

# 2 Samuel 1 Commentary

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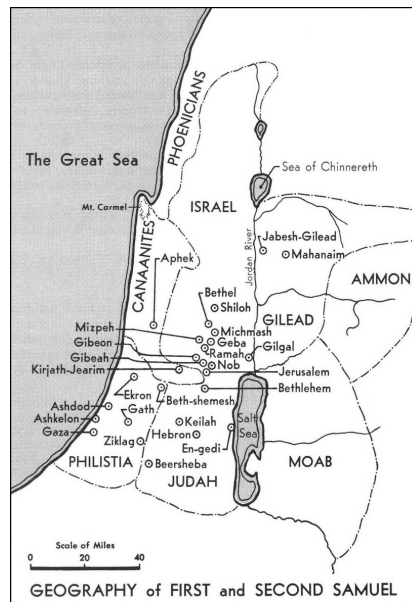
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Chart from recommended resource [Jensen's Survey of the OT](#) - used by permission  
 2 Samuel Chart from Charles Swindoll

TIMELINE OF THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL, KINGS & CHRONICLES									
1107	1011				971	931	853	722	586
1 Samuel	2 Samuel				1 Kings	1 Kings	2 Kings		
31	1-4	5-10	11-20	21-24	1-11	12-22	1-17	18-25	
1Chr 10		1 Chr 11-19		1 Chr 20-29	2 Chronicles 1-9	2 Chronicles 10-20	2 Chronicles 21-36		

**Legend:** B.C. dates at top of timeline are approximate. Note that 931BC marks the division of the Kingdom into Southern Tribes (Judah and Benjamin) and Ten Northern Tribes. To avoid confusion be aware that **after the division** of the Kingdom in 931BC, the Southern Kingdom is most often designated in Scripture as "**Judah**" and the Northern Kingdom as "**Israel**." Finally, note that 1 Chronicles 1-9 is not identified on the timeline because these chapters are records of genealogy.



Map of David's Kingdom-ESV Global

Map of Cities in 2 Samuel

**2 Samuel 2 Sam 1:1** Now it came about after the death of Saul, when David had returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites, that David remained two days in Ziklag.

- **when David:** 1Sa 30:17-26
- **Ziklag:** 1Sa 27:6
- 2 Samuel 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Joshua 1:1 Now it came about **after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD** that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' servant, saying,

Judges 1:1 Now it came about after the death of Joshua that the sons of Israel inquired of the LORD, saying, "Who shall go up first for us against the Canaanites, to fight against them?"

1 Samuel 30:16+ When he had brought him down, behold, they were spread over all the land, eating and drinking and dancing because of all the great spoil that they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from the land of Judah. 17 **David slaughtered them from the twilight until the evening of the next day; and not a man of them escaped**, except four hundred young men who rode on camels and fled. 18 So David recovered all that the Amalekites had taken, and rescued his two wives.

## SAUL HAS FALLS DAVID BEGINS TO RISE

Note that 1 and 2 Samuel were originally one book. 2 Samuel 1:1–14 begins where 1Sa 31:1–13 ended, with the death of Saul, also described in 1Ch 10:1–14.

**Now it came about after the death of Saul** - Recall Saul (passive participle of sha'al = ask something of someone) means "asked for," which is apropos since the people asked for a king like all of the other nations (1Sa 8:5-6+). God answered their prayer and gave them Saul, a man after men's hearts. Recall why Saul died the writer of Chronicles stating "So Saul died for his trespass which he committed against the LORD, because of the word of the LORD which he did not keep; and also because he asked counsel of a medium, making inquiry of it, and did not inquire of the LORD. Therefore He killed him and turned the kingdom to David the son of Jesse." (1Ch 10:13-14+)

**Guzik** - It was the sad ending of a tragic life, concluding the story of a man who came to the throne humble but left it hardened, bitter against both God and man.

**Warren Wiersbe** - Saul began his career standing (1Sa 10:23+), but he closed his career falling (2Sa 1:4, 10, 12, 19, 25, 27):

“Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall” (1Co 10:12+). Natural abilities and great opportunities do not guarantee success. Saul was head and shoulders above everybody else, but he was not heart and soul yielded to God. Robert Murray M'Cheyne said, “It is not great talents God blesses so much as great likeness to Jesus.” (Borrow [With the Word](#))

**When David had returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites, that David remained two days in Ziklag-** While God had allowed Saul and Israel to be defeated by the Philistines, He had allowed David to be victorious over the Amalekites. Both men had inquired of the LORD. Saul's inquiry was refused by God which forced him to commit the capital crime of necromancy (1Sa 28:6,8+) which earned him the judicial sentence of execution within 24 hours! David's inquiry was accepted (1Sa 30:6-8+) and launched him on his journey to become king over a nation in shambles as a result of Saul's sins.

#### **1 Samuel 30:6+ marks a WATERSHED MOMENT in his life!**

In Ziklag ([map](#)) David is on the SW border of the territory God had given to Judah (1Sa 28:19+). Ziklag's burning and loss of all his earthly possessions (1Sa 30:1-2+) marked a low point in his life, from which the Spirit of God would enable him to ascend upward eventually to the throne. It is darkest before the dawning of the light. We are reminded of Paul's powerful, paradoxical words in 2Cor 12:9-10+ when Jesus answered his prayer by saying “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness (IN ZIKLAG DAVID WAS AT THAT POINT).” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.”

Recall that Ziklag had been given to the tribe of Simeon (cf Jos 19:1–5) and was presumably occupied by them (cf. Jdg 1:17–18), only to be lost to the Philistines at a later, undisclosed time. When David went to Gath, the king gave him Ziklag from which he conducted raids on Israel's enemies. He deceived the Philistine king, making him think that he was actually carrying out raids on Israeli towns.

**Matthew Henry** - Verses 1-10. The blow which opened David's way to the throne was given about the time he had been sorely distressed. Those who commit their concerns to the Lord, will quietly abide his will. It shows that he desired not Saul's death, and he was not impatient to come to the throne.

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#### **QUESTION - [Why are there contradictory accounts regarding the death of Saul in 1 and 2 Samuel?](#)**

**ANSWER** - Critics of the Bible sometimes note the two different versions of the death of [King Saul](#) as a “contradiction” in Scripture. First Samuel 31:4 says that Saul was injured in battle and then killed himself. Second Samuel 1:10 relates an Amalekite's claim to have killed Saul. Is this a true contradiction in the Bible? Which account of the death of Saul is true?

The clear answer is that Saul killed himself and that the Amalekite's story was a fabrication. The Amalekite lied about the death of Saul, hoping to receive a reward from David. The Bible records the lie the Amalekite told but never affirms it as true.

The inspired history of the death of Saul is found in 1 Samuel 31. The historian plainly says that Saul killed himself: “The fighting grew fierce around Saul, and when the archers overtook him, they wounded him critically. Saul said to his armor-bearer, ‘Draw your sword and run me through, or these uncircumcised fellows will come and run me through and abuse me.’ But his armor-bearer was terrified and would not do it; so Saul took his own sword and fell on it. When the armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he too fell on his sword and died with him. So Saul and his three sons and his armor-bearer and all his men died together that same day” (1 Samuel 31:3–6). The verses following this account mention several witnesses to the event.

Second Samuel 21:12 identifies the Philistines as responsible for the death of Saul: “The Philistines . . . struck Saul down on Gilboa.” Saul and his army were doing battle with the Philistines at the time, and it was during that conflict that Saul took his own life. His suicide was prompted by his being mortally wounded by the Philistines and his fear of capture, torture, and shame at his enemies' hands.

Second Samuel 1 relates the story of the Amalekite who came to [David](#). The biblical record describes him as a man “from Saul's camp with his clothes torn and dust on his head” (2 Samuel 1:2). When he came to David, he fell to the ground to honor the presumptive king. He then told his lie about the death of Saul: “I happened to be on Mount Gilboa, . . . and there was Saul, leaning on his spear, with the chariots and their drivers in hot pursuit. When he turned around and saw me, he called out to me, and I said, ‘What can I do?’ . . . Then he said to me, ‘Stand here by me and kill me! I'm in the throes of death, but I'm still alive.’ So I stood beside him and killed him, because I knew that after he had fallen he could not survive. And I took the crown that was on his head and the band on his arm and have brought them here to my lord” (2 Samuel 1:6–10).

