

1 Samuel 30-31

It is so good to be here with you all tonight.

Men I want to remind you to sign up for the Men's Conference, that will be here before you know it.

The Marriage Class will begin this Sunday, please sign up in the back if you are planning on coming, it is a potluck, so please let them know what you are bringing on the signup.

Seasoned Saints, our over 50 group will be canceled this month due to the Men's Conference.

If you are new here tonight, please fill out a visitor card.

Also, if you have any prayer request go ahead and drop those in the Agape Box in the back.

We do not pass an offering on Wednesday night, but if you feel led to give to the work here, you can also drop your offerings in the Agape Box in the back.

This evening we will finish our 14th book of the Bible together.

It is our 9th here in the Old Testament.

As we will be in 1 Samuel 30 and 31.

I remember in the middle of the Book of Genesis it seemed like such a daunting task to make our way through the Old Testament.

But now, it is amazing to see as we keep our hands to the Plow, and plod along, we are getting through God's Word.

What a wonderful goal to get through all of God's Word together.

I just want to remind you all that we have all our teachings on our Website, and you can download our App in the App store on your phone to keep up to date.

Let's pray before we get into the study...

Remember last time we were together in 1 Samuel, we saw both David and Saul at their lowest.

David had fled into the Philistine's territory.

He made a home in the enemy camp using deceit and lying.

This move was something David did without seeking the Lord.

David, with such a great witness of God's protection lost faith, and decided to take matters into his own hands.

Rather than trust God, and believe that God would continue to deliver him, he looked at his circumstances, and let them overshadow who his God was.

God promised that David would sit on the throne, and God's Word would not fail.

But despair overcame him, and he allowed his emotions to lead his decision making.

He won the heart and mind of his enemy, who gave him Ziklag, and city within the territory that the Philistines had control over.

Then the Philistines gathered to make war against Saul, and David's friendship with the enemy put him in a great predicament.

He was summoned to go to war against the very nation he was supposed to rule over.

David's back sliding put him in a terrible place where he was joined with the enemies of God and God's people.

And you cannot get much further than that!

God's sovereignty over the situation became evident, when the lords of the Philistines saw David, and said "No way! This Hebrew and his followers are not riding with us!"

They were worried and rightfully so, that David would turn on them in battle, and try to win Saul's affection one more time.

They reminded the king of the Philistines, Achish, that David was the one the songs were written about, that ten thousands were slain, and surely many of those were Philistines.

The lords won the day, and God spared David from a terrible mistake.

They were sent back to Ziklag, and we can picture them relieved that they were spared from fighting other Jews.

We also saw King Saul last time, and we saw his falling away spiritually led him to a witch in En Dor, and he was there informed by the prophet Samuel that this coming battle would be his last.

Now the writer, the historian recording this account, will keep the readers in suspense about the big battle looming.

Some even have accused the writer of lollygagging, and dragging out this story, because the end of this book, the end of Saul's life is so terribly disappointing he simply just is holding out as long as he can.

So he stays with David in Chapter 30, and he will end with Saul's tragic ending in Chapter 31.

So, let's read the events of David's tale, and then we will get to the big battle in a little bit.

Vs. 1-6

David's Conflict with the Amalekites

30:1 Now it happened, when David and his men came to Ziklag, on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the South and Ziklag, attacked Ziklag and burned it with fire, 2 and had taken captive the women

and those who were there, from small to great; they did not kill anyone, but carried them away and went their way. 3 So David and his men came to the city, and there it was, burned with fire; and their wives, their sons, and their daughters had been taken captive. 4 Then David and the people who were with him lifted up their voices and wept, until they had no more power to weep. 5 And David's two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite, had been taken captive. 6 Now David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and his daughters. But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God.

We see here the lowly David, drifting further and further into despair and uncertainty, must endure through one more blow of suffering.

The Amalekites, the very people King Saul was commanded to wipe out, and he disobeyed the Lord.

We see they invaded the South, Judah, the people of God were now tormented by their king's disobedience.

Remember God's command to Saul **1 Sam 15:2-3**

2 Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he ambushed him on the way when he came up from Egypt. 3 Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman,

infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.'"

These were God's orders, and Saul stopped at the one victory, and kept the king as a trophy, Samuel had to kill the king, but Saul never finished the job given to him.

It was that moment the Lord regretted putting Saul as King.

It was the first of many blunders for Saul.

And now the people are being tormented by the Amalekites.

They invaded the land, and also attacked David's stronghold.

