

Message #1**II Samuel 1:1-16**

Many of us love sequels. A good sequel is riveting. We already know the characters and we already have some background and a good sequel captivates your mind. II Samuel is an inspired sequel and it is riveting. It tells a continuous story. John Woodhouse said every reader of II Samuel should have first read I Samuel (*II Samuel*, p. 26). **This is a sequel and this sequel will not only captivate your mind, it has the power to transform your heart.**

We begin a new study tonight of II Samuel which is most logical and, in fact, most Biblical. **In the Hebrew Bible, I and II Samuel were originally one book and not two.** The Septuagint, Greek translation of the O.T., was the first to divide the book into two distinct books. When the O.T. was translated into Latin in AD 382, it kept the division of two books. The Masoretic Hebrew text (AD 600-900) kept I & II Samuel as one book and give the total number of verses of 1506 at the end of II Samuel.

The books of I & II Samuel form a continuous history for the nation Israel. Combined, these two books cover the stories of the lives of three main characters: Samuel, Saul and David. The two books cover a span of time of about 150 years. I Samuel covers about 110 years and II Samuel covers about 40 years. **These books are critical because these books take Israel into a new form of government, from the time of the Judges to the monarchical reign of a King.**

Although the authors of the Samuel books were not specifically named, we may conclude that the inspired data is actually compiled by three main prophets: Samuel, Nathan and Gad. Samuel was the historian of his own life and the historian who recorded much information about Saul.

The two prophets who compiled the majority of information about David were Nathan and Gad. These two were in some type of close official capacity in David's court - II Sam. 7:2; II Sam. 24:11.

II Samuel is a book about King David and apparently since one book of the Bible is devoted to him, God expects us to learn much about him. David was Israel's greatest King and David was a man after God's own heart. He was certainly not a perfect man, but when it comes to being a man of God, there is no greater name than King David.

As we come to II Samuel, there are two main divisions of Davidic reign:

- 1) David reigns over Judah - II Samuel 1-4
- 2) David reigns over all Israel - II Samuel 5-24

John Phillips said that II Samuel may be broken down into three main sections:

(*Exploring the Scriptures*, Revised, p. 73)

- 1) David's patient years - II Sam. 1-4
- 2) David's prosperous years - II Sam. 5-12
- 3) David's perilous years - II Sam. 13-24

J. Vernon McGee said that II Samuel may be broken down into two main parts:

(The Book of II Samuel, Thru the Bible, Vol. 2, p.187)

- 1) The Triumph of David - II Sam. 1-10
- 2) The Troubles of David - II Sam. 11-24

One thing that is most unique is that II Samuel is all about David, but it is a book with Samuel's name. Samuel was a key prophet of God who obviously held a great position as a powerful spokesman and instrument of God, who spoke and wrote inspired truth. David does not tell this story about himself, other prophets told it.

One reason why God had prophets tell this story is because One would eventually come into this world who would be "the Son of David." That of course was Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:1).

As II Samuel opens, it opens with the response of David to the news that Saul and Jonathan were dead. What we clearly see here is this:

WHEN DAVID LEARNED THAT SAUL AND JONATHAN WERE DEAD, HE DID NOT REJOICE OR GLOAT BUT HE MOURNED OVER THE LOSS.

Now keep in mind that the final years of Saul's life were spent alienated from God. He did not end his life walking in fellowship with God; he ended his life in rebellion against God. Also the final years of his life were spent hating and hunting David.

So when news comes to David about Saul being gone, his response is quite amazing. There are three qualities about David that truly stand out:

- 1) David never forgot his friends.
- 2) David never forgot his enemies.
- 3) David would forgive Saul.

David did not forgive everyone, as we will see in this text; but he did forgive Saul because he realized that Saul had been God's first choice for the anointed King of Israel. Now as II Samuel opens, there are four narrative observations we want to make:

NARRATIVE OBSERVATION #1 – David was back in Ziklag after slaughtering the Amalekites. 1:1

David had been successful in another military conflict. He had gone after the Amalekites, who had taken their wives, sons and daughters and possessions, and he had slaughtered them and brought all of the spoils back to Ziklag where he was headquartered. It probably looked like a bombed Berlin.

When David got back to Ziklag, he was there for two days rejoicing at the wonderful victory God had given him. He was probably savoring the moment of what God had done. What an amazing life David had lived at this point and he is only about 30-years-old.

He had been a shepherd in Bethlehem; then he became a military hero; then he became a servant of Saul and a son-in-law of Saul; and then he became a fugitive outlaw in the wilderness.

At least now, for the time being he had a couple of days to relax and enjoy what God had done.

NARRATIVE OBSERVATION #2 – David is notified by an Amalekite that the Philistines had defeated Israel and Saul and his sons were dead. **1:2-5**

On day three of David being in Ziklag, an Amalekite man went before David to inform him what had happened.

Now the distance from the battlefield of Gilboa to Ziklag, where David was, is about 90-100 miles. So if this Amalekite has made this trip in three days, he made good time. He traveled over 30 miles per day.

This man who witnessed what happened immediately went to report it to David at Ziklag. When David looked at this guy, he appeared to be sweaty and dirty and his clothes were torn and he had dust on his head, indicating this was not good news. In fact, this was a sign of anguish and distress.