The Amalekite's story conflicts with the biblical historian's account of the death of Saul and is therefore a lie. Probably, the truth of the matter is that the Amalekite was a treasure-hunter, a battlefield opportunist who followed armies in conflict in hopes of gathering booty from the fallen soldiers. The Amalekite likely witnessed the death of Saul and heard Saul's plea for his armor-bearer to kill him

before committing suicide. After Saul was dead, the Amalekite plundered the body but then realized he might be able to gain an even greater prize from David, who stood to benefit most from the death of Saul. So the Amalekite fabricated his story about killing Saul at Saul's request, showed Saul's crown and armband as "proof" of his story, and sat back, expecting David to grant him a large reward.

The Amalekite had miscalculated, however. King Saul had indeed been David's enemy, but David was by no means happy at the death of Saul. In fact, David had previous opportunities to kill Saul himself, but he had refrained out of the fear of God, since Saul was God's anointed (see 1 Samuel 24:6). Instead of the bonanza he was anticipating, the Amalekite received judgment. "David called one of his men and said, 'Go, strike him down!' So he struck him down, and he died. For David had said to him, 'Your blood be on your own head. Your own mouth testified against you when you said, 'I killed the Lord's anointed'" (2 Samuel 1:15-16). The Amalekite's lie about the death of Saul brought about his own death.

Putting all the events concerning the death of Saul in the correct order:

- Saul is wounded in battle and then kills himself by falling on his own sword.
- An Amalekite comes across Saul's dead body and takes his crown and armband.
- The next day, the Philistines find Saul's body, behead him, strip him of his armor, send the report, and fasten his body to the wall of Beth Shan (1 Samuel 31:8-10).
- Men of Jabesh Gilead travel overnight and take Saul's body and those of his sons and burn them at Jabesh (1 Samuel 31:11-12).
- The men of Jabesh Gilead bury Saul's bones under a tamarisk tree at Jabesh, and the men of that city fast for seven days (1 Samuel 31:13).
- The Amalekite arrives at David's camp on the third day with the crown and armband, reporting his fictional story.
- David and his men fast and mourn until evening.
- David has the Amalekite executed.
- David becomes king and honors the brave men who buried Saul's body (2 Samuel 2:4-7). [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

**2 Samuel 1:2 On the third day, behold, a man came out of the camp from Saul, with his clothes torn and dust on his head. And it came about when he came to David that he fell to the ground and prostrated himself.**

- 1Sa 4:12
- **the third:** Ge 22:4 Es 4:16 5:1 Ho 6:2 Mt 12:40 16:21
- **a man:** 2Sa 4:10
- **clothes:** Ge 37:29,34 Jos 7:6 1Sa 4:12,16 Joe 2:13
- **and dust:** 2Sa 15:32
- **he fell:** 2Sa 14:4 Ge 37:7-10 43:28 1Sa 20:41 25:23 Ps 66:3 Rev 3:9
- 2 Samuel 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Resources:

2 Samuel 13:19 Tamar put ashes on her head and tore her long-sleeved garment which was on her; and she put her hand on her head and went away, crying aloud as she went.

2 Samuel 15:32 It happened as David was coming to the summit, where God was worshiped, that behold, Hushai the Archite met him with his coat torn and dust on his head.

### A REPORT FROM THE BATTLE

**On the third day** - While I do not want to get too mystical, for some reason the Spirit wants us to see this time phrase. So might I suggest that just as David began his rise to the throne of Israel, the greater Son of David would rise in three days, would ascend waiting "until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet," (Heb 10:13+) at which time He too would return to take His rightful place in Israel as "King of kings and Lord of lords." (Rev 19:11-15,16+). Just a thought to ponder as we study the life of the first David.

**Third day** - Gen. 1:13; Gen. 22:4; Gen. 31:22; Gen. 34:25; Gen. 40:20; Gen. 42:18; Exod. 19:11; Exod. 19:15; Exod. 19:16; Lev. 7:17; Lev. 7:18; Lev. 19:6; Lev. 19:7; Num. 7:24; Num. 19:12; Num. 19:19; Num. 29:20; Num. 31:19; Jos. 9:17; Jdg. 20:30; 1 Sam. 20:12; 1 Sam. 30:1; 2 Sam. 1:2; 1 Ki. 3:18; 1 Ki. 12:12; 2 Ki. 20:5; 2 Ki. 20:8; 2 Chr. 10:12; Ezr. 6:15; Est. 5:1; Hos. 6:2; Mt 16:21; Matt. 17:23; Matt. 20:19; Matt. 27:64; Lk.

**Behold** ([hinneh](#); Lxx = [idou](#)), **a man came out of the camp from Saul, with his clothes torn and dust on his head**- **Behold** calls for us to pay attention! This man is coming from Saul's camp and presumably the observers know that is where he is from. His **torn** clothes and **dust** upon the head were a bad sign, for these were common signs in the near east of one who was mourning, usually for someone who had died (cf. Josh 7:6; 1Sa. 4:12). The torn clothes probably represented a rent heart or unrestrained grief, but the exact significance of the dust upon the head is less obvious (but see Walton's note below). (2Sa 13:19, 15:32).

[Walton](#) has an interesting thought on **dust on his head** - The practice of putting dirt, dust or ashes on one's head was a typical sign of mourning throughout the Old Testament and into the New Testament period. It is a practice also known from Mesopotamia and Canaan. Many mourning rites function as a means for the living to identify with the dead. It is easy to see how dust on the head would be a symbolic representation of burial. ([IVP Background Commentary-OT](#))

**And it came about when he came to David that he fell to the ground and prostrated himself**- We have not yet been told this man is an Amalekite but he knows who he is and he also knows how his people had mistreated Israel, so he is wise to hit the ground in front of David!

[Walton](#) on **prostrated himself** - The standard method of demonstrating obeisance in the ancient Near East was to bow to the ground. Egyptian tomb art is filled with examples of servants and royal officials prostrating themselves before the pharaoh. In the El Amarna tablets (fourteenth century B.C.) the format of each letter contains a greeting, followed by a set formula of honoring the pharaoh by bowing seven times forward and backwards. ([IVP Background Commentary-OT](#))

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**Behold** ([02009](#) [hinneh](#)) is an interjection meaning behold, look, now; if. "It is used often and expresses strong feelings, surprise, hope, expectation, certainty, thus giving vividness depending on its surrounding context." (Baker) [Hinneh](#) generally directs our mind to the text, imploring the reader to give it special attention. In short, the Spirit is trying to arrest our attention! [Spurgeon](#) reminds us that "**Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." I would add, **behold** is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah!"

**2 Samuel 1:3 Then David said to him, "From where do you come?" And he said to him, "I have escaped from the camp of Israel."**

- **From:** 2Ki 5:25
- I: Job 1:15-19
- 2 Samuel 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## DAVID'S INTERROGATION

**Then** - Term of progression in the narrative.

**David said to him, "From where do you come?"** - It is interesting David does not ask who he is but where he is from. So clearly the statement **came out of the camp from Saul** in verse 2 is the writer's commentary, for David and his men did not yet know where the Amalekite was from, nor did they know he was an Amalekite.

**And he said to him, "I have escaped from the camp of Israel**- The word **escaped** would have caused David's heart to sink, for one does not escape from a victorious setting. This "courier" had traveled from the scene of the battle at Mount Gilboa some 75-80 miles south to Ziklag, which would have taken several days on foot. The fact that he is an Amalekite suggests he was not likely a part of **the camp of Israel!**

**2 Samuel 1:4 David said to him, "How did things go? Please tell me." And he said, "The people have fled from the battle, and also many of the people have fallen and are dead; and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also."**

- **How** 1Sa 4:16

- **the people:** 1Sa 31:1-6 1Ch 10:1-6
- 2 Samuel 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**David said to him, "How did things go? Please tell me."** - As noted above, escaped in v3 has negative implications, but David still seems to hold out hope for a positive outcome.

**And he said, "The people have fled from the battle and also many of the people have fallen and are dead"** He begins with a non-committal description the people, which still does not identify who fled and therefore who was defeated. Who are the dead? David will now find out to his dismay.