They took advantage of all the warring men of the Philistines and Israel gathering for battle, and took the vulnerable towns.

The Amalekites burned down David's stronghold, and took the undefended citizen's captive, even David's wives and children.

These would be valuable slaves on the market, they would be trophy slaves, from the warriors of David.

And it is by God's Grace the Amalekites took them alive and showed mercy.

When David and his men arrived backed to their torched city, and saw their loved one's missing, the despair was too much.

They wept from the depth of their souls.

They did not see them slain, and in this day, understand being taken captive was in many ways worse than death.

They knew their loved ones would now spend the rest of their lives in isolation, bondage, suffering, and in complete and utter misery.

They would be assaulted against their own will, and treated shamefully and harshly.

David and his men cried and wailed until they had no more power to weep.

The sorrow of knowing that those they loved and lived for were gone into suffering, and never to be seen again.

Now remember David's men were a band of rebels and misfits, and they were unstable and unpredictable, and Greif has a way of bringing about a terrible bitterness toward others.

David was the obvious target, they had followed him, trusted his leadership, and now this.

David, too was greatly distressed, not only did he mourn for his loss, but we see in verse 6 mutiny was being spoken of, a stoning, David must die.

We see the soul of the people were grieved, and they needed an outlet, they needed closure and wrath was the answer to their sorrow.

But, we see in David, we see this is actually the rock bottom for him.

David had been beaten down and cast out, he was chased unfairly, and took an excruciating beating ever since he was anointed by the prophet Samuel.

Wave upon wave crashed against his life.

Just when he could get his head above the water, another wave came crashing against him.

Now, this is a very enlightening picture here for us tonight.

Have you ever thought to yourself, “Can it get any worse?”

“I cannot take another blow!”

And 1 Samuel 30 teaches us, yes it can get worse, and yes you can take another blow.

You may think that your troubles are maxed out and the tribulations are at the last straw.

Then you come stumbling upon your own Ziklag of despair.

But we see it is here, when David’s life was on the chopping block, we see a ray of light at the end of verse 6, and we read, “David strengthened himself in the Lord his God.”

This is the writer of **Ps 30:1**

Weeping may endure for a night,

But joy comes in the morning.

David strengthened himself in the Lord.

What is it that strengthened David?

Where is the believer to go when overwhelmed and troubled with life?

To the promises of God, we hold onto God's Word.

David's strength came from the assurance of God.

When He sent the prophet Samuel to anoint a king to take Saul's place.

1 Sam 16:12-13 So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with bright eyes, and good-looking. And the Lord said, "Arise, anoint him; for this is the one!" 13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward...

God had spoken then, and David would not be stoned to death here, these men needed a leader.

And at rock bottom David sees clearly, when all was stripped away, the True Lens of life showed David the reality of his purpose.

Run to God's Word, read and recite the promises within, when you have nothing but God's Word, you begin to see clearly.

David is strengthened in the Lord, he is the king.

And we see now his forward motion, as he leads these once rebellious men.

7 Then David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, "Please bring the ephod here to me." And Abiathar brought the ephod to David. 8 So David inquired of the Lord, saying, "Shall I pursue this troop? Shall I overtake them?"

And He answered him, "Pursue, for you shall surely overtake them and without fail recover all."

9 So David went, he and the six hundred men who were with him, and came to the Brook Besor, where those stayed who were left behind. 10 But David pursued, he and four hundred men; for two hundred stayed behind, who were so weary that they could not cross the Brook Besor.

So we do not know how many votes were cast to stone David, but he regains strength in the Lord, and goes to Abiathar the priest.

David finds his strength in God's Word.

From the pit, from rock bottom, we see this is the turning point to get out of the pit.

This is what it means to strengthen yourself in the Lord, to Seek Him in His Word, to surround yourself with godly men and women.

To press in.

What is the temptation when the trials of this life come?

Satan wants isolate us, Satan wants to keep you away from here and God's people.

He wants to busy you with the affairs of this world.

He lies, he seeks to divide God's people.

Have you ever noticed when you are low, and perhaps in a time of isolation, Satan makes an enemy out of those who really love you, he puts in your head and mind that they are betraying you.

You began to believe the lie, and deeper into despair you go.

But when you finally come to yourself, when you seek to strengthen yourself in the Lord, and you come back around the people of God, there is nothing but love?

Press in to God, surround yourself with people of God, with those who can speak God's promises into your heart and mind.

When you are low, strengthen yourself in the Lord.

My wife Jessica, came home from women's Bible study so full last night.

