

## **240131-4 1Sa 31, Saul & His Sons Die in Battle for His Transgressions—CThurman**

There were a number of good things to consider in the last chapter, things which came as a result of the raid of the Amalekites against the city of Ziklag and taking the inhabitants of this city captive.

1. Though David's own men, being so grieved at the loss of the families, thought to stone him, and he being distressed, he *encouraged himself in the LORD his God*. (v.6) And the LORD turned the whole situation around so that they set out to rescue their loved ones.
2. But some of the men of war were too faint to go on. So these stayed behind keeping the stuff and the strong went forward and recovered everything and every one. Both the strong and the weak a work to do.
3. But the strong thought to profit from the misfortunes of their weaker brethren. But David was clear about this matter, saying, '*Ye shall not do so, my brethren .... [v.23]*' And David made an ordinance that protected everyone equally in instances like this. And finally,
4. David, even in his present circumstance as a refugee for the past 10-15 yrs., stopped to *show* his thanks to all those cities in Judah that gave sanctuary to him as he fled from Saul.

In this last chapter of the Book of 1Samuel (ch. 31) the narrator of the book, being born along by the Holy Spirit to write by inspiration, turns back to the battle that has been brewing in the north over the past few weeks, at the Valley of Jezreel. The Valley of Jezreel appears to be an extension of the infamous battleground called Armageddon, or the Valley of Megiddo, which is a plain. (chs. 28, 29, at Shunem) And the southeast part of this plain descends into the Valley of Jezreel.

(See also 1Chronicles chapter 10, which is a parallel account of 1Samuel chapter 31.)

**1 ¶ Now the Philistines fought against Israel: and the men of Israel fled**

— מִפְּנֵי —

**from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa.**  
the face of

*slain*, of the adj. לָלֵךְ, tss. *wounded, profane, wounded, kill.*

The Philistines' forward position was at Shunem, a city overlooking the Valley of Jezreel at the northwest end, at Mt. Moreh. (cf. 1Sa.28.4) Israel's forward position was in Mount Gilboa, which is on the southeast of the same valley. So, the Philistines advanced through the ranks of the Israelites, slaying many. (cf. 2Sa.1.4, *many of the people also are fallen and dead ...*)

**2 And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons;**  
stuck to to

*followed hard*, Hiphil (causative act.) fut. of the verb בָּרַךְ, or בָּרַךְ, tss. *to cleave, to join together, to follow hard* (1Sa.31.2; 1Chr.10.2), *to stick, to take, to keep, to abide fast, to follow close, to make.*

**and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Malchishua, Saul's sons.**  
Ishui

*slew*, Hiphil (causative act.) fut. of the verb נָכַח, tss. *to beat, to punish, to smite, to slay, to kill, to strike.*

*1Ch 10:2 And the Philistines followed hard after Saul, and after his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Malchishua, the sons of Saul.*

The names of Saul's sons also given in 1Sa.14.49.

*1Sa 14:49 Now the sons of Saul were Jonathan, and Ishui, and Melchishua: and the names of his two daughters [were these]; the name of the firstborn Merab, and the name of the younger Michal:*

Saul's life continued for a little space after the deaths of his sons.

מִצְרַיִם

**3 And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him;**  
was heavy found, v.8 (with their arrows)

sore, Qal fut. of the verb כָּבַד, tss. to be rich, to be grievous, to be sore, to be heavy, to be chargeable, to be glorified, to be honorable.,,

מְאֹד, masc. noun commonly used as an adverb

**and he was sore wounded of the archers.**  
very (v.4) from

נִשְׂאֵה-כֶּלִי

**4 Then said Saul unto his armourbearer, Draw thy sword,**  
to him bearing his weapons

draw, Qal imper. of the verb שָׁלַף, to draw, to pluck, to grow up.

**and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come and**  
strike with it

thrust me through, Qal pret. of the verb דָּקַר, tss. to thrust through, to pierce, to strike through, to wound.

**thrust me through, and abuse me.**  
mock, defile

abuse, Hithpael (reflexive act.) pret. of the verb עָלַל, tss. to defile, to affect, to glean, to mock, to work wonderfully, to abuse, to practise (practice).

His fear of abuse was not things the Philistines would do to Saul after he died, but of what they could do while he was living.