**And Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also** - Now comes the news David dreaded to hear. He feared the worse and it had transpired. **The people** the man had referred to were Israelites. It is interesting he does not mention the other two sons. Possibly the covenant relationship between David and Jonathan was a story that had circulated among the people. Alternatively, this may simply be the writers way of helping understanding the intensity of David's subsequent response. It is interesting that he does not mention Saul's other sons or the armor bearer.

**Warren Wiersbe** - The Amalekite tried to deceive David and win his favor, for his account contradicts the inspired record (1 Sam. 31). He did not know David! Saul was not David's enemy, so David could not rejoice over Israel's inglorious defeat. Do you have enemies whose sorrows make you happy? If you do, carefully consider Proverbs 24:17 and Romans 12:14–15.(Borrow [With the Word](#))

## 2 Samuel 1:5 So David said to the young man who told him, "How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?"

- **know:** Pr 14:15 Pr 25:2
- 2 Samuel 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passage:

Proverbs 25:2 It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, But the glory of kings is to search out a matter.

## DAVID SEEKS AFFIRMATION OF THE BAD NEWS

**So David said to the young man who told him, "How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?"**- It is notable that David does not rejoice "Now, finally I am the king for my enemy is dead," which is what most men in his situation would have shouted. David in fact will compose a song but it is a eulogy. He was surely sad that Saul's sin had affected his kindred spirit Jonathan who also lost his life. Had Saul sought the Lord, the Lord would have protected Israel from the Philistines, and neither would have died in a battle. Sins of disobedient fathers sadly can have consequences on others who are close to them.

**Adam Clarke** - The whole account which this young man gives is a fabrication: in many of the particulars it is grossly *self-contradictory*. There is no *fact* in the case but the bringing of the *crown*, or *diadem*, and *bracelets* of Saul; which, as he appears to have been a plunderer of the slain, he found on the field of battle; and he brought them to David, and told the lie of having dispatched Saul merely to ingratiate himself with David."

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**David Guzik** on the Amalekite - Though the Bible does not specifically say it, Amalek is commonly regarded as an illustration of our fleshly, carnal nature. Consider these ways in which Amalek is similar to our fleshly nature:

- Amalek focused its attack on the tired and weak (Deuteronomy 25:17-18).
- Amalek does not fear God (Deuteronomy 25:17-18).
- God commanded a permanent state of war against Amalek (Exodus 17:16).
- The battle against Amalek is only won in the context of prayer and seeking God (Exodus 17:11).
- God promises to one day completely blot out the remembrance of Amalek (Exodus 17:14).
- Amalek is defeated by God's servant, Joshua (Exodus 17:13).
- Amalek was once first but will one day be last (Numbers 24:20).
- Amalek allies itself with other enemies in battle against God's people (Judges 3:13).

Using this picture, we see that Saul's failure to deal with Amalek when God told him to resulted in ruin, with an Amalekite delivering

the death-blow. In the same way, when we fail to deal with the flesh as God prompts us, we can expect that area of the flesh to come back and deliver some deadly strikes.

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**Walter Kaiser** - [goto page 191 in Hard Sayings of the Bible](#) - **How Did Saul Die?** Who is telling the truth? The narrator of 1 Samuel 31 or the Amalekite of 2 Samuel 1:6–10? Or to put the question in another way: Did Saul commit suicide, or was he killed by this Amalekite, as he claimed, at Saul's own request?

Although there have been attempts at harmonizing the two accounts, the effort always seems to fall short of being convincing. For example, as early as the first Christian century, Josephus tried to make the accounts fit each other. Josephus claimed (*Antiquities* 6, 370–72 [xiv.7]) that after Saul's armor-bearer refused to kill Saul, Saul tried to fall on his own sword, but he was too weak to do so. Saul turned and saw this Amalekite, who, upon the king's request, complied and killed him, having found the king leaning on his sword. Afterward the Amalekite took the king's crown and armband and fled, whereupon Saul's armor-bearer killed himself.

While everything seems to fit in this harmonization, there is one fact that is out of line: the armor-bearer. The armor-bearer was sufficiently convinced of Saul's death to follow his example (1 Sam 31:5). Thus, Josephus's greatest mistake was in trusting the Amalekite. Also, it is most improbable that the Amalekite found Saul leaning on his sword, an unlikely sequel of a botched attempt at suicide.

It is my conclusion that Saul did commit suicide, a violation of the law of God, and that the Amalekite was lying in order to obtain favor with the new administration.

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**Gleason Archer** - [goto page 185 in Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties](#) - **First Samuel 31 gives account of Saul's death that conflicts with another given in 2 Samuel 1. How can both be correct?**

1 Samuel 31:3–4 informs us that Saul was fatally wounded by a Philistine arrow at the disastrous battle of Mount Gilboa. Realizing that he was about to die, Saul himself appealed to his own armor bearer to thrust his sword through his heart and kill him immediately—"lest these uncircumcised [Philistines] come and pierce me through and make sport of me" (NASB). But since the armor bearer could not bring himself to take the life of his king, Saul took his own sword, fastened its hilt firmly in the ground, and then fell on it in such a way as to end his misery right then and there.

In 2 Samuel 1 we read that a certain Amalekite who had served in Saul's bodyguard fled from the battlefield and made his way to David's camp, in order to bring him news of Saul's death. According to the account he gave to David (vv. 6–10), he was summoned by King Saul to his side while he was hopelessly surrounded by the triumphant Philistines; and he was ordered by the king to take his life immediately, in order to end his misery from his fatal wounds. The Amalekite then complied with his request (v.10): "So I stood beside him and killed him, because I knew that he could not live after he had fallen. And I took the crown which was on his head and the bracelet which was on his arm, and I have brought them here to my lord" (NASB).

This presents obvious discrepancies with the account in 1 Samuel 31, but it is not presented as being an actual record of what happened during Saul's dying moments; it is only a record of what the Amalekite mercenary said had taken place. Coming with Saul's crown and bracelet in hand and presenting them before the new king of Israel, the Amalekite obviously expected a handsome reward and high preferment in the service of Saul's successor. In the light of the straightforward account in the previous chapter, we must conclude that the Amalekite was lying in order to gain a cordial welcome from David. But what had actually happened was that after Saul had killed himself, and the armorbearer had followed his lord's example by taking his own life (1 Sam. 31:5), the Amalekite happened by at that moment, recognized the king's corpse, and quickly stripped off the bracelet and crown before the Philistine troops discovered it. Capitalizing on his good fortune, the Amalekite then escaped from the bloody field and made his way down to David's headquarters in Ziklag. But his hoped-for reward turned out to be a warrant for his death; David had him killed on the spot, saying: "Your blood is on your head, for your mouth has testified against you, saying, 'I have killed the LORD's anointed'" (2 Sam. 1:16; NASB). His glib falsehood had brought him the very opposite of what he had expected, for he failed to foresee that David's high code of honor would lead him to make just the response he did.

It should be added that this particular Amalekite came from a different Amalekite tribe from that which Saul had earlier destroyed at God's command—the tribe over which Agag had ruled (1 Sam. 15:7–8). Those Amalekite lived between Havilah and Shur. But there were other Amalekites not involved in this campaign, some of whom raided David's settlement at Ziklag (1 Sam. 30).

**2 Samuel 1:6** The young man who told him said, "By chance I happened to be on Mount Gilboa, and **behold**, Saul was leaning on his spear. And behold, the chariots and the horsemen pursued him closely.

- **By chance I happened** Ru 2:3 1Sa 6:9 Lu 10:31
- **mount:** 2Sa 1:21 1Sa 28:4 1Sa 31:1
- **Saul:** 1Sa 31:2-7
- 2 Samuel 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## NOTHING HAPPENS BY CHANCE!

The young man who told him said, "By chance I happened to be on [Mount Gilboa](#) - No, he was not there by chance, but by choice and ultimately by divine providence, that God might use this Amalekite to convey the message of Saul's death to David.

And **behold** ([hinneh](#); Lxx = [idou](#)), Saul was leaning on his spear. And **behold** ([hinneh](#); Lxx = [idou](#)), the chariots and the horsemen pursued him closely - Note rare use of the doubling of **behold** ([hinneh](#); Lxx = [idou](#))! It is interesting that he mentions the spear, the weapon David would have all too familiar with and which might even recall to his mind Saul's attempts to spear him (1Sa 18:10-11+). Saul's spear of course was also a symbol of his authority (1Sa 26:11+). The Amalekite thinks he has some remarkable information for David, and surely thinks David will reward him for his detailed disclosure! The man's story is a fabrication because 1Sa 31:4+ says "Saul took his sword and fell on it", not that he was **was leaning on his spear**. Clearly Saul was already dead when the Amalekite discovered his body. The Amalekite statement that the Philistines pursued Saul is further fabrication but does reveal something we have not been told before about the Philistine attack on Israel -- the attack included their dread chariots (cf Jdg 4:3+, 1Sa 13:5+)!