She told me that she does not go because she is a pastor's wife, and she thinks she is obligated to be here.

She said she comes to seek wisdom for life, to come under the teaching of God's Word, to be vulnerable with the women here, and allow God to minister to her.

There is value in pressing into God when we are at our lowest.

This is our example here, David at his lowest, seeks God's Word.

And he receives a promise, that not only is victory ahead, but all will be recovered.

What a promise.

Christian don't you understand you have assurances, no matter how dark your life is right now.

Rom 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

You are assured good in the end, that all things work together for good.

Maybe a door has been closed in your face, and you are wondering why, maybe you have lost your job, maybe a failed relationship, heartbreak, maybe loss and tragedy.

God's Word stands true against it all.

**Prov. 3:5-6 Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
And lean not on your own understanding;**

6 In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He shall direct your paths.

Grab ahold of, and believe God's Promises.

David receives a Word, and he is able to now lead his mob of misfits.

Those against stoning the anointed king, won the day, and David not holding anything against the rebels, in a great display of grace gathers his forces who are still overcome with despair.

Some so much, David has to leave them behind, because they were so weary and exhausted.

David will not hold this against them, and he is gracious.

He understands God has assured a victorious mission, and the Word of God will stand true even with a smaller force.

He is not relying on anything now but his God.

And God once again steps in, the Amalekites have fresh slaves, and these men were so vicious toward their slaves, we find they left one discarded and left to die.

But they had no idea, their trash would become someone else's treasure.

11 Then they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David; and they gave him bread and he

ate, and they let him drink water. 12 And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs and two clusters of raisins. So when he had eaten, his strength came back to him; for he had eaten no bread nor drunk water for three days and three nights. 13 Then David said to him, "To whom do you belong, and where are you from?"

And he said, "I am a young man from Egypt, servant of an Amalekite; and my master left me behind, because three days ago I fell sick. 14 We made an invasion of the southern area of the Cherethites, in the territory which belongs to Judah, and of the southern area of Caleb; and we burned Ziklag with fire."

15 And David said to him, "Can you take me down to this troop?"

So he said, "Swear to me by God that you will neither kill me nor deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will take you down to this troop."

I imagine David and his men interrogated everyone they passed between Ziklag and the Brook of Besor.

Now, we have to consider the seemingly helpless situation of David and his men.

It really helps us understand the despair of the 200 men who just could not continue on.

They had no idea what enemy had attacked their families

If there was evidence of Amalekites, that would add to the despair, because they were a nomadic people, and there would be no particular direction to search for them.

They could be anywhere in that unforgiving southern desert.

It would be like guessing what way to swim after being shipwrecked at sea.

But we see Providence once again, a thrown out slave, almost starved to death, dying of thirst, and sick, is the unexpected piece to David's puzzle.

Think of your own life, the answer you may be looking for might be from an unexpected person.

A forgotten application, a past deal, an odd connection.

God works in unexpected ways, that is super clear throughout scripture.

I remember Jess and I when we moved out here from Arizona to serve in youth ministry full time, we did not have much.

And we just could not find anywhere to live.

The housing market crashed in 2008, we arrived here in 2009, and we looked to see if we could buy something.

The banks were skeptical to give anyone a loan at that time.

Yet through persistence we got approved at \$80,000.

Now, understand, so many houses had been abandoned, and copper ripped out of walls, and our price range was right at the bottom of it all, and every house we went into was destroyed, unlivable.

I had construction skills, but we had no money to fix up.

There was one house we went into, a short sale, it had previously been purchased for over 200,000, and was on the market for around our max, and it was a stretch for us to even put an offer.

We put in our offer and it was rejected immediately, it was too low, and we moved on, looking for months, and we were just getting so frustrated, it seemed impossible, every house we were getting out bid by investors and banks, and just as we were about to give up, after months and forgetting about that other place.

Our approval from the bank was about to expire, and we would have had to fight all over again for the bank to loan us money.

And a couple days before that approval expired that short sale came back to the table, and with days left on our loan, we went into escrow.

And after all the negotiating was over we purchased that house for \$75,000.

It was a forgotten deal, an unexpected place, we had thought we would never find a home.

And that little Charlie Brown house, within 3 years had doubled its equity, and we were able to put a pretty good chunk on a bigger home, just in time the kid expansion to take place in our family.

God's Hand was so precisely over it all, that Jess and I could never ever take credit for it.

But God seems to always work through the unexpected, and He does this so man cannot get the glory.

It was not David's superior tracking skills, nor his fast mobility that won the day, but a sickly slave that was found mostly dead.