**But his armourbearer would not; for he was sore afraid.**  
consented very, v.3

would, Qal pret. of the verb תָּצַח, tss. *to will, to consent, to rest content.*

***Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it.***

***5 And when his armourbearer saw that Saul was dead,***

Or, at least he supposed that Saul was dead (2Sa.1.1-16)

***he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him.***

***6 So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armourbearer, and all his men, that same day together.***

***and all his men*** – Probably all of those men close to him died that same day.

Abner, cousin to Saul and captain of Saul's armies (1Sa.14.50), was not killed in this conflict. (cf. 2Sa.2.12) There might be something to this. Earlier, at the wilderness of Ziph, David had opportunity to once again prove that he had no ill intentions toward Saul. David, along with Abishai was, by the LORD, able to come into the very midst of the camp, to the very place where Saul was sleeping, and took Saul's spear and his cruse of water. For this David said that Abner was worthy of death because he had failed to protect the king. Here is a part of that account.

*1Sa 26:14 And David cried to the people, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, Answerest thou not, Abner? Then Abner answered and said, Who [art] thou [that] criest to the king?*

*15 And David said to Abner, [Art] not thou a [valiant] man? and who [is] like to thee in Israel? wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king? for there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord.*

*16 This thing [is] not good that thou hast done. [As] the LORD liveth, ye [are] worthy to die, because ye have not kept your master, the LORD'S anointed. And now see where the king's spear [is], and the cruse of water that [was] at his bolster.*

**So Saul died** – Saul died, but not because of the normal course of life. He died because the LORD's hand was against him.

*1Ch 10:13 So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, [even] against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking [counsel] of [one that had] a familiar spirit, to enquire [of it];*

*14 And enquired not of the LORD: therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse. (The LORD slew Saul through the instrumental means of the Philistines.)*

*1Sa.28.18 Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the LORD, nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the LORD done this thing unto thee this day.*

*19 Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and to morrow [shalt] thou and thy sons [be] with me: the LORD also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.*

Saul died for purposely, presumptuously sinning against the LORD. (cf. Due.17.12, For one to act presumptuously by refusing to obey the voice of the priest or the ruler was to die.)

*Ex 21:14 But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die. (Even if one is involved in worship he was to be removed and slain.)*

*Nu.15.30 ¶ But the soul that doeth [ought] presumptuously, [whether he be] born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people.*

*31 Because he hath despised the word of the LORD, and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity [shall be] upon him.*

*Ps 19:13 Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous [sins] (to purpose to act against the word of God [vss.7-11]); let them not have*

*dominion over me (Let not my life be dictated by such sins!): then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.*

*14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.*

Though Saul had been commanded, encouraged, and warned to do the will of the LORD, he would not *correct himself*. He refused to discipline himself, to conform to the will of God. After reading of Saul's history, who would deny that Saul's life was characterized by unbelief and rebellion to the will of God. Though a king, his life was truly a miserable existence that began with a pretense to humility, turning to impatience, jealousy, anger, hate, murder, with foolish decision after foolish decision, the end of which is – death.

*Ro 6:21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things [is] death.*

It was for this reason that the LORD finally brought him into severest judgment. His sins cost him by cutting his house off from the kingdom (cf. 1Sa.13.14, *thy kingdom shall not continue*), then for himself (cf. 1Sa.15.23, *he hath also rejected thee from being king*), and finally his own life and the lives his sons (cf. 1Sa.28.10, *tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me*).

Now, the sad history of the man named Saul gives cause to doubt whether he was a child of God. It is difficult to tell a child of God from one that is of the world when he lives in glaring rebellion to the word of God. But because Saul was an Israelite under covenant to the LORD he was to live according to His commandments. Therefore he was judged in a way that the Gentiles were not, being a son of Abraham. So, there is a parallel between the Lord's dealings with the children of Israel and the Christian. Certainly, Christians are judged by the Lord in a way that the world is not. Saul provides a good example of that child of God which the LORD brings into judgment or chastens for failing to correct his way before Him.

*1Co.11.31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.*

Brethren, we must learn to correct ourselves when we sin. When we learn to judge ourselves, then we deliver ourselves from the judgment of the Lord. But what are we *prone* to do? What are we inclined to do when we fall into sin? We are prone to harden ourselves by justifying our sin. There's always a *reason* we have for committing some sin. But the truth is, there isn't a justifiable reason for sin. What we must do is learn to correct ourselves. We must acknowledge our sin (admit it), confess our sin, and repent of it. For the child of God, there isn't any other alternative. Less than this and we should expect that the Lord will judge us. Until then, there's no joy for the child of God. He lives with a guilty conscience, knowing what he ought to do. He lives in constant fear expecting judgment.