**MacArthur** - Chariots and horsemen were a symbol of power and strength (cf. Ex 14:9; 1Sa 8:11; 13:5; 2Sa 8:4; 1Ki 4:26; 9:19; 10:26; 1Ch 19:6; 2Ch 1:14; 9:25; 12:3; 16:8; Da 11:40). The Philistines were in pursuit of Saul with an abundant number of warriors, making Saul's escape hopeless.

It is interesting that Josephus in the *Antiquities of the Jews* 6.14.7 tried to combine the two stories into one account. So much for his historicity in this particular scenario! [Utley](#) adds that "Saul made a crucial military mistake by attempting to engage the Philistines on the flat plains where their chariots could function. He left himself no way of escape. This is probably why he ran to Mount Gilboa." (See [SPECIAL TOPIC: CHARIOTS](#))

**TSK NOTE** - The story of this young man appears to be wholly a fiction, formed for the purpose of ingratiating himself with David, as the next probable successor to the crown. There is no fact in the case, except for the bringing of the diadem and bracelets of Saul, as a sufficient evidence of his death, which, as he appears to been a plunderer of the slain, he seems to have stripped from the dead body of the unfortunate monarch. It is remarkable, that Saul, who had forfeited his crown by his disobedience and ill-timed clemency with respect to the Amalekites, should now have the insignia of royalty stripped from his person by one of those very people.

**2 Samuel 1:7 "When he looked behind him, he saw me and called to me. And I said, 'Here I am.'**

- **Here am I:** 2Sa 9:6, 9:54 1Sa 22:12 Isa 6:8 Isa 65:1
- 2 Samuel 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE FABRICATED STORY CONTINUED

**When he looked behind him, he saw me and called to me. And I said, 'Here I am'**(Literally "behold me" = [hinneh](#); Lxx = [idou](#)) - The man's lies continues in an attempt to ingratiate himself to David.

[Utley](#) on **Here I am** - This is a Semitic idiom for a servant's availability to a superior's request (cf. Gen. 22:1,7,11; 27:1; 31:11; 46:2; Exod. 3:4; 1 Sam. 3:4,5,6,8,10; 22:12; 2 Sam. 1:7).

**2 Samuel 1:8 "He said to me, 'Who are you?' And I answered him, 'I am an Amalekite.'**

- **Amalekite:** Ge 14:7 Ex 17:8-16 Nu 24:20 De 25:17-19 1Sa 15:3 27:8 1Sa 30:1,13,17
- 2 Samuel 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



## Related Passages:

Exodus 17:14+ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this in a book as a memorial and recite it to Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven."

Deuteronomy 25:17-19+ Remember what Amalek did to you along the way when you came out from Egypt, how he met you along the way and attacked among you all the stragglers at your rear when you were faint and weary; and he did not fear God. 19"Therefore it shall come about when the LORD your God has given you rest from all your surrounding enemies, in the land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance to possess, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven; you must not forget.

1 Samuel 15:2-3+ "Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he set himself against him on the way while he was coming up from Egypt. 3'Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.'"

1 Samuel 15:28+ So Samuel said to him, "The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to your neighbor, who is better than you

## IRONY OF IDENTIFICATION OF AN AMALEKITE

**He said to me, 'Who are you?'** - He is recounting his conversation with Saul, which was a lie.

**And I answered him, 'I am an Amalekite'** - Can we not see the bitter irony, for it was Saul's failure to obey God and eradicate the Amalekites that resulted in his downfall (1Sa 15:2-3, 28+)! David's ears must have perked up at the news this man was an Amalekite! What had the Amalekites just done to David and his men at Ziklag? (1Sa 30:1-2, 13-18+) One can imagine that the town still reeked of smoke (see below), the smell of which can linger for weeks (or longer)! So with a bad smell in his nostrils and now a bad man (an enemy of Israel) in his presence, David's ember of righteous anger must have been in the process of igniting!

**Smoke smell** - After a fire in your building, it could take **several weeks** for the smells to go away. During this time, it's important to clean thoroughly and ventilate as much as possible to improve indoor air quality.

**2 Samuel 1:9 "Then he said to me, 'Please stand beside me and kill me, for agony has seized me because my life still lingers in me.'**

- 2 Samuel 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## AMALEKITE LIES THAT HE WAS AN ANGEL OF MERCY

**Then he said to me, 'Please stand beside me and kill me, for agony has seized me because my life still lingers in me'** - The Amalekite claims Saul gave him two commands, adding details which would he felt surely would make David see him as an "angel of mercy" who would obey the king's commands and put an end to Saul's agony.

**2 Samuel 1:10 "So I stood beside him and killed him, because I knew that he could not live after he had fallen. And I took the crown which was on his head and the bracelet which was on his arm, and I have brought them here to my lord."**

BGT 2 Samuel 1:10 κα π σην π α τ ν κα θ αν τ ω σα α τ ν τι δειν πι ο ζ σε τ αι με τ πε σε ν α τ ν κα λα β ο ν τ β α σ λει ο ν τ π τ ν κε φ α λ ν α τ ο κα τ ν χ λ ι δ ν α τ ν π το β ρ α χ ο ν ο ς α τ ο κα ν νο χ α α τ τ κυ ρ μου δε

LXE 2 Samuel 1:10 So I stood over him and slew him, because I knew he would not live after he was fallen; and I took the crown that was upon his head, and the bracelet that was upon his arm, and I have brought them hither to my lord.

KJV 2 Samuel 1:10 So I stood upon him, and slew him, because I was sure that he could not live after that he was fallen: and I took the crown that was upon his head, and the bracelet that was on his arm, and have

brought them hither unto my lord.

NET 2 Samuel 1:10 So I stood over him and put him to death, since I knew that he couldn't live in such a condition. Then I took the crown which was on his head and the bracelet which was on his arm. I have brought them here to my lord."

CSB 2 Samuel 1:10 So I stood over him and killed him because I knew that after he had fallen he couldn't survive. I took the crown that was on his head and the armband that was on his arm, and I've brought them here to my lord."

ESV 2 Samuel 1:10 So I stood beside him and killed him, because I was sure that he could not live after he had fallen. And I took the crown that was on his head and the armband that was on his arm, and I have brought them here to my lord."

NIV 2 Samuel 1:10 "So I stood over him and killed him, because I knew that after he had fallen he could not survive. And I took the crown that was on his head and the band on his arm and have brought them here to my lord."

NLT 2 Samuel 1:10 "So I killed him," the Amalekite told David, "for I knew he couldn't live. Then I took his crown and his armband, and I have brought them here to you, my lord."

- **killed:** Jdg 1:7, Jdg 9:54 1Sa 22:18 31:4,5 Mt 7:2
- **crown:** 2Sa 12:30 La 5:16
- 2 Samuel 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### SAUL'S CROWN AND BRACELET AFFIRM HIS CLAIM

**So** (therefore , for this reason) - Because Saul was in agony and had given him a command.

**I stood beside him and killed him, because I knew that he could not live after he had fallen. And I took the crown which was on his head and the bracelet which was on his arm, and I have brought them here to my lord** - An Amalekite calling David **my lord!** What a hypocrite! He had prostrated himself to David as lord and now mouths lying words in an attempt to deceive David. He would have been honest had he said "my enemy!" Presumably he was the first to come to Saul's body (for Philistines would never have left Saul's crown) and thereby obtained the crown and bracelet which were presumptive evidence that he was telling the truth. Little did he know that this validation of his lie would cost his life!

The question this text raises is where did this Amalekite get the crown and bracelet, for we know the Philistines had searched the battle field for spoil, "the next day...to strip the slain." (1Sa 31:8+) and that they identified Saul. Presumably his royal robe would have given away his identity.