David nourishes the poor man, and when he is brought too, they find he has the answers they were looking for.

He can lead them to the enemy who stole their lives.

16 And when he had brought him down, there they were, spread out over all the land, eating and drinking and dancing, because of all the great spoil which they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from the land of Judah. 17 Then David attacked them from twilight until the evening of the next day. Not a man of them escaped, except four hundred young men who rode on camels and fled. 18 So David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away, and David rescued

his two wives. 19 And nothing of theirs was lacking, either small or great, sons or daughters, spoil or anything which they had taken from them; David recovered all. 20 Then David took all the flocks and herds they had driven before those other livestock, and said, "This is David's spoil."

We see David's enemies had a false confidence as they celebrated their great victory over Ziklag and other undefended areas.

They were complacent as the great battle loomed in the North between Israel and Philistia, they thought they were safe to party.

They were caught completely by surprise.

We can picture with a great fury David and his men killed the Amalekites with a great slaughter.

For the whole day the battle waged, and all except 400 men who escaped on camels, were killed.

David rescued all the people that were taken, and recovered their belongings.

It was a total and complete victory for David and his men.

We see too, it was a profitable victory, as David now took all the flocks and herds that the Amalekites had amassed in their raids.

Think about this, just when David thought he could handle no more, Ziklag was destroyed, and surely

thoughts of giving up came over him, his men stopped believing in him, and depression overcame him.

But he had no idea that God would take this tragedy, and turn it around for a prosperous blessing.

Again, look at your own life, the trials you are facing even now, trust in, hold onto, believe God's Word, you have no idea what is around the corner.

Your great heartbreak can be the prelude to a great blessing, that most definitely seems to be the believer's plight and school in this life.

Rom 5:3-5 ...we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

David's weeping is turned into rejoicing.

Ps 37:5 Commit your way to the Lord,

Trust also in Him,

And He shall bring it to pass.

Maybe that is a Word for some of you here tonight.

Commit your way to the Lord, Trust in Him, and He will bring it to pass.

So next, we see David's wonderful leadership, God's generosity allows David to be generous.

21 Now David came to the two hundred men who had been so weary that they could not follow David, whom they also had made to stay at the Brook Besor. So they went out to meet David and to meet the people who were with him. And when David came near the people, he greeted them. 22 Then all the wicked and worthless men of those who went with David answered and said, "Because they did not go with us, we will not give them any of the spoil that we have recovered, except for every man's wife and children, that they may lead them away and depart."

23 But David said, "My brethren, you shall not do so with what the Lord has given us, who has preserved us and delivered into our hand the troop that came against us. 24 For who will heed you in this matter? But as his part is who goes down to the battle, so shall his part be who stays by the supplies; they shall share alike." 25 So it was, from that day forward; he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel to this day.

26 Now when David came to Ziklag, he sent some of the spoil to the elders of Judah, to his friends, saying, "Here is a present for you from the spoil of the enemies of the Lord" — 27 to those who were in Bethel, those who were in Ramoth of the South, those who were in Jattir, 28 those who were in Aroer, those who were in Siphmoth, those who were in Eshtemoa, 29 those who were in Rachal, those who were in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, those who were in the

cities of the Kenites, 30 those who were in Hormah, those who were in Chorashan, those who were in Athach, 31 those who were in Hebron, and to all the places where David himself and his men were accustomed to rove.

David did not see this incredible increase in wealth as a way to merit himself as a king.

He did not hoard this wealth to himself as a way to demonstrate his power.

No, even when the wicked and worthless men with him wanted to keep it back for themselves from those who stayed back.

David intervened and established a principle that became a lasting statute in Israel.

Everyone will share in the loot, even those who stay back and guard the supplies.

Those who stay by the stuff are just as necessary as those who go to the front.

It is a principle that carried over into the church actually.

We see it in 1 Corinthians 12 where Paul lays out the reality that the church is made up of many parts of the Body of Christ.

He demonstrates that we are all needed, although there are diverse gifts they all work together for the cause of Christ.

The giver shares in the blessings of the missionary on the front lines, all are part of the same work.

Everyone who participates in God's Work should share in the honor and victory.

God gave David and his men the victory, and David reminds them of this in verse 23, the Lord has given the victory.

Now, we see again, the wealth gained here serves a great purpose for David.

Instead of selfishly hoarding the money, he spreads it as gifts all over the southern part of Judah.

All the people who may have been impacted by the Amalekite raids.

But this would serve a greater purpose and reminder for those in Judah, that David was their king and protector.

