

SECOND SAMUEL

Chapter 1

David Hears of Saul's Death

After the death of Saul, when David had returned from striking down the Amalekites, David remained two days in Ziklag. 2 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. 3 David said to him, "Where do you come from?" And he said to him, "I have escaped from the camp of Israel." 4 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." 5 Then David said to the young man who told him, "How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?" 6 And the young man who told him said, "By chance I happened to be on Mount Gilboa, and there was Saul leaning on his spear, and behold, the chariots and the horsemen were close upon him. 7 And when he looked behind him, he saw me, and called to me. And I answered, 'Here I am.' 8 And he said to me, 'Who are you?' I answered him, 'I am an Amalekite.' 9 And he said to me, 'Stand beside me and kill me, for anguish has seized me, and yet my life still lingers.' 10 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." 11 Then David took hold of his clothes and tore them, and so did all the men who were with him. 12 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. 13 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, an Amalekite." 14 David said to him, "How is it you were not afraid to put out your hand to destroy the LORD's anointed?" 15 Then David called one of the young men and said, "Go, execute him." And he struck him down so that he died. 16 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.'"

1:1 *After the death of.* See Jos 1:1; Jdg 1:1. The narrative thread of 1 Samuel is continued. 1 and 2 Samuel were originally one book. (CSB)

David returned from defeating the Amalekites. See 1Sa 30:26. (CSB)

striking down the Amalekites. Revenge for when they had raided Ziklag and taken David's wives (1Sm 30. (TLSB)

1:2 *his clothes torn ... dust on his head.* See note on 1Sa 4:12; see also Jos 7:6; Ac 14:14. (CSB)

Symbols of mourning. (TLSB)

fell to the ground. Sign of obedient honor. (TLSB)

1:8 *Amalekite.* It is not necessary to conclude from v. 3 that this Amalekite was a member of Saul's army. His statement that he "happened to be on Mount Gilboa" (v. 6) is probably not as innocent as it appears. He may have been there as a scavenger to rob the fallen soldiers of their valuables and weapons. It is ironic that Saul's death is reported by an Amalekite (see 1Sa 15). (CSB)

1:9–10 Cf 1Sm 31:4–5. Saul’s armor may have prevented the sword from penetrating deeply, or perhaps the Amalekite plundered the battle site after Saul’s death. (TLSB)

1:10 *I stood beside him and killed him.* The Amalekite’s story conflicts with 1Sa 31:3–6, where Saul is depicted as taking his own life. It appears that the Amalekite fabricated this version of Saul’s death, expecting David to reward him (see 4:10). His miscalculation of David’s response cost him his life (see v. 15). (CSB)

sure that he could not live. Attempt to justify the assisted suicide. (TLSB)

Kings often went to battle in full royal clothing (cf 1Ki 22:30–32). (TLSB)

I took the crown. Apparently he got to Saul before the Philistines did (see 1Sa 31:8–9). (CSB)

Kings often went to battle in full royal clothing (cf 1Ki 22:30–32). (TLSB)

armlet. Royal bracelet worn on the upper arm. (TLSB)

I have brought. Messenger implies that David is Saul’s rightful successor. He may have hoped for a reward. (TLSB)

1:11 *took hold of his clothes and tore them.* Symbol of David’s grief that his enemy Saul had died. (TLSB)

1:12 *mourned and wept.* David and his men expressed their grief in typical Near Eastern fashion (see Ge 23:2; 1Ki 13:30; Jer 22:18). (CSB)

They not only mourned the death of Saul and Jonathan but also the defeat at Gilboa, which was a national tragedy. (TLSB)

1:13 David confirmed the man’s identity before taking action. (TLSB)

Amalekite. The man was probably unaware of David’s recent hostile encounters with the Amalekites. (CSB)

Resident aliens who owed obedience to King Saul. (TLSB)

1:14 The Amalekite understood nothing of the deep significance that David attached to the sanctity of the royal office in Israel. (CSB)

the LORD’s anointed. Hbr *mashiach*. Used also in OT for the promised Messiah. To destroy the Lord’s anointed king was to reject the Lord, who had designated him Israel’s leader. (TLSB)

1:15 *go execute him.* David displays no personal satisfaction over Saul’s death and condemns to death the one he believes to be his murderer (see note on v. 10; see also 4:10). (CSB)

The Amalekite was guilty of murder and deserved to die (v 10). David commissioned a soldier to carry out the execution. (TLSB)

1:16 *Your blood be on your own head.* The Amalekite’s own testimony brought about his execution (see Jos 2:19; 1Ki 2:37). (CSB)

Expression of condemnation. (TLSB)