*He.10.26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, 27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.*

**7 And when the men of Israel that [were] on the other side of the valley,**  
Perhaps on the northern side of the valley.  
**and [they] that [were] on the other side Jordan,**  
(to the east)

**saw that the men of Israel fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they**

**forsook the cities, and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them.**  
left destitute  
abandoned  
verb root יָשַׁב  
inhabited –  
v.11  
*they forsook, Qal fut. of the verb יָזַב, tss. to leave destitute, to leave off, to forsake, to leave, to refuse, to fortify.*

**8 ¶ And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the**

*to strip, Hiphil (causative act.) fut. of the verb פָּשַׁט, plus a prefixed preposition לְ, to; tss. to put off, to rush, to make a road (1Sa.27.10, Qal pret.), to invade (1Sa.23.27, Qal pret.; 30.1, 14, Qal pret.), to*

*strip (1Sa.31.8, Piel infin.), to strip off (1Sa.31.9, Hiphil fut.), to spread, to spoil.*

נָצַח

*slain, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen in mount Gilboa.*

v.3

**9 And they cut off his head, and stripped off his armour, and sent**

(word of the victory)

*into the land of the Philistines round about, to publish [it in] the house  
broadcast*

*to publish, Piel (intensive act.) infin. of the verb נָצַח, tss. to bear tidings, to preach, to publish, to preach good tidings, to shew forth, to be a messenger, to be a bringer of good tidings.*

**of their idols, and among the people.**

Saul's head was brought into the temple of Dagon.

*1Chr.10.9 And when they had stripped him, they took his head, and his armour, and sent (word of the victory) into the land of the Philistines round about, to carry tidings unto their idols, and to the people.*

*10 And they put his armour in the house of their gods, and fastened his head in the temple of Dagon.*

**10 And they put his armour in the house of Ashtaroth: and they fastened his  
weapons**

**body to the wall of**  
corpse, v.12

**Bethshan.**  
Bethshean

*body, גִּבּוֹלָה, a fem. noun tss. body (cf. Dan.10.6), corpse (Nah.3.3), carcass (cf. Jud.14.8).*



to the wall, of the fem. noun חֹמָה, with a prefixed preposition אֶל, on; חֹמָה, is always tss. into the English wall; v.12.

Perhaps the same city called *Bethshean*. *Bethshean* is about five miles up on a river in the Valley of Jezreel that drains into the Jordan River.

**11 And when the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead**  
dwellers, v.7

Jabeshgilead is on other side of the Jordan River, about 16 miles southeast of Bethshan. It is located about 8 miles up the Brook Cherith.

**heard of that which the Philistines had done to** **Saul;**  
(the body)

גִּבּוֹל, masc. noun

**12 All the valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the**  
able, powerful, strong, (the)  
mighty

**body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Bethshan,**  
corpse, v.10 corpses v.10

Qal fut. of שָׂרַף

**and came to Jabesh, and burnt them there.**  
(shortened for Jabeshgilead) kindled

אֲשֵׁל

**13 And they took their bones, and buried [them] under a tree**

אֲשֵׁל, also tss. grove (Ge.21.33);  
2Chr.10.12, has oak, but this is  
tss. from another Hebrew,  
אֵלֶּה, also tss. elm, Hos.4.13.

**bones, עֲצָמֹת**, a fem. noun, tss. bone ([oft] cf. Ge.2.23), **body** (cf. Ex.24.10), **life** (cf. Job 7.15), **strength** (cf. Job 21.23), **selfsame** (cf. Ez.40.1).

*buried*, Qal fut. of the verb קָבַר, always tss. with the English, *to bury*. This means *to enter* the body into a קְבֹרָה, *a buryingplace, a sepulchre, a grave*.

*tree*, אֲשֵׁל, a masc. noun only three times in the OT, tss. *tree* (2 [1Sa.22.6; 31.13]) *grove* (Gen.21.33); a Tamarisk tree, also called a salt cedar. Both Saul and Jonathan were buried under this tree in 1Sa.31.13.

***at Jabesh, and fasted seven days.***

Seven days is the same period of time required by the law of Moses to be purified for touching the bodies of the dead. (cf. Nu.19.11-13) The time for fasting appears to be completely arbitrary. We find a seven-day mourning period which the sons of Jacob observed for their father when he died, (cf. Gen.50.10) but there doesn't appear to be a commandment to fast or a rule stipulating how long a fast should be. But fasting is a means to show that someone is in mourning.

Benjamin stood against the nation to shield the sodomites that had committed great sin in the land. Israel in the battle lost many men and turned to the Lord.

*Jud 20:26 Then all the children of Israel, and all the people, went up, and came unto the house of God, and wept, and sat there before the LORD, and fasted that day until even, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD.*

Samuel, upon the beginning of his public called Israel to repentance. And during this time the Philistines came against them.