God gave David this wealth to serve God's purposes.

It reminds me of Mary and Joseph, the poor carpenter and his wife, who in their poverty were gifted Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh.

The reasonable thing, would to set up a trust fund of some kind, and invest into their future.

But God had other plans, Herod the murderous king of the land would seek to kill their Child, they were instructed to go to Egypt, a costly venture that God just provided for.

When God brings wealth, and huge increases, before you start planning your spending spree, ask God, “Why did you bring this into our lives,” and be open to His reply.

It is all His, David is God’s servant, and he was wise.

David’s gifts would win him friends for a future kingdom, where David would have so much more than Amalekite loot.

He knew he had to invest into heavenly matters, and not selfish matters.

David set up in Ziklag and reached out to the elders of Judah, and unknown to him, the big battle that God spared him from was about to take place.

And in a moment, his miserable tormentor king Saul will be dead.

Everything is about to change once again for Israel, they are about to enter into their most prosperous and victorious time in history, but before that happens, one more dark hour looms for her history.

The historian writing has waited, and almost postponed its telling until he absolutely has too.

He does not write with much detail, and we can almost feel the disappointment in the storyteller’s lack of details.

But nonetheless the bad news must be told, in order for us to get to the rise of God’s king.

The Tragic End of Saul and His Sons (1 Chron. 10)

31:1 Now the Philistines fought against Israel; and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell slain on Mount Gilboa. 2 Then the Philistines followed hard after Saul and his sons. And the Philistines killed Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua, Saul's sons. 3 The battle became fierce against Saul. The archers hit him, and he was severely wounded by the archers.

4 Then Saul said to his armorbearer, "Draw your sword, and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised men come and thrust me through and abuse me."

But his armorbearer would not, for he was greatly afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword and fell on it. 5 And when his armorbearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his sword, and died with him. 6 So Saul, his three sons, his armorbearer, and all his men died together that same day.

7 And when the men of Israel who were on the other side of the valley, and those who were on the other side of the Jordan, saw that the men of Israel had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them.

The writer of these accounts brings us right into the fight.

He is like a Live News reporter telling of the accounts as he sees them.

First we see Israel's forces were no match for their foes.

The Philistines were skilled warriors with chariots and battle formations that were far superior to the weaker Israelites.

Now, none of that mattered when God was fighting for them, out-numbered, impossible odds, and overwhelming enemy forces, puuush, that is nothing for Yahweh, He has a history of destroying armies and reducing chariots to junk piles.

But Saul had not heard from the Lord in a long time, a witch at En Dor was his last desperate search for answers.

Saul marches into this battle, knowing he is defeated before he even engaged.

His sons marching faithfully by his side.

Philistines we see in verse 2 followed hard, the demonic spirits leading their armies know Yahweh has left Saul completely vulnerable, this was his end.

And those devils, love to kill, steal, and destroy, they take their unhindered Philistine forces and we see the most tragic of the news here, Jonathan, the faithful friend and son, dies first along with his two brothers.

One brother is missing in this battle, and perhaps Saul, knowing this was his end, left him to rule in his stead, Ishbosheth, we will see him in the 2 Samuel.

But the dynasty is hit hard here, a fatal blow.

Jonathan, who has played such a central role, is almost mentioned in passing by the writer, it is heartbreaking.

Dale Ralph Davis helps the writer here with a better obituary for Jonathan, who I agree, needs a better ending, he says, “Here then is Jonathan’s obituary. He remained a true friend to David and a faithful son to Saul. He surrendered his kingship to David; he sacrificed his life for Saul. In this hopeless fiasco Jonathan was nowhere else but in the place that Yahweh had assigned him – at the side of his father.”

He continues to say... “That is not tragic at all. What is tragic about remaining faithfully in the calling God has assigned us?”

I think we can argue pretty plainly that success in God’s view is faithfulness, not worldly accolades.

Jonathan was a faithful man to all, and especially His God.

If the church is going to have any kind of lasting impact, we need faithful men and women to stay at their post, the post that God has called them too, regardless if they get glory or not.

Faithfulness is the key to successful ministry, stay with your hands to the plow.

Jonathan laid aside his own ambitions, laid aside a kingdom that should have been his, and he now enters a heavenly kingdom that cannot be taken from him.

Verse 3 we see an archer's random arrow was taken into the Hand of Providence, and driven into the unfaithful king's flesh.

Saul knowing it was a fatal shot, looked to his armor bearer, a post once held by David, and he asked him to run him through with his sword.

