

SECOND SAMUEL
A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 1

- Vv. 1-12 *The Amalekite's account of Saul's death.* David was in Ziklag when he heard of Saul's death. An Amalekite came to him saying that he had fled from the field of battle. He told David that he had seen Saul lying mortally wounded and that Saul had asked him to kill him. The Amalekite said that he had actually slain Saul.
- Vv. 13-16 *David's punishment of the Amalekite.* David was not willing himself to lay a hand on God's anointed. He had no respect for anyone else who would destroy God's chosen servant. He ordered one of his men to fall upon the Amalekite and kill him.
- Vv. 17-27 *The Song of the Bow.* David mourned greatly over the deaths of Saul and Jonathan. He wrote a lamentation that came to be known as the Song of the Bow. He taught it to the people of Israel, and they used this in their lamentation over Saul.

LESSONS FOR LEARNING

1. "*Abstain from all appearance of evil*" (I Thessalonians 5:22). God's men must be honorable. David's hands were entirely clean of the blood of Saul. He had much to gain by taking Saul's life, but on a number of occasions he had refused to lift up his hand against this king. He came to the throne in God's own good providence. It was in God's good time and was accomplished as the will of God had decreed. It is necessary for Christians to live in such a way that they cannot be accused of evil deeds. They must be men and women of good report among all.
2. *There is some good in all men.* Someone has said that there is enough good in the worst of us and enough

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bad in the best of us that none of us can condemn the rest of us. Saul had been a very wicked man, but there were good things about him. These were the things that David praised in his Song of the Bow. We should shun the evil in others, but we should also praise and copy the good we see in them.

I. DAVID MADE KING OF ISRAEL, 1:1—5:25.

1. David Receives News of Saul's Death, 1:1-27.

The Amalekite's account of Saul's Death. 1:1-12

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 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.

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

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.

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

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.

7 And when he looked behind him, he saw me, and called unto me. And I answered, Here *am* I.

8 And he said unto me, Who *art* thou? And I answered him, I *am* an Amalekite.

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.

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.

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

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.

1. How long after the battle before David heard the news? 1:1

David had abode in Ziklag for two days before he heard the news from the battlefield. This gave him time to return from his slaughter of the Amalekites and to establish his residence again in the Philistine city which had been given him by Achish. On the third day a man came from the camp and brought the news to David. It had taken a similar amount of time for David's men to move from Aphek to Ziklag when the Philistine lords insisted that he not go to battle with them.

2. In what condition was the bearer of the news? 1:2

The man had his clothes rent. He had earth upon his head indicating that he had not taken time to clean up after the battle. When he came to David he fell on his face to the ground and did obeisance. When he was asked about his activities he said that he had come out of the camp of Israel. Whether this was a disguise or the actual condition the man found himself in after the battle cannot be determined at this point.

3. Did David believe the man? 1:5

David asked him about the outcome of the battle. The man told him that the people of Israel had fled from the battle. He also announced that many of the people were killed. He especially noticed that Saul and Jonathan were dead. The man does not mention Malchishua or Abinadab. David evidently doubted the veracity of the man's account because he asked him how he knew that Saul and Jonathan were dead.

4. How did an Amalekite get in Saul's army? 1:8

Mercenaries were allowed to join in a campaign, especially if it were an unholy war in which the citizens had no interest. It is rather ironic that the man was a member of the tribe whom Saul was sent to exterminate. It was God's intention that these people be driven out of the land of Canaan, but Saul had failed to do his work thoroughly. His lack of thoroughness had brought about his downfall and rejection. At this point an Amalekite takes credit for having killed Saul.

5. Where did the Amalekite get Saul's crown? 1:10

An Amalekite came out of the midst of the battle and brought David the news. It was a common thing for foreigners to join with the armies of the Israelites. David had been back at Ziklag for two days when he received this word. Nothing is said in the account as to how long after the battle it was when David received the announcement. Very evidently the foreigner did not tell the truth about the death of Saul. More than likely he had obtained the bracelet and the crown by coming upon the body before the Philistines did.

*6. Why did the Amalekite bring the report to David?
1:10*

The Amalekite called David his lord. He took the crown that was on Saul's head and the bracelet that was on his arm and brought them to David. He said that he had killed Saul. He said that anguish had taken hold

on him so he could not live. Evidently the Amalekite thought that David would appreciate his killing Saul. He also must have thought that David was to be the next king. It was for these reasons that he brought the evidence of Saul's death to David and made the report to him.

7. *How did Saul die? 1:10*

David was removed from the field of battle by at least a three-day journey. He had no way of knowing exactly how Saul had died, but he had heard the testimony of the Amalekite who said he had killed Saul. He certainly did not want anyone to say that he had been involved in planning or executing Saul's murder. The Amalekite evidently had not told the truth. The account of Saul's death in I Samuel 31 is an inspired account. The Amalekite's version varies in several significant details leading us to conclude that he did not tell the truth.

8. *What was David's reaction to the news? 1:11, 12*

David took hold on his clothes and rent them. This was the customary Jewish way of expressing deep emotions. David wept and fasted throughout the rest of the day. The men that were with him also mourned and wept and fasted. Their lament was for Saul, the fallen king, and his good son Jonathan. They were also weeping because hard times had befallen the people of Israel. The Philistines had beaten them in battle, and they were in a position similar to that in the days of Eli when the Philistines had captured the Ark.

David's punishment of the Amalekite. 1:13-16

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.

14 And David said unto him, How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?

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

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.

9. *Why did David ask the Amalekite who he was? 1:13*

The man had already told him that he was an Amalekite. He had said that Saul asked him who he was and he had replied that he was an Amalekite. David evidently interrogated the young man thoroughly after he and his men had recovered from their shock and grief. As he made inquiry, he asked the man who he was. The young man told him that he was the son of a stranger. This was another way of his saying that he was not a member of the commonwealth of Israel. He identified himself as an Amalekite.