**Vos** says, "There are at least two particulars that cast real doubt on the validity of the Amalekite's story: The intimation that Saul was alone and unattended by Israelite warriors, and that Saul would call on a pagan Amalekite to kill him in order to save himself from the uncircumcised Philistines. Evidently, the Amalekite found Saul after he had died, but before the Philistines came to strip the dead on the battlefield. He made off with the king's crown and arm band, and took them to David with the report that he had killed the king—no doubt hoping for some reward from David."

**TSK** on **bracelet:** This was probably worn as an ensign of royalty, as is frequently the case in the East. When the Khalif Cayem Bemrillah granted the investiture of certain dominions to an Eastern prince, the ceremony was performed by sending him letters patent, a crown, chain, and bracelets. The bracelet, says Mr. Morier, are ornaments fastened above the elbows, composed of precious stones of great value, and are only worn by the king and his sons.

**Walton** - The headwear mentioned here would more accurately be rendered "diadem," referring to an object hung at the forehead or on the front of a headpiece. It often is a symbol of authority. As early as the Sumerian period the diadem is one of the insignias of royal power bestowed on the king by the god Anu. Perhaps the best-known example of this in the ancient world is the serpent (uraeus) on the front of a pharaoh's crown, which was believed to be a protective device. In the descriptions of Israel's high priest's garments the diadem is generally associated with a "golden plate" (NIV; see comment on Lev 8:9). The armband is not referred to in any other Old Testament passages. Armbands were a frequent adornment in the first millennium. The earliest examples found by archaeologists in Israel date to the eleventh century. Armbands and a diadem are mentioned in a list of jewelry that the Assyrian king Sennacherib gave to his son (and successor) Esarhaddon. ([IVP Background Commentary-OT](#))

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[Uitley](#) on **fallen** - This same VERB (BDB 656, KB 709, *Qal*/INFINITIVE CONSTRUCT) is used several times in this context.

1. 1 Sam. 31:1 – to fall in battle
2. 1 Sam. 31:4,5 – to commit suicide
3. 1 Sam. 31:8 – same as #1
4. 2 Sam. 1:2 – pay homage
5. 2 Sam. 1:4 – same as #1
6. 2 Sam. 1:10 – in a weak state or fall to the ground
7. 2 Sam. 1:12 – same as #1
8. 1:19,25,27 – shame of losing the battle

**2 Samuel 1:11 Then David took hold of his clothes and tore them, and so also did all the men who were with him.**

- rent: 2Sa 3:31 13:31 Ge 37:29,34 Ac 14:14
- likewise: Ro 12:15
- 2 Samuel 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Proverbs 17:5 He who mocks the poor taunts his Maker; **He who rejoices at calamity will not go unpunished.**

### DAVID'S INTENSE REACTION TO THE BAD NEWS

**Then** - Marks progression in the narrative and shows David's reaction to the news, which was not sham but sincere. David and his men were visibly shaken over Saul's death.

**David Guzik** When David heard of Saul's death, he mourned. We might have expected celebration at the death of this great enemy and rival, but David mourned.. Out of pure jealousy, hatred, spite, and ungodliness, Saul took away David's family, home, career, security, and the best years of David's life – and Saul was utterly unrepentant to the end. Yet David mourned and wept and fasted when he learned of Saul's death. This contrast powerfully demonstrates that our hatred, bitterness, and unforgiveness are chosen, not imposed on us. As much as Saul did against David, David chose to become better instead of bitter.

**David took hold of his clothes and tore them, and so also did all the men who were with him** - Like king, like men, so all expressed immediate and intense grief and emotion to the news of Saul and Jonathan's death. The Amalekite knows he has struck a chord in David's heart, but has no idea that the very "boomerang" he had just thrown was soon to return to strike him fatally in the head!

Is there not a touch of poetic irony here? Saul had torn Samuel's robe symbolizing the tearing of the kingdom from him (1Sa 15:27-29+). Here David tears his own robe because Saul's kingdom has been torn from him.

**Walton** - Along with placing ashes in the hair, the tearing of clothing was a common form of mourning in the ancient Near East. One example outside the Bible is found in the Ugaritic Epic of Aqhat (c. 1600 B.C.), in which the sister of the hero tears her father's garment as she foretells a coming drought. Such an act often implied grief over the death of a relative, friend or prominent individual. ([IVP Background Commentary-OT](#))

**THOUGHT** - David and his mighty men showed sincere sorrow and grief. Are you too macho to cry? "They were not ashamed to grieve. Today, some people consider expressing emotions to be a sign of weakness. Those who wish to appear strong try to hide their feelings. But expressing our grief can help us deal with our intense sorrow when a loved one dies." (Life Application Study Bible [borrow](#)) As an aside the old Puritans used to pray for the gift of tears! When was the last time you wept over your sin against your Father? Listen to Keith Greene's soul piercing song [My Eyes Are Dry](#) ([here is the long version](#))

"The old Puritans used to pray for **the gift of tears.**' A man has the power to harden himself against one of God's greatest gifts. If in order to dissolve a piece of ice, you take a hammer and smash it up, you simply break it into so many pieces of ice; but put the ice out in the sunshine and it quickly disappears. That is just the difference between man's handling of wrong and God's. Man's handling may cause it to crumble, but it is

only so much crumbled-up wrong; when God handles it, it becomes repentance, and the man turns to God and his life becomes a sacrament of experimental repentance." --Oswald Chambers, in Baffled to Fight Better

**Don Anderson** - David had a spirit of forgiveness. This is also seen in JESUS as he is being nailed to the cross. He prays, "Father, forgive them, for they are not knowing what they are doing." STEPHEN reflects this same attitude in Acts 7 when he is being stoned to death.

**Matthew Henry** - Verses 11-16. David was sincere in his mourning for Saul; and all with him humbled themselves under the hand of God, laid so heavily upon Israel by this defeat. The man who brought the tidings, David put to death, as a murderer of his prince. David herein did not do unjustly; the Amalekite confessed the crime. If he did as he said, he deserved to die for treason; and his lying to David, if indeed it were a lie, proved, as sooner or later that sin will prove, lying against himself. Hereby David showed himself zealous for public justice, without regard to his own private interest.

**2 Samuel 1:12 They mourned and wept and fasted until evening for Saul and his son Jonathan and for the people of the LORD and the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword.**

- Est 4:3; Joel 2:12 Ps 35:13-14 Pr 24:17 Jer 9:1 Am 6:6 Mt 5:44 2Co 11:29 1Pe 3:8
- 2 Samuel 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Psalm 35:13-14+ But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth; I humbled my soul with fasting, And my prayer kept returning to my bosom. 14 I went about as though it were my friend or brother; I bowed down mourning, as one who sorrows for a mother.

Matthew 5:44+ "But I say to you, **love** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) your enemies and **pray** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) for those who persecute you,

### MOURNING, WEeping AND FASTING FOR THE DAY

**They mourned and wept and fasted until evening for Saul and his son Jonathan and for the people of the LORD and the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword** - Weeping, wailing, lamenting and fasting were how people in the ancient near east expressed intense grief. David and his men practiced the Proverb which says "Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles." (Pr 24:17) David's response was that of a man after God's own heart.

**THOUGHT** - How do you respond when your enemy (or opponent at work, school, etc) stumbles and/or falls? How you respond says a lot about your heart and character and whether or not you are depending on the Holy Spirit to live your life ([see above](#)) or on your own strength (which would rejoice over a fallen opponent)! Flesh rejoices with failure of a foe and gives clear indication we are not filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18+).

**David Guzik** David heard this life-changing news – the throne of Israel was now vacant, and it seemed that the royal anointing he received some 20 years before might now be fulfilled with the crown set on his head. Nevertheless, David expressed little thought of himself. "His generous soul, oblivious to itself, poured out a flood of the noblest tears man ever shed 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." (Meyer)

**2 Samuel 1:13 David said to the young man who told him, "Where are you from?" And he answered, "I am the son of an alien, an Amalekite."**

- 2Sa 1:8
- 2 Samuel 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### DAVID CONFIRMS COURIER IS AN AMALEKITE

David said to the young man who told him, "Where are you from?" And he answered, "I am the son of an alien, an Amalekite." NET = "I am an Amalekite, the son of a resident foreigner." (2Sa 1:13NET) While he might have been under Saul's command, more likely he was in the field as a scavenger for spoil, an action which would be most apropos for an Amalekite!