He approached David very humbly and reverently. He prostrated himself on the ground before David (**v. 2**) and when David asked him from where he had come, he told him that he had escaped from the camp of Israel (**v. 3**).

According to **verse 4**, David wanted to know how things had gone and the man reported that many of the Israelites fled; many of the Israelites were killed in battle and that Saul and Jonathan were dead.

According to **verse 5**, David wanted to know how he knew that Saul and Jonathan were dead.

NARRATIVE OBSERVATION #3 – David is told an embellishment lie by the Amalekite about how Saul died. **1:6-10**

This Amalekite is nothing more than a mercenary looter, who is looking out for himself. What he wants is for David to either financially reward him or promote him (II Sam. 4:9-10). Every army campaign is followed by looters who want to get their hands on some of the spoils or remuneration.

In the Bible, we have three accounts of the death of Saul. I Samuel 31:4; II Samuel 1:1-10 and I Chronicles 10:4. **What we may determine from these accounts is that this Amalekite is lying**. He is embellishing the story because he is hoping to look good and get rewarded by it.

Since he is the only eye witness to get to David, he figured David would never know the actual truth. David wanted to know how this Amalekite knew Saul and Jonathan were dead. So he told him a four part story:

(Part #1) - I was standing on Mount Gilboa and I spotted Saul leaning on his own spear because the Philistines were closing in on him fast. **1:6**

The word “lean” may mean he was either supporting himself or stabbing himself on his spear. That is not what happened. Saul did not lean on the sword; he fell on it (I Sam. 31:4; I Chron. 10:4).

(Part #2) - Saul spotted me and asked me to identify myself. **1:7-8**

Now this is fishy. If the Philistines are coming against you fast, why would you care who a person is? Well the Amalekite said Saul called out to him and he told him that he was an Amalekite.

(Part #3) - Saul asked me if I would kill him and relieve him of his agony. **1:9**

There is no hint that any of this happened. This guy is making up a story. He is trying to make David think that he did something heroic out of compassion.

(Part #4) - I did what Saul wanted and killed him. **1:10**

I knew he could not live any longer. So I killed him and took the crown and bracelet and brought it to you.

Now we know this story is not true. This is not what happened to Saul. Saul had been badly wounded with arrows and he fell on his own sword and committed suicide (I Sam. 31:3-5).

Then Saul’s own armor bearer, who was right there with Saul, committed suicide (I Sam. 31:5-6). That armor bearer would have never let the Amalekite near Saul.

So what really happened is that this Amalekite either saw both of them kill themselves or he just stumbled on their dead bodies. But he figured if he twisted the story a little bit, he could come out of this looking like a hero and get some reward.

NARRATIVE OBSERVATION #4 – David reacts to the Amalekite story of Saul’s death.
11:11-16

There were two main reactions that David had:

Reaction #1 - David and his men mourn over what happened to Israel, Saul and Jonathan.
1:11-12

When David and his men learned what had happened, they tore their clothes and mourned and wept and fasted until the evening.

The practice of tearing clothing was a physical expression of great grief. It was often displayed in the death of a loved one (Job 1:20; II Sam. 1:11; 13:31). There is no specific text of Scripture that actually explains this, but it does seem to have been a cultural expression of great grief.

They were sad because of what had happened to God's people and God's King.

One might think that David would have been doing cart-wheels in celebration over the fact that his arch enemy, Saul, was gone. But David was sad.

This is a real sorrow that he has. It is not some phony emotional response.

Reaction #2 - David questions and kills the lying Amalekite. **1:13-16**

When David asked the Amalekite where he was from (**1:13**), I am certain that the Amalekite thought he had hit pay dirt and would receive a wonderful reward.

David's question would tell him whether or not the man lived within Israel's land or out of Israel's land.

The Amalekite identified himself as the "son of an alien." What that means is that he is identifying himself as a second generation individual who lived outside of Israel's land who knew about Israel and he knew about God.

He knew that Saul was the king of Israel and he knew that David was going to be the next king of Israel because he brought him the crown and bracelet. So this was not some stranger passing through the land. He was a man who knew things and lived in the area.

In **verse 14**, David asks the Amalekite a question which is how did you dare to kill God's anointed King? How did you dare to kill the King that had been anointed by Jehovah?

According to **verses 15-16**, it does not appear as though David even gave the guy time to make up some answer. The conjunction "and" that begins **verse 15** indicates that this was rapid succession action. David ordered one of his men to execute this guy immediately.

His lie about killing the LORD'S anointed caught up with him and he was dead. His own mouth brought about his own judgment.

Now David did something here that did square with the O.T. law. The Amalekites had been a ruthless and godless people and God ordered His people to destroy them (Ex. 17:15-16; Deut. 25:17-19).

We don't know whether David believed the guy's story about killing Saul. It does appear as though he did and God did not reveal to him any further information at the moment. So David is responding to the man's own testimony. That is all David knew at this point.

We are not responsible for what we don't know; we are responsible to act on what we do know. But what we do see here is that David had an awesome view of God and he knew it was a serious thing to think lightly and treat lightly one of God's chosen servants.

PRACTICAL LESSONS:

- 1. In God's time, He will raise up His faithful people.**
- 2. Do not ever embellish anything when it comes to truth about God.**
- 3. Tell a lie against a chosen servant of God and there will be disastrous consequences.**