

1 Chronicles

Chapter 10

The Death of Saul and His Sons

Now the Philistines fought against Israel, and the men of Israel fled before the Philistines and fell slain on Mount Gilboa. 2 And the Philistines overtook Saul and his sons, and the Philistines struck down Jonathan and Abinadab and Malchi-shua, the sons of Saul. 3 The battle pressed hard against Saul, and the archers found him, and he was wounded by the archers. 4 Then Saul said to his armor-bearer, "Draw your sword and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised come and mistreat me." But his armor-bearer would not, for he feared greatly. Therefore Saul took his own sword and fell upon it. 5 And when his armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell upon his sword and died. 6 Thus Saul died; he and his three sons and all his house died together. 7 And when all the men of Israel who were in the valley saw that the army had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, they abandoned their cities and fled, and the Philistines came and lived in them. 8 The next day, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, they found Saul and his sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. 9 And they stripped him and took his head and his armor, and sent messengers throughout the land of the Philistines to carry the good news to their idols and to the people. 10 And they put his armor in the temple of their gods and fastened his head in the temple of Dagon. 11 But when all Jabesh-gilead heard all that the Philistines had done to Saul, 12 all the valiant men arose and took away the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons, and brought them to Jabesh. And they buried their bones under the oak in Jabesh and fasted seven days. 13 So Saul died for his breach of faith. He broke faith with the LORD in that he did not keep the command of the LORD, and also consulted a medium, seeking guidance. 14 He did not seek guidance from the LORD. Therefore the LORD put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse.

10:1–13 Only incident of Saul's life from 1Sm 8–31 that is recorded here. Chronicles only considers Saul as David's unfaithful predecessor (cf v 14). (TLSB)

10:6 General statement; the Chronicler also notes in the genealogies that the line of Saul's son Jonathan continued (8:34–40; 9:40–44). *house*. Here refers to a political force or dynasty. Expression refers to "all his men" (1Sm 31:6) who constituted Saul's immediate entourage or bodyguard. (TLSB)

10:8–12 The Chronicler omits details such as Saul's decapitation, the name of the goddess Ashtaroth, the fastening of the body to the wall of Beth-shan, the all-night journey of the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead, and the cremation of Saul's body. Included is the account of Saul's head being taken to the temple of Dagon (v 10), a pagan temple in Philistia. When the ark of the covenant was taken there (1Sm 4–7), the idol Dagon's head and arms were broken off. (CSB)

10:8 *strip the slain*. Articles of value, even clothing, were taken as part of a winning soldier's compensation. (CSB)

10:9 *good news to their idols*. Gods were not regarded as all-knowing, as Scripture describes the Lord. (CSB)

10:10 *fastened his head*. Picture of the exile yet to come, typified in the head of Saul hung before a pagan god in a foreign land. (TLSB)

10:13–14 These verses are not paralleled in the Samuel account; they were put here by the Chronicler in line with his concern with immediate retribution. Seeking mediums was forbidden (Dt 18:9–14) and

brought death to Saul. The Chronicler is obviously writing to an audience already familiar with Samuel and Kings, and he frequently assumes that knowledge. Here the consultation with the medium at Endor is alluded to (see 1Sa 28), but the Chronicler does not recount the incident. (CSB)

10:13 Theological analysis of Saul's death. Saul died because he was unfaithful and failed to keep God's command that Samuel the prophet had given him (1Sm 13). He refused to exterminate the Amalekites (1Sm 15; 28:18), and he visited a medium in Endor (1Sm 28:8–14). Failure to heed the prophets is given as the ultimate reason for the Babylonian exile (2Ch 36:15–16). (TLSB)

10:14 Saul's demise was according to God's decision, so that He might put David on the throne. This is a type of the exile to come under Babylon. Like Saul, Judah was unfaithful, did not seek the Lord, and rejected His prophets. Therefore, God raised up Babylon to destroy Judah. Yet, just as after Saul's death God gave the throne to the great king David, so He also would restore the exiles. Readers are thus warned about their own faithfulness, their own seeking of the Lord, and their own reception of the prophetic word. Saul took his own life. However, the cause of death is ascribed directly to God, even though it happened through human agents. (TLSB)