**2 Samuel 1:14 Then David said to him, "How is it you were not afraid to stretch out your hand to destroy the LORD'S anointed?"**

- **How:** Nu 12:8 1Sa 31:4 2Pe 2:10
- **stretch forth:** 1Sa 24:6 26:9 Ps 105:15
- **Lord's anointed** 1Sa 24:1–15; 1Sa 26:1–20
- 2 Samuel 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## DAVID REMINDS HIM SAUL WAS LORD'S ANOINTED

**Pritchard** - If you think David was happy to hear of Saul's death, just ask the Amalekite. ([The End of the Beginning](#))

**Then** - Marks progression in narrative and a turn for the worse in regard to the Amalekite.

**David said to him, "How is it you were not afraid to stretch out your hand to destroy the LORD'S anointed(mashiach; Lxx - Christos)** - This is the very reason David refused to kill Saul when he had the chance. Note David does not commend him for relieving Saul of his agony (not realizing he had lied). , David had on two occasions refused to take Saul's life because he was anointed by God, and would expect no less from others. This principle is found in Romans 13:1-7 which shows that God has placed rulers in authority over us, and we should respect their positions.

**Walton** makes an interesting observation that if David had "received the actions of the Amalekite as having been done in his service, he would be subject to the accusation that he had commissioned an agent to execute Saul. It was important for him to distance himself from the actual killing of Saul, even if it could be justified as a mercy killing." ([IVP Background Commentary-OT](#))

**ESV Study Bible** - As a sojourner who was subject to the laws of Israel (Lev. 24:22), the Amalekite should have recognized the sanctity of Saul as his king (contrast Saul's armor-bearer; 1 Sam. 31:4–5). David himself had refrained from killing Saul (1 Samuel 24; 26). Clearly, David did not ascend to the throne through violence or disloyalty (cf. note on 2 Sam. 1:1–27).

**THOUGHT** - "A life of deceit leads to disaster. The man lied to gain some personal reward for killing David's rival, but he misread David's character. If David had rewarded him for murdering the king, David would have shared his guilt. Instead, David had the messenger killed. Lying can bring disaster upon the liar, even for something he or she has not done." (Life Application Study Bible [borrow](#))

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**Anointed** (04899) [mashiach/masiyah](#) from **mashach** = to smear, anoint) is Hebrew word that in almost all OT uses is found in a compound phrase. It is a masculine noun which can function as an adjective (as in Lev 4:3,5, 16) which means "anointed." This Hebrew word is used several times to prophetically picture the Messiah, the Christ (1Sa 2:10, 35, Da 9:25-26). In the OT, priests, prophets and kings were anointed and all these offices were fulfilled in "the Mashiach," the Messiah. **Swanson** - anointed one, i.e., a person having sacred oil poured ceremonially on one's head, and so become a person with special authority and function, with the implication of one having the choice and approval of God. **Lxx** translates **mashiach** in this verse (and most of the 38 uses in the OT) with the adjective [Christos](#) which describes one who has been anointed, symbolizing appointment to a task; as a title for Jesus, designating him as the Messiah sent from God (Jn 1:41, Jn 4:25 [Greek = [messias](#)], Ro 6:4). BDAG - [Christos](#) = "fulfiller of Israelite expectation of a deliverer, the Anointed One, the Messiah, the Christ."

**Mashiach - 30v - Anointed(1), anointed(34), anointed ones(2), Messiah(2).** Lev. 4:3; Lev. 4:5; Lev. 4:16; Lev. 6:22; 1 Sam. 2:10; 1 Sam. 2:35; 1 Sam. 12:3; 1 Sam. 12:5; 1 Sam. 16:6; 1 Sam. 24:6; 1 Sam. 24:10; 1 Sam. 26:9; 1 Sam. 26:11; 1 Sam. 26:16; 1 Sam. 26:23; 2 Sam. 1:14; 2 Sam. 1:16; 2 Sam. 1:21; 2 Sam. 19:21; 2 Sam. 22:51; 2 Sam. 23:1; 1 Chr. 16:22; 2 Chr. 6:42; Ps. 2:2; Ps. 18:50; Ps. 20:6; Ps. 28:8; Ps. 84:9; Ps. 89:38; Ps. 89:51; Ps. 105:15; Ps. 132:10; Ps. 132:17; Isa. 45:1; Lam. 4:20; Dan. 9:25; Dan. 9:26; Hab. 3:13

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**Related Resource:**

- [What is the anointing? What does it mean to be anointed?](#)

**2 Samuel 1:15 And David called one of the young men and said, "Go, cut him down." So he struck him and he died.**

BGT 2 Samuel 1:15 κα κ λεσεν Δαυιδ ν τ ν παιδαρ ων α το κα ε πεν προσελθ ν π ντησον α τ κα π ταξεν α τ ν κα π θανεν

LXE 2 Samuel 1:15 And David called one of his young men, and said, Go and fall upon him: and he smote him, and he died.

KJV 2 Samuel 1:15 And David called one of the young men, and said, Go near, and fall upon him. And he smote him that he died.

NET 2 Samuel 1:15 Then David called one of the soldiers and said, "Come here and strike him down!" So he struck him down, and he died.

CSB 2 Samuel 1:15 Then David summoned one of his servants and said, "Come here and kill him!" The servant struck him, and he died.

ESV 2 Samuel 1:15 Then David called one of the young men and said, "Go, execute him." And he struck him down so that he died.

NIV 2 Samuel 1:15 Then David called one of his men and said, "Go, strike him down!" So he struck him down, and he died.

NLT 2 Samuel 1:15 Then David said to one of his men, "Kill him!" So the man thrust his sword into the Amalekite and killed him.

- **Go:** 2Sa 4:10-12 Jdg 8:20 1Sa 22:17,18 1Ki 2:25,34,46 Job 5:12 Pr 11:18
- 2 Samuel 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**WASTE HIM!  
ON THE SPOT!**

**And David called one of the young men and said, "Go, cut him down."** - You can picture the face of the Amalekite who was convinced he would be generously rewarded by bringing news of "good tidings" tidings that David's enemy was dead! Clearly David believed the account and had the Amalekite executed on the basis of his own testimony of having slain the king, the LORD'S anointed. These appear to be David's first orders as the new king.

**So he struck him and he died** - David's young man obeyed without question. We will see a repeat of this story in the lives of the men who killed Ish-bosheth, thinking they would be rewarded for their action! (Read 2Sa 4:5-12+).

**THOUGHT-** Before we leave the Amalekite, thinking "How horrible was this man," we need to look in the mirror and ask if we have you ever brought news to another person with impure motives like the Amalekite? Perhaps we were seeking a reward, accolade or affirmation from the person to whom we brought the news!

**2 Samuel 1:16 David said to him, "Your blood is on your head, for your mouth has testified against you, saying, 'I have killed the LORD'S anointed.'"**

- **blood:** Ge 9:5,6 Lev 20:9,11-13,16,27 De 19:10 Jos 2:19 Jdg 9:24 1Sa 26:9 1Ki 2:32,33,37 Eze 18:13 33:5 Mt 27:25 Ac 20:26
- **mouth:** 2Sa 1:10 Job 15:6 Pr 6:2 Lu 19:22 Ro 3:19
- 2 Samuel 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Related Passage:**

Leviticus 19:18+ (DAVID PRACTICED THIS PRECEPT --- DO I?) "You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD.

**SELF TESTIMONY**

## CONVICTS THE AMALEKITE

David said to him, "Your blood is on your head (cf Josh. 2:19; 1Ki 2:32, 37; Eze 33:4), for your mouth has testified against you, saying, 'I have killed the LORD'S anointed - Your blood is on your head, indicates the Amalekite was executed based on his own testimony. David sought no other witnesses! David's acceptance of the Amalekite's mercy killing would have been tantamount to David accepting the killing and in a sense participating in it, something he had repeatedly refused to do. David cleared himself of any part in Saul's death.

Had he accepted the story and rewarded the Amalekite, blood would have been on his hands and he would have ascended to the throne with a unclean conscience!

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### 2 Samuel 1:1-16 God Doesn't Need Help - Theodore Epp

Second Samuel opens with the account of a messenger coming to David and telling him that Saul and Jonathan and many others were dead.

Thinking to gain David's approval and possibly receive a reward from him, this messenger, who was an Amalekite, told David that it was at his hands Saul had died.

