written in the book of Jasher.”*** The reference evidently is to Saul and how that during his reign as king, he taught his fledgling kingdom the art of war. The implication is that David viewed that favorably.

One of the good things done by Saul was the beginnings of a national system of defense for Israel. David as the later king would fully develop what Saul had begun. The reference to the “book of Jasher” is unclear. The word rendered as **Jasher** (*rvyyashar*) is one of the basic, Old Testament words for righteousness. It simply means ‘upright’ or ‘righteous.’

The book of Jasher therefore may be a reference to chronicles of righteous men. If that be the case, David ascribed Saul as righteous notwithstanding all his faults. Others claim the book of Jasher refers to the book of Genesis or even the greater law of Moses in general. However, there does not seem to be any scriptural support for that.

David's eulogy to Saul and Jonathan is in this next verse.

“The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places: how are the mighty fallen! “

Notice the magnanimity of David in describing Saul (as well as Jonathan) as the “beauty of Israel.” Their death at Mount Gilboa is described as a high place. David therefore movingly notes, “how are the mighty fallen!”

2 Sam 1:20 Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.

2 Sam 1:21 Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain, upon you, nor fields of offerings: for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with oil.

2 Sam 1:22 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.

2 Sam 1:23 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.

2 Sam 1:24 Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with other delights, who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel.

David directed that the dishonorable end of Saul not be publicized in Philistia lest they further rejoice over his decease. He called upon the mountains of Gilboa to allow neither dew nor rain in mourning for their lost king, manifesting his grief. David recounts how that Saul had been carelessly slain as if he were not God's anointed. (1 Samuel 10:1.) He further paid tribute to the courage of Jonathan and the success of Saul.

David paused in the midst of his lofty eulogy to directly honour Saul and Jonathan.

“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.”

Though Saul had been his mortal enemy, David never the less honored him. He had only good to say about his adversary and his dear friend. He ascribed both tender virtues as well as majestic strength to them both.

David therefore directed his own people Israel to mourn for Saul. ***“Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with other delights, who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel”.***

The implication is that Saul brought prosperity to his people. David therefore urged them to pay tribute to their fallen leader.

2 Sam 1:25 How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places.

2 Sam 1:26 I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.

2 Sam 1:27 How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!

David's heartfelt sorrow was finally focused upon his dear friend, Jonathan, and his demise. David thus expresses his pure friendship for his fallen friend. He concludes his great eulogy with a burst of moving heart-rending anguish.

Conclusion: He that is deeply concerned for the honor of God cannot rejoice in the afflictions that come upon his enemies. In the disgrace that comes upon them let us not forget their former successes and real service.

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.