

Coming Full Circle

The need for reflection

Thus Saul died... (vs. 6)

Two tamarisk trees (chp. 22:6, chp. 31:13)

Have you ever come full circle, finding yourself needing to reflect on “How did I get here?”

How Did We Get Here?

Bad leadership (vs. 6)

Trusting in a human king (vs. 7)

1 Samuel 8: 19-20 But the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel. And they said, “No! But there shall be a king over us, ²⁰ that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.”

Psalm 20:7-8 “Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God. They collapse and fall, but we rise and stand upright.”

The Philistine “gospel” (vss. 8-10)

The Philistine gospel prevails (temporarily!) when God’s people aren’t faithful

Where’s the Hope?

The significance of an honorable burial (vs. 11-12)

Saul’s good deeds remembered (1 Samuel 11, rescuing Jabesh Gilead)

Hebrews 6:9-11

Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things—things that belong to salvation. ¹⁰For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do. ¹¹And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end.

Forgiveness

Jeremiah 31:34 “...they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

Hebrews 10:17 “I will remember their sins and lawless deeds no more.”

Romans 4:7-8 “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; ⁸blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.”

Tim Keller: ‘You are more wicked than ever dared believe and yet, you are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than you ever dared hope.’

Questions for Study and Reflection

1. Can you think of a time when you needed to reflect deeply on your life and how you got to where you were? Do you need to do that now?
2. What lessons do you find most relevant for yourself from Saul’s life?
3. It seems deeply unfair that Jonathan dies because of his father’s sins. How does this teach us about the brokenness of the world and the consequences of leaders?
4. The men of Jabesh-gilead are the only bright spot in a dark passage. What is the author doing by including them in the story?