He said he had come upon Saul, who was still alive even after falling on his own sword. Saul had pleaded with him to kill him before the Philistines came upon him and mutilated his body while he was still alive.

The young man claimed he did as Saul requested. Some Bible students believe the young man told the truth; others believe he lied, but whatever the correct version is, he took his story to the wrong man.

David had always had a strong aversion to raising his hand against God's anointed. Neither would he permit any of his own men to do it. So when this young Amalekite claimed to have killed Saul, David had him put to death.

David did not want what the Lord did not give to him. He would not take by force what God had promised.

So many of us make the mistake of feeling we have to help God fulfill His promises.

"Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all" (1 Chron. 29:11).

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### 2 Samuel 1:17 Then David chanted with this lament over Saul and Jonathan his son,

- **lament:** 2Sa 1:19 Ge 50:11 2Ch 35:25 Jer 9:17-21
- 2 Samuel 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## DAVID'S FUNERAL DIRGE AN EULOGY TO SAUL & JONATHAN

**Then David chanted with this lament over Saul and Jonathan his son** - David the musically talented sweet psalmist of Israel laments Saul and Jonathan in a song he pens in their honor. David instead of rejoicing, is lamenting the loss of the life of Saul and Jonathan. And recall the context -- Saul has sought David's life for over 10 years, which one would have thought might have filled David's cup of bitterness and hatred to the brim! But David shows himself to be like God in his forgiving spirit, one more evidence of why he is called a man after God's own heart!

**MacArthur - lament.** David chose to have both Saul and his noble son Jonathan remembered through this lament, which would be taught to all Israel as a national war song.

**ESV Study Bible** - As part of the historical records of David's reign, the lament provides lasting evidence of David's innocent ascent to the throne (cf. notes on 2Sa 1:1–27 and 2Sa 1:4). Though grievously wronged by Saul, David nonetheless chose to remember Saul in a generous way, setting an example of graciously emphasizing the good that someone has done after that person dies. The

**Walton** - Examples of funeral laments have been found in the ancient Near Eastern literatures. Perhaps best known is [Gilgamesh's](#) lament for his deceased friend Enkidu in tablet eight of the [Gilgamesh Epic](#). This calls on others to share in the mourning and eulogizes the good qualities and heroic deeds of the deceased. ([IVP Background Commentary-OT](#))

**Vanderwall** points out, “Composed prior to 1000 B.C., the poetic lament which David chanted over Saul and Jonathan has made an impression upon those who have studied it. The lament has been described as one of the most poignant eulogies ever written. Another writes that it is one of the most eloquent expressions of sorrow in the most genuine sense recorded in ancient history.”

**Matthew Henry** - Verses 17-27. Kasheth, or "the bow," probably was the title of this mournful, funeral song. David does not commend Saul for what he was not; and says nothing of his piety or goodness. Jonathan was a dutiful son, Saul an affectionate father, therefore dear to each other. David had reason to say, that Jonathan's love to him was wonderful. Next to the love between Christ and his people, that affection which springs from it, produces the strongest friendship. The trouble of the Lord's people, and triumphs of his enemies, will always grieve true believers, whatever advantages they may obtain by them.

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## 2 Samuel 1:17-27 An Emergency Of The Spirit

David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son. —2 Samuel 1:17

In March 2011, a devastating tsunami struck Japan, taking nearly 16,000 lives as it obliterated towns and villages along the coast. Writer and poet Gretel Erlich visited Japan to witness and document the destruction. When she felt inadequate to report what she was seeing, she wrote a poem about it. In a PBS NewsHour interview she said, “My old friend William Stafford, a poet now gone, said, ‘A poem is an emergency of the spirit.’”

We find poetry used throughout the Bible to express deep emotion, ranging from joyful praise to anguished loss. When King Saul and his son Jonathan were killed in battle, David was overwhelmed with grief (2 Sam. 1:1-12). He poured out his soul in a poem he called “the Song of the Bow”: “Saul and Jonathan were beloved and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided. . . . How the mighty have fallen in the midst of the battle! . . . I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; you have been very pleasant to me” (vv.23-26).

When we face “an emergency of the spirit”—whether glad or sad—our prayers can be a poem to the Lord. While we may stumble to articulate what we feel, our heavenly Father hears our words as a true expression of our hearts. By David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Sometimes I do not pray in words—  
I take my heart in my two hands  
And hold it up before the Lord—  
I am so glad He understands.  
—Nicholson

God does more than hear words; He reads hearts.

INSIGHT: Although Saul had treated David as his enemy, David did not treat Saul as his. When Saul and his son Jonathan died in battle, David honored them in the song in today's passage, which opens and closes with the refrain “How the mighty have fallen!” (2 Sa 1:19,27).

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## The Last Call

How the mighty have fallen! 2 Samuel 1:27

Today's Scripture & Insight: 2 Samuel 1:17–27

After serving his country for two decades as a helicopter pilot, James returned home to serve his community as a teacher. But he missed helicopters, so he took a job flying medical evacuations for a local hospital. He flew until late in his life.

Now it was time to say goodbye to him. As friends, family, and uniformed co-workers stood vigil at the cemetery, a colleague called in one last mission over the radio. Soon the distinctive sound of rotors beating the air could be heard. A helicopter circled over the memorial garden, hovered briefly to pay its respects, then headed back to the hospital. Not even the military personnel who were present could hold back the tears.

When King Saul and his son Jonathan were killed in battle, David wrote an elegy for the ages called “the lament of the bow” (2 Samuel 1:18). “A gazelle lies slain on your heights,” he sang. “How the mighty have fallen!” (v. 19). Jonathan was David's closest friend and brother-in-arms. And although David and Saul had been enemies, David honored them both. “Weep for Saul,” he wrote. “I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother” (vv. 24, 26).

Even the best goodbyes are oh-so-difficult. But for those who trust in the Lord, the memory is much more sweet than bitter, for it is never forever. How good it is when we can honor those who have served others! By: Tim Gustafson ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright](#)



Lord, we thank You for those who serve their communities as First Responders. We humbly ask You for their safety.

We honor the Creator when we honor the memory of those who honored Him.

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**Samuel 1:17-27 Compliments For An Enemy** (ED: I do not like the title for David never once called Saul "enemy")

Why did David say that Saul and Jonathan were "beloved and pleasant in their lives"? (2 Samuel 1:23). We can understand why he would say this of Jonathan, his good friend. But why say this of King Saul, who had brought him so much sorrow?

There were good things David could say of Jonathan that he could not say of Saul. Yet, instead of pointing out Saul's faults and failures, he commended what was good in him: his courage, his military victories, and his prosperous kingdom (2 Samuel 1:21-24).

David's graciousness causes me to wonder: How often have I brooded over and judged the flaws of my opponents? How often have I been offended when others have found good in those who have harmed me? How much do I dwell on the bad I see in someone rather than the good that God and others can see?

The Bible says that we need to leave judgment in the Lord's hands, for when Jesus returns He will "reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God" (1 Corinthians 4:5).

Do we focus only on the traits that make our enemies so unlikable? Accentuating the positive qualities of those who trouble us is a good way to deal with resentment, and to transform our hatred into love (Matthew 5:44). —David H. Roper ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

We're told to love our enemies  
Who in this life we face,  
For showing love that's not deserved  
Reveals to them God's grace.  
—Bosch

It's hard to hate someone when you're complimenting

**2 Samuel 1:18 and he told them to teach the sons of Judah the song of the bow; behold, it is written in the book of Jashar.**

BGT 2 Samuel 1:18 κα ε πεν το διδ ξαι το ς υ ο ς Ιουδα δο γ γραπται π βιβλ ου το εθο ς

LXE 2 Samuel 1:18 And he gave orders to teach it the sons of Juda: behold, it is written in the book of Right.

KJV 2 Samuel 1:18 (Also he bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow: behold, it is written in the book of Jasher.)

NET 2 Samuel 1:18 (He gave instructions that the people of Judah should be taught "The Bow." Indeed, it is written down in the Book of Yashar.)

CSB 2 Samuel 1:18 and he ordered that the Judahites be taught The Song of the Bow. It is written in the Book of Jashar:

ESV 2 Samuel 1:18 and he said it should be taught to the people of Judah; behold, it is written in the Book of Jashar. He said:

NIV 2 Samuel 1:18 and ordered that the men of Judah be taught this lament of the bow (it is written in the Book of Jashar):

NLT 2 Samuel 1:18 and he commanded that it be taught to the people of Judah. It is known as the Song of the Bow, and it is recorded in The Book of Jashar.