10. *Why did David slay the bearer of the news? 1:15*

The Amalekite had come to tell the news of the death of Saul with the expectation of a reward from the hand of David. David slew the newsbearer. David felt that if he did not slay the Amalekite that the blood of Saul would be required of his hands. Such an occurrence as this shows that David still had a very, very deep regard for Saul.

The Song of the Bow. 1:17-27

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

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

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

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

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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 25 How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!
O Jonathan, *thou wast* slain in thine high places.
- 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.
- 27 How are the mighty fallen,
and the weapons of war perished!

11. *What was the "Song of the Bow?" 1:18*

The Song of the Bow is the name given to lamentation that David wrote at the time of the death of Saul and Jonathan. Why this title is given to this particular passage is not known. There is a mention of the bow in verse 22. It seems better to regard this verse as a notice of the fact that David commanded that the children of Judah learn this song than that he ordered all of them to have training in the actual use of the bow.

12. *What was the book of Jasher? 1:18b*

The book of Jasher was evidently a non-canonical book kept by the Israelites to record the outstanding exploits

of their national heroes. This book is mentioned also in Joshua 10:13. The word *Jasher* comes from a Hebrew root which signifies "the upright" or "the righteous." This is evidently another way of referring to the Israelites by calling them the righteous or upright people.

13. *In whom was the "beauty of Israel?" 1:19*

Later on in the song David refers to Saul and Jonathan being lovely and pleasant in their lives (verse 23). He may have been referring to the king of Israel who was indeed a handsome man. He stood head and shoulders above all the other Israelites. More than this David was lamenting the fact that the best young men of all Israel had fallen in battle.

14. *Why did he not want it told in Gath? 1:20*

The Philistines had taken Saul's head and sent it around to the various cities of Philistia (31:9). They published it in the house of their idols and among the people. David regretted this and he did not want it told. He was praying that they might not have reason to rejoice in Philistia. He did not want it told in Ashkelon or to see the daughters of Philistines rejoice.

15. *Why did he speak about the mountains of Gilboa? 1:21*

The mountain of Gilboa would stand for defeat to the people of Israel from this day forward. It was the place where their first king had fallen in battle. David prayed that there might not be dew or rain upon the mountains. He prayed that there might not be fields of offerings. Evidently he meant that he hoped that there would not be grain to grow, a portion of which might be used for an offering. This was David's way of saying that the mountain of Gilboa would stand for defeat as Waterloo did for Napoleon.

16. *Did David praise Saul? 1:22*

David did praise Saul. David had always praised Saul. He would not condone Saul's sin; he would praise those things worthwhile in the character of Saul. Saul's charac-

ter, up until the time that he became unmindful of the commandments of God, was worth praising. David said that Saul and Jonathan had been victorious in many battles. They had not come back empty from their campaigns. The bow of Jonathan had turned not back from the blood of the slain or from the fat of the mighty.

17. What benefits had Israel received from Saul? 1:24

David's mentioning of the women being clothed in scarlet and other delights indicates that some prosperity had come to Israel because of Saul's reign. David said that he had put on them ornaments of gold which would point to considerable prosperity. Many of Samuel's predictions of the nature of the kingdom must have come true. Samuel had said that if Israel had a king they would have to pay taxes (I Samuel 8:10-18). Samuel indicated that a king would become so oppressive that they would cry out for relief. This certainly came true in the days of Rehoboam (I Kings 12:1-4) when the people of Israel asked for relief from their taxes. Some indication of their chafing under the yoke of the king is seen from the fact that people who were distressed or in debt came to follow David (I Samuel 22:2). These people had to pay for some of the blessings which they had received, but they should have been thankful for the leadership which Saul gave to them.

18. Why did David speak of Jonathan's love? 1:26

Jonathan's soul was knit to the soul of David from the time of David's introduction to Saul after David had killed Goliath (I Samuel 18:1). At that time we read "Jonathan loved him as his own soul." Jonathan and David entered into a covenant which was renewed on a number of occasions. They pledged themselves to lifelong loyalty to each other and they also promised that they would not do harm to each other's descendants. It was for this reason that David spoke of Jonathan's love.

STUDIES IN SAMUEL
CHAPTER 1 IN REVIEW

1. How long was it after the battle when David heard of Saul's death? _____
2. Where was David when he heard the news? _____
3. Of what nationality was the bearer of the news? _____
4. What possessions of Saul's did the man have? _____
5. How did David punish the bearer of the news? _____
6. What was the name of the song with which David lamented Saul's death? _____
7. In what other book was it recorded? _____
8. What Philistine cities are mentioned in the song? _____
9. What weapons of Saul and Jonathan did David mention? _____
10. What mountain did David curse in the song? _____

A DIGEST OF CHAPTER 2

- Vv. 1-7 *David, king in Hebron.* David inquired of the Lord concerning his every move. He asked him where he should go after Saul had been killed. The Lord told him to go up to Hebron. Hebron was one of the important cities of Judah, David's own tribe. David went up to this important city, and all the men of Judah came there to make him king over them.
- Vv. 8-11 *Saul's son, king in Gilead.* Abner, the son of Ner and captain of Saul's hosts, took Ishbosheth, Saul's son, and made him king in Gilead. Gilead was the land east of the Jordan river. There were thus two rival kings in Israel.
- Vv. 12-16 *The contest at Gibeon.* Abner was the captain of the Ish-bosheth's army, and Joab was the captain of David's army. The two armies met in a battle near Gibeon. A contest was suggested, and twelve men from each side went out