

## II Samuel 1 Handout

### Verse 1

This verse tells us where we are. We see that this verse picks up right where the last chapter in I Samuel leaves off. Remember, David and his men were not allowed to go fight with the Philistines and are sent back. When they return to Ziklag, they find their families have been taken captive and the city burned. They go after and slaughter the Amalekites and get everything that was taken back. The battle where Saul and his sons are killed seems to be happening simultaneously.

### Verse 2

After being back at Ziklag for three days, we are told a man comes from Saul's camp?

**How is he described?** \_\_\_\_\_

**How does he react when he comes before David?** \_\_\_\_\_

### Verse 3-4

David asks where he has come from. **What is his response?** \_\_\_\_\_

**What does David ask him?** \_\_\_\_\_

David's question tells us that he is not aware of the outcome of the battle. He doesn't know about the death of Saul and his sons.

### The man tells David three things:

- People have fled the battle
- Many have fallen and are dead
- Saul and Jonathan are dead

### Verse 5-10

**Instead of reacting right away to the news, what does David ask?**

\_\_\_\_\_

He explains how he happened to be at a place in the battle where he could see Saul leaning on his spear. He goes on to say that the chariots and horsemen had overtaken him, and that Saul looked back and saw him and called to him.

**What does he say Saul asks him?** \_\_\_\_\_

**What is the man's response?** \_\_\_\_\_

**What does Saul ask this man to do?** \_\_\_\_\_

So, the man kills Saul. He says because he knew that Saul could not live after he had fallen

**What does the man tell David he did next?** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Let's look back at what I Samuel 31:3-6

This account differs a bit from what the man has told David. There are different thoughts on this, but the most logical is that the author put these stories back to back to show that the Amalekite was lying. The account he gives for the most part agrees with the other, except for verses 7-10 where he enhances his involvement; it would seem to win favor with David. This man, being a resident alien within the borders of Israel and an Amalekite would have automatically raised suspicion among David and his men. Remember, David and his men have just returned from fighting the Amalekites who had taken their wives and families and destroyed their homes.

**How would most people in our world today, and even back then assume David would react to this news?**

**Verses 11-12**

**What is the first thing David does?** \_\_\_\_\_

**We are told they do three other things in verse 12:**

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Who are we told they were mourning for?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Why?** \_\_\_\_\_

After all that Saul had done, David genuinely mourns his death.

**Verse 13-16**

David wants to know where this man is from. The man tells him he is the son of a stranger, an Amalekite

**What does David want to know now?** \_\_\_\_\_

**What does David do to the man?** \_\_\_\_\_

He does this because he had testified by his own mouth that he killed the Lord's anointed.

If you remember back in I Samuel, we saw how seriously David took the fact that Saul had been appointed by God to be king of Israel. He had more than one opportunity to take Saul's life while he was on the run for his life, but he never took it. He knew it wasn't his place to remove Saul from the throne, because God had put him there.

The rest of the chapter (vs.19-27) is David's lament for Saul and Jonathan. The theme of his lament is: "How the mighty have fallen".

### **A. A cultivated grief (vs.17-18)**

#### **Verses 17-18**

**What are we told that David does now?** \_\_\_\_\_

They are told to teach this song to the sons of Judah. It is called the *Song of the Bow* and we are told it is written in the Book of Jashar.

It is thought here that David is telling them to teach the children of Judah how to use the bow to avoid such disaster from striking in the future. We are told in I Samuel 31:3 that Saul was overtaken by the archers. In I Chronicles 12:1-7 we learn that before Saul's defeat, a band of archers belonging to the tribe of Benjamin had joined David in Ziklag and rallied around him. This seems to be telling us that Saul was without archers in the battle.

Throughout Scripture, the bow is a symbol of strength that is used to conquer the enemy. Whereas the sword is used in hand-to-hand combat, the bow is used to attack from a distance fighting off the enemy's approach. The archer sees the enemy approaching in the distance and watches his movements and strategy and then takes him out before he has the opportunity to attack. The bow is a weapon that takes a lot of skill to master.

The book of Jashar is found in the Apocrypha, which is a collection of books written between 200 BC and 400 AD. These are works outside the accepted canon of scripture, but can provide insight into Jewish history and culture. However, they don't hold the authority of scripture.

**Why would it be important for this song of lament to be taught to others as well as be written down for future generations? Why does David want to cultivate grief among the people and those who come after them?**

### **B. A Corporate Grief (vs. 19-25a)**

There is a phrase we see at both the beginning and end of this section.

**What is it?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Why would David not want the Philistines to hear this news?** \_\_\_\_\_

We see that this song of lament isn't for everyone who died during this battle. **Who is it about?** \_\_\_\_\_

One might conclude then, that David wanted this song taught and passed down because he wanted everyone to know how much he respected Saul and Jonathan, and have everyone present and future honor their memories.

We already know about David's heart for God. Look at I Samuel 17:26–

*“Then David said to the men who were standing by him, “What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and rids Israel of the disgrace? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he has dared to defy the armies of the living God?”*

### **I Samuel 17:45-47–**

*“But David said to the Philistine, “You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a saber, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of armies, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. **46** This day the Lord will hand you over to me, and I will strike you and remove your head from you. Then I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild animals of the earth, so that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, **47** and that this entire assembly may know that the Lord does not save by sword or by spear; for the battle is the Lord’s, and He will hand you over to us!”*

In these passages, David stood against Goliath, the Philistine champion in order that shame would not be brought upon God’s people. But now it has. Israel’s glory – her king (Saul) and her prince (Jonathan) have been cut down.

God’s people need to learn to grieve when God’s name is discredited and his leaders brought down by the enemy.

Look at verse 22.

*“From the blood of those slaughtered, from the fat of the mighty,  
The bow of Jonathan did not turn back,  
And the sword of Saul did not return unstained.”*

Remember when the people used to sing, *“Saul killed his thousands, David killed his tens of thousands.”* It’s always the second unit that has the place of prominence. Even though David loved Jonathan and had a deep friendship with him, it was Saul whom he put in a place of prominence when he wrote this lament. He pays homage, love and respect to Saul.

**Do you think David was doing this for political reasons? Or do you think he was genuine in his lament for Saul?**

### **C. Covenant Grief (vs. 25b-27)**

It’s like David adds on something very personal at the end of his lament.

Who does he talk about in these last few verses? Jonathan

Back in I Samuel 18-20, Jonathan made a covenant with David and swore his allegiance to him.

### **I Samuel 20:17–**

*“And Jonathan made David vow again because of his love for him, because he loved him as he loved his own life.”*

As you might imagine, some people read verse 26 and see it as evidence that David and Jonathan had a homosexual relationship. However, the noun for ‘love’ that is used here has

political and diplomatic connotations. Their relationship had been previously marked as a covenant sealed by love. The words in verse 26 are referring to the depth of that love. (Note: the O.T. verb for sexual activity is “know” and it’s never used to describe their relationship.)

David seems to be saying here that his relationship with Jonathan proved to be more meaningful than his relationship with women. The controversy surrounding this verse seems to be more of a reaction of our modern society to justify homosexual activity than an interpretation of this passage.

**How does David conclude his song of mourning in verse 27? \_\_\_\_\_**

**What do you notice about what David does and does not mention about Saul in his poem of lament?**

Even though David doesn’t say it, we know that Saul fell long before he died in battle. He fell when he hardened his heart against God and disobeyed. Saul’s death on Gilboa was a sad conclusion to what had already happened.

**What lessons should we learn about our attitude towards people of authority?**