*1Sa.7.6 And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured [it] out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the LORD. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh.*

David fasted at the report of the deaths of Saul and his sons.

*2Sa.1.11 ¶ Then David took hold on his clothes, and rent them; and likewise all the men that [were] with him:*

*12 And they mourned, and wept, and fasted until even, for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the LORD, and for the house of Israel; because they were fallen by the sword.*

While Daniel was fasting the LORD revealed future events that concerned Persia and Rome.

*Dan.10.1 ¶ In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing [was] true, but the time appointed [was] long: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.*

*2 In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks.*

*3 I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.*

### Review of the book of 1Samuel

This book begins with the birth of the last judge of Israel, Samuel (ch.1). The LORD had closed the womb of Hannah, Samuel's mother, but the LORD heard her prayers and gave her this child. And she promised, when he was weaned, to give him over to serve in the house of the LORD under Eli, the high priest (ch.2). Then the LORD calls Samuel to salvation & service, and at the same time reveals that he will judge the house of Eli, and his wicked sons Hophni and Phinehas. (ch.3) That time came when Israel went out to fight against the Philistines. (ch.4). The Philistines also took possession of the ark of the covenant. For this the LORD brings plagues upon every city where the Philistines bring it. And finally, the Philistines decide to send it back to Israel (chs.5, 6). Eli, Hophni, and Phinehas being dead Samuel begins his public ministry and calls Israel to repentance (ch.7). Then Samuel appointed his sons to be judges in Israel, but they didn't walk in his ways. So they desired a king. And the LORD commanded Samuel to hear them, that they have not rejected him, but that they have rejected Him, the LORD. (ch.8) And so the LORD in His providence directs Saul to come to Samuel (ch.9). The LORD equips and proves him for the office of king (chs.10, 11). Samuel admonishes Israel for desiring a king rule over them to the LORD Himself. (ch.12) Later the Philistines gather for battle once again. But Saul, rather than waiting for Samuel to come and offer the burnt offering decides to offer it himself. For this the LORD removes the kingdom from his house and seeks a man after His own heart. (ch.13) This is followed by the valiant

act on Jonathan's part to attack a garrison of the Philistines with only his armorbearer (ch.14). Then the Lord would have Saul to utterly destroy the Amalekites. And for his disobedience the LORD rejects him from being king. (ch.15). The LORD would have Samuel to anoint David king of Israel (ch.16). David as a young lad smites Goliath, the champion of the Philistines (ch.17). Saul is jealous of David and turns to hate him (ch.18). David then flees from Saul, seeks help from Ahimelech the high priest and obtains the sword of Goliath. (chs. 19, 20). From here David goes to Gath and pretends to be a mad man before king Achish (ch.21). In the mean-time Saul turns to slay Ahimelech and all the priests of Nob. He is suspicious that they have made a league with the *son of Jesse* to make him king (ch.22). David leaves Gath and finds refuge in Judah, coming to Engedi (ch.23). But when Saul comes there David has opportunity to prove that he is not conspiring against him to overthrow his kingdom (ch.24, cuts off a small piece of Saul's skirt). Saul returns to Gibeah for a while. At this place we are told that the old prophet Samuel has died. David, leaves Engedi, which leads to the episode with the fool, Nabal (ch.25). Saul resumes his pursuit of David and comes to Hachilah. David again proves he means no ill to Saul (ch.26). David flees to Gath once again anticipating that Saul will give up searching for him. (ch.27). And finally, the Philistines gather themselves to Shunem to prepare for war, and Israel gathers to mount Gilboa. Saul, in distress turns to seek counsel from a witch at Endor, and here it is revealed that tomorrow both he and his sons will die (ch.28). We read that the king of Gath had given the city of Ziklag to David (ch.29). But while David and his men were traveling up to Aphek with Achish, the Amalekites invaded the south, burned Ziklag with fire and took their wives, sons and daughters captive. But the lord's of the Philistines refused to allow David and his men to fight with them for fear they would turn against them and defend their brethren. So David returned to Ziklag only to find that it had been burned and their families taken captive. But the LORD allows for David to recover everything and everyone. (ch.30). And the last chapter ends with the deaths of Saul and his sons in the conflict against the Philistines (ch.31)

The Book of 1Samuel is a historical account which begins with the birth of Israel's last judge and ends with the death of Israel's first king. The next book of the Bible, the Book of 2Samuel, begins with the transition of the kingdom to the house of David and closes with the end of David's reign.