

## ***“Lessons from the Life of David” – Pastor Jim Ruddy***

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### **Study # 15 – The Sad End of a Stubborn King 1 Samuel 31**

#### **I. THE DEFEAT OF THE ARMY OF ISRAEL 31:1**

##### **A. DAVID’S DISMISSAL FROM BATTLE 1 Sam. 29 > Review**

- As the Philistines gathered to confront Israel, David and his men are “providentially dismissed” from battle and thus, will have no complicity in Saul’s death. cf. 24:6; 26:23

##### **B. ISRAEL’S DEFEAT IN BATTLE 1 Sam. 31:1**

- While David smites the Amalekites and they flee, (30:17) the Philistines smite Saul and Israel flees!
- Saul, who was introduced as the one who would deliver Israel from the Philistines (9:16), cannot even deliver himself.
- Note how the tables have turned from 14:20-23.

#### **II. THE DEATH OF SAUL ON MT. GILBOA 31:2-6**

##### **A. DEPRIVED OF HIS SONS v2**

- Three of Saul’s four sons are slain in battle. 1 Chr. 8:33; 9:39
- Note the rise of Saul’s son, Ish-Bosheth in 2 Sam. 2:8-10.
- Interestingly, Abner, Saul’s cousin and Commander in Chief is missing from the battle and lives to fight another day.

##### **B. WOUNDED BY THE ARCHERS v3**

- The archers “*found their mark*,” critically wounding Saul, as the defenses around him collapsed.

##### **C. SLAIN BY HIS SWORD v4**

- Sensing the seriousness of his injuries, Saul requests that his armor-bearer finish him off, depriving the Philistines of a chance to torture and ridicule him further.
- Like David, Saul’s armor-bearer refuses to lift his hand (24:6; 26:23), subtly reminding us that David, who at one time held this position (16:21), is not present. cf. 26:10
- Sadly, Saul, in failure and desperation, takes his own life.

##### **D. HONORED BY HIS SERVANT v5**

- Like his master, who refused to die at the hands of the Philistines, Saul’s armor-bearer takes his own life as well.

##### **E. FORSAKEN BY THE LORD v6**

- Saul lost his troops, armor-bearer, sons and his own life.
  - Note: “fell / fallen” v1, 4, 5, 8; 2 Sam. 1:4, 10, 12, 19, 25, 27.
- Saul’s dies as a direct result of his unfaithfulness to God (1 Chr. 10:13-14; 1 Sam. 12:25; 13:13-14).
- As a result of his sin, Saul becomes his own executioner.

### **III. THE DEMISE OF THE LAND OF ISRAEL 31:7**

#### **A. THE FLIGHT OF THE PEOPLE**

- With their leadership fallen, the people of Israel panic and flee.
- *"Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered."* Zech. 13:7

#### **B. THE DELIGHT OF THE PHILISTINES**

- The Philistines advance to occupy the deserted towns.
- Sadly, by the end of Saul's reign, the Philistines were just as powerful as they were at the beginning. cf. 4:1,2; 9:16

### **IV. THE DISGRACE OF THE BODY OF SAUL 31:8-10**

#### **A. THE DISCOVERY OF SAUL'S BODY v8**

- As the Philistines stripped the slain, (a favor that David's men would later return), they found Saul's body. cf. 2 Sam. 23:8-10

#### **B. THE DEFILEMENT OF SAUL'S BODY v9-10**

- Similar to David's treatment of Goliath, the Philistines stripped Saul of his armor and severed his head! cf. 17:51-54
- The Philistines published their victory in their pagan temples, displaying Saul's armor before their Ashtoreths (5:2), and impaling his body on the wall of Beth-Shan (17:44).
- Beth-Shan was not far from where Saul had been inaugurated as king. Although he had reigned for 40 years, he had failed to advance the kingdom even but a few miles.

### **V. THE DEDICATION OF THE MEN OF JABESH 31:11-13**

#### **A. THE BRAVERY OF THE MEN OF JABESH v11-12**

- The valiant fighters of Jabesh, whom Saul had earlier rescued from the Ammonites (11:1-11), show their undying loyalty and tribute by retrieving the bodies of Saul and his sons.

#### **B. THE BURIAL OF THE BODY OF SAUL v13**

- Perhaps to avoid the risk of infection from the quickly decomposing bodies, the men of Jabesh burn the remains.
  - Note: 7 days = ceremonies involving ritual uncleanness. Num 19:11
- The bones of Saul and his sons were then given an honorable burial, an act that is later rewarded by David. cf. 2 Sam. 2:4-6
- Saul's burial under the tamarisk tree is an ironic contrast to 22:6.
- David will later see to it that the remains of Saul and his sons are moved to their hometown. cf. 2 Sam. 21:12-14