Saul knew what these Philistines would do to him if he had an ounce of life left, every last breath would be used to feel the worst kind of pain, and they would abuse him and humiliate him, and try to drag it out as long as they could.

They loved to especially make a spectacle of kings and officers.

When the young man failed to do as his king asked, Saul took matters into his own hands, and fell on his own sword, and his armor bearer did the same.

And when the men of Israel who were on the other side of the valley and on the other side of the River Jordan saw that their king was slain, with his sons, they ran for their lives, they forsook their cities, and the Philistines came in and settled them.

Now, this is so hard to read, because after Saul's tremendous beginning as king, taking back lands stolen from God's people, we see now, Israel, was left no different than it was at Saul's beginning here after his death.

The same oppressed lands, were oppressed again.

Saul started out so promising, a valiant warrior, a brave king, and because he could not yield to Israel's God, his whole legacy is erased.

And his sins and rebellion did not only affect him, but his sons.

How many times do we see the sins of a drunken father affecting a whole family, or an unfaithful mother, or reckless child?

Our sins have an impact on others, there is no escaping that reality.

Saul's chapter closes with suicide, and we see next why it was so urgent Saul be dead when the pagan Philistine army found him.

8 So it happened the next day, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. 9 And they cut off his head and stripped off his armor, and sent word throughout the land of the Philistines, to proclaim it in the temple of their idols and among the people. 10 Then they put his armor in the temple of the

Ashtoreths, and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth Shan.

Humiliating the prisoners and the dying and stripping the dead were the chief activities of a victorious army, because the spoils of war were a big part of the soldier's wages for risking their lives. Wiersbe

The Philistines celebrated their great enemy Saul's defeat, they cut off his head, as David did to their own hero Goliath, then they stripped off his armor, and they sent heathen evangelists throughout the land to announce their demonic gods were victorious over Yahweh and His anointed king.

It was a glorious day in the Philistine cities, celebrations were held in their god's temples, they hung Saul's armor in the temple of Ashtoreths, and of course Dagon was honored, and the demons celebrated.

Israel's God is defeated, and they hung Saul and his son's bodies on the hill on top of the fortress city Beth Shan.

Those going to Israel will see this place, it is one of the most incredible fortresses that has stood throughout many centuries and endured through many different empires, and you will be able to see the place Saul was hung as a trophy.

This is a sad end to a man who was just out looking for donkeys one day.

Now while the Philistines were celebrating, there will be some men, who remembered the might of Saul, and were grateful for their own deliverance.

Remember King Saul's first great victory was when he delivered the territory of Jabesh Gilead from the vicious Ammonite leader Nahash, who threaten to take the eye of the vulnerable Israelites.

Saul mustered the army of Israel, and a great victory and deliverance had come.

The citizens remember, and they act.

11 Now when the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, 12 all the valiant men arose and traveled all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth Shan; and they came to Jabesh and burned them there. 13 Then they took their bones and buried them under the tamarisk tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days.

It was sacrilegious and humiliating for a Jew not be properly buried.

They burned Saul's mutilated flesh off, and left the bones for burial.

They did not do a full cremation in Israel, but in times of haste, and in emergencies they would burn the corpses that could not be properly washed, and they would give an honorable burial with the bones.

And the men of Jabesh after burying Saul, fasted in tribute of a courageous leader.

And 1 Samuel ends on a note of tragedy and uncertainty.

It is dark and gloomy for Israel.

The leadership is annihilated, their territory is evacuated, many thousands were slaughtered.

This book is a story of one disappointment after another, that recorded judgement upon ungodly leadership.

We saw rejection of anointed leadership, and persecution of God's man.

Yet God is not done with His man, or His nation.

He chose a shepherd boy to lead, and that boy has finished his schooling just in time.

The sheep are scattered but God's Shepherd is about to gather them together again.

We have seen God has also taken Israel through a school themselves, to ready them for their Shepherd David.

Before the historical record of 1 Samuel, we saw deep divides and tribal factions, and God used this time to bring the tribes together as one kingdom, and now both nation and king are almost ready to come together.

Remember God is the orchestrator of History, the devil is never given a victory without it serving God's purpose.

And the second book of Samuel will bring the story together.

Remember the key thing we learned through this book, is **1 Sam 16:7 "For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."**

Things are not always what they seem, God is always in control, and that is our take away tonight.

No hardship, no trial, no heartache has come to us without first coming through His Hands.

He sees how the story ends, trust Him tonight with your story.

Amen?

Let's pray...