1:1–16 The Amalekite confesses that he had assisted with Saul’s suicide and now expects a reward. Instead, he receives capital punishment for killing the Lord’s anointed king. God is the author of human life, and He wants innocent human life protected. Yet, He has given the sword to the government for the punishment of evildoers. Most important, God is the author of eternal life in the Messiah, Jesus, our Savior. • Lord, thank You for good government. Increase my respect for Your gift of human life. Amen. (TLSB)

David’s Lament for Saul and Jonathan

17 And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and Jonathan his son, **18** and he said it should be taught to the people of Judah; behold, it is written in the Book of Jashar. He said: **19** “Your glory, O Israel, is slain on your high places! How the mighty have fallen! **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. **21** “You mountains of Gilboa, let there be no 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. **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, beloved and lovely! In life and in death they were not divided; they were swifter than eagles; they were stronger than lions. **24** “You daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you luxuriously in scarlet, who put ornaments of gold on your apparel. **25** “How the mighty have fallen in the midst of the battle! “Jonathan lies slain on your high places. **26** 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. **27** “How the mighty have fallen, and the weapons of war perished!”

1:17 *lament.* It was a common practice in the ancient Near East to compose laments for fallen leaders and/or heroes. (CSB)

Lit, “chanted this lament.” (TLSB)

1:18 *lament of the bow.* Perhaps David taught his men to sing this lament while they practiced the bow (Israel’s most common weapon; see, e.g., 22:35) as a motivation to master the weapon thoroughly so they would not experience a similar defeat (see note on Eze 21:9). (CSB)

it should be taught to the people. David wanted his lament to become a national song of mourning to pay tribute to Israel’s first royal family and to remind the people that the Lord would bless them through the office of king. Despite Saul’s weaknesses, the Israelites had firmly united under him against their enemies. (TLSB)

1:19–27 A funeral dirge. (TLSB)

1:19 *Your glory.* A reference to Saul and Jonathan as divinely designated leaders of God's covenant people, who had achieved many significant victories over Israel's enemies. (CSB)

Or, "gazelle." Image of a powerful buck, master of the area it inhabits, lying dead in a place that should have provided protection. (TLSB)

How the mighty have fallen! The theme of David's lament (see v. 27). David's words contain no suggestion of bitterness toward Saul but rather recall the good qualities and accomplishments of Saul and Jonathan. (CSB)

1:20 *Tell it not in Gath ... Ashkelon.* As the major Philistine cities located the closest and farthest from Israel's borders, Gath and Ashkelon represent the entire Philistine nation. David does not want the enemies of God's covenant people to take pleasure in Israel's defeat (as he knew they would; see 1Sa 31:9–10) and thus bring reproach on the name of the Lord (see Ex 32:12; Nu 14:13–19; Dt 9:28; Jos 7:9; Mic 1:10). (CSB)

1:21 *O mountains of Gilboa.* As an expression of profound grief, David rhetorically pronounces a curse on the place where Israel was defeated and Saul and Jonathan were killed (for other such rhetorical curses see Job 3:3–26; Jer 20:14–18). (CSB)

Because Saul's blood had been poured out on them. (TLSB)

defiled. With dirt and blood. (TLSB)

not anointed with oil. Leather shields were rubbed with oil to preserve them. (CSB)

To keep Saul's wicker and leather shield from growing brittle. Supple leather better resisted arrows. (TLSB)

1:22 Saul and Jonathan had many military victories. (TLSB)

1:23 *in death they were not divided.* Even though Jonathan opposed his father's treatment of David, he gave his life beside his father in Israel's defense. (CSB)

Terms of deep affection. Of Saul's sons, David mentions only Jonathan, his trusted confidant and companion. (TLSB)

1:24 *clothed you.* Saul's victories had created a stable society that allowed the Israelites to prosper. (TLSB)

scarlet ... gold. Most expensive wool cloth, with fine embroidery. (TLSB)

1:26 *surpassing the love of women.* David is not suggesting that marital love is inferior to that of friendship, nor do his remarks have any sexual implications. He is simply calling attention to Jonathan's nearly inexplicable self-denying commitment to David, whom he had long recognized as the Lord's choice to succeed his father rather than himself. (CSB)

David loved Jonathan as a brother. (TLSB)

1:27 *weapons of war.* Probably a metaphor for Saul and Jonathan. (CSB)

Mourning the loss of two great warriors. Cf v 22.

1:17–27 David sings not only of his love for his friend Jonathan but also of his respect and admiration for King Saul, a man who had forced him to live as a fugitive for more than 12 years. Like David, we should not delight in our enemies' downfall but commend their families to God in prayer. How mercifully God treats us, even though we by nature were His enemies (Rm 5:10). • I praise You, O God, for Your amazing grace to me and all sinners in Christ Jesus. Amen. (TLSB)