- **teach:** Ge 49:8 De 4:10
- **bow:** {Kasheth,} or the bow, was probably the title of the following threnody; so called, in the oriental style, because Saul's death was occasioned by that weapon, and because the bow of Jonathan, out of which "the arrow was shot beyond the lad," (1 Sa 20:36,) is celebrated in this song.
- **the book:** Jos 10:13

- **Jasher**: or, the upright, So LXX. the book of the law;" the Arabic, "the book of Ashee: this is the book of Samuel." This book was probably a collection of divine odes, written to commemorate remarkable events.
- 2 Samuel 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE SONG OF THE BOW

**and he told them to teach the sons of Judah the song of the bow-** This song was to be taught in Judah. While the meaning of song of the bow is not certain, it is interesting that Saul's initial severe wound was the result of an arrow from a bow (1Sa 31:3+ - although David apparently would not know this fact). Bow may refer to Jonathan as 2Sa 1:22 mentions "the bow of Jonathan."

**THOUGHT** - As you read David's eulogy, see if you can discern even one negative word (direct or implied) in David's description of Saul. I can save you the time (although I still want you to read it) - You will not find one negative word about Saul from David's pen! Oh, to be a man after God's own heart like David! And David had not even heard Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount - "You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.' **But I say to you, love** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) your enemies and **pray** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) for those who persecute you so that you may be sons of your Father (**NET** = "SO THAT YOU MAY BE LIKE") who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous." (Mt 5:43-45+) (**NET NOTE** on "*so that you may be sons of your Father...*" - Here the focus is **not on attaining a relationship** (becoming a child of God) but rather on **being the kind of person who shares the characteristics of God Himself** (a frequent meaning of the Semitic idiom "son of")") (How did David do this? See discussion on [THOUGHT below](#))

**NET Note** on "be taught the bow." - The reference to "the bow" is very difficult here. Some interpreters (e.g., S. R. Driver, P. K. McCarter, Jr.) suggest deleting the word from the text (cf. NAB, TEV), but there does not seem to be sufficient evidence for doing so. Others (cf. KJV) understand the reference to be elliptical, meaning "the use of the bow." The verse would then imply that with the deaths of Saul and Jonathan having occurred, a period of trying warfare is about to begin, requiring adequate preparation for war on the part of the younger generation. Various other views may also be found in the secondary literature. However, it seems best to understand the word here to be a reference to the name of a song (i.e., "The Bow"), most likely the poem that follows in vv. 19-27 (cf. ASV, NASB, NRSV, CEV, NLT); NIV "this lament of the bow." To make this clear the words "the song of" are supplied in the translation.

**McGee** points out, "Saul had taught Israel something. He made a contribution. You see, the Israelites had no iron weapons of war, so Saul taught them to be bowmen. The bow and arrow was a formidable weapon. Many of our ancestors would testify to that. The Indians used the bow and arrow to hold back their enemies and win many battles."

**behold** ([hinneh](#); Lxx = [idou](#)), **it is written in the book of Jasher** - **Jasher** means "the Righteous One" and David is saying that the Book of Jasher contained ancient poetic accounts of heroic deeds (cf. Josh 10:13+) but such a book has not been preserved in the [canon](#). This song was still quoted in the Maccabean period (cf. 1 Macc. 9:20-21).

**Believer's Study Bible** - The **Book of Jasher** was a collection of ancient hero-songs and is lost. "The Bow" here apparently refers to a martial ode which David took, at least in part, from the lost Book of Jasher.

**Guzik** - We shouldn't think that this is a "missing" book of the Bible. It is *completely unjustified leap* over logic to say that if the Bible *mentions* an ancient writing, and if that ancient writing has any material in common with biblical books, that writing is genuinely Scripture and is a "lost" book of the Bible. Our Bibles are complete and completely inspired.

**Utley** on **song of the bow** - The [Masoretic Text](#) has only "the people of Judah should be taught the bow." The word "bow" is missing in the LXX. The Peshitta has "teach the children of Judah the use of the bow." However, the UBS Text Project supports the [Masoretic Text](#) inclusion of "the bow" with a "B" rating (some doubt). The bow may refer to (1) how Saul was killed by the Philistine archers (1 Samuel 31; LXX), (2) a tribute to Jonathan's use of his bow in battle (2 Sam. 1:22), (3) a call for Judah to prepare for war (Peshitta), (4) the funeral dirge for Saul and Jonathan.

**2 Samuel 1:19 "Your beauty, O Israel, is slain on your high places! How have the mighty fallen!"**

LXE 2 Samuel 1:19 Set up a pillar, O Israel, for the slain that died upon thy high places: how are the mighty fallen!

KJV 2 Samuel 1:19 The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places: how are the mighty fallen!

NET 2 Samuel 1:19 The beauty of Israel lies slain on your high places! How the mighty have fallen!

CSB 2 Samuel 1:19 The splendor of Israel lies slain on your heights. How the mighty have fallen!

ESV 2 Samuel 1:19 "Your glory, O Israel, is slain on your high places! How the mighty have fallen!

NIV 2 Samuel 1:19 "Your glory, O Israel, lies slain on your heights. How the mighty have fallen!

NLT 2 Samuel 1:19 Your pride and joy, O Israel, lies dead on the hills! Oh, how the mighty heroes have fallen!

NRS 2 Samuel 1:19 Your glory, O Israel, lies slain upon your high places! How the mighty have fallen!

NJB 2 Samuel 1:19 Does the splendour of Israel lie dead on your heights? How did the heroes fall?

- **beauty:** 2Sa 1:23 De 4:7,8 1Sa 31:8 Isa 4:2 53:2 La 2:1 Zec 11:7,10
- **how:** 2Sa 1:25,27 La 5:16
- 2 Samuel 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE GLORY OF SAUL & JONATHAN SLAIN ON GILBOA

**Your beauty, O Israel, is slain on your high places!** - CSB- "The splendor of Israel" Mount Gilboa, where Saul died.

**How have the mighty** ([gibbor](#); Lxx = [dunatos](#) - possessing power) **fallen** ("slain," "lies dead") - This is David's theme in his lament. **NLT** = "How the mighty heroes have fallen!" David used the very word to describe his own men, the "mighty [gibbor](#) men of David" (2Sa 23:8+). David places great emphasis on the fact that both were mighty men, repeating "mighty" in 2Sa 1:25, 27.

**THOUGHT** - David's song is a beautiful example of not returning evil for evil which is the fallen world's way, but instead returning good for evil (once he almost did not do this - 1Sa 25:21+ but God sent Abigail to the rescue!) As Paul wrote "**Do not be overcome** ([present imperative with a negative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) by evil, but **overcome** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) evil with good." (Ro 12:21+). How did David do this? I will submit to you that the same way and the only way you and I can do this - by the power of the the Holy Spirit giving us the desire to do it and power to follow through (see Php 2:13NLT+). You say David was in the OT and the Holy Spirit was not as active. 1Sa 16:13+ suggests that the Holy Spirit was continually active in David's life (except of course when he sinned and grieved or quenched Him) for the text clearly says "and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David **from that day forward.**" Note "from that day forward," which I think includes the day he learned of Saul and Jonathan's deaths and wrote a [eulogy](#) (speech in praise of or in honor of). A natural man cannot do that! I submit that David was a Spirit empowered man when he wrote this song honoring the man who had sought his life for 10 years!

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**Mighty** ([01368](#)) [gibbor](#) cp related verb **gabar** = be strong, accomplish, excel, prevail) is from a root which is commonly associated with warfare and has to do with the strength and vitality of the successful warrior. And thus this adjective means powerful, strong, brave, mighty. Warrior. Hero. **Gibbor** is used of God Himself -- **Jehovah** is "the God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the **mighty** and the awesome God" (Dt 10:17), the "King of glory, Jehovah strong and **mighty**, Jehovah **mighty** in battle" (Ps 24:8), "a victorious **warrior** ([gibbor](#))" (Zeph 3:17), the "**Mighty** One ([gibbor](#) - in context a prophecy of the Messiah)" (Ps 45:3)

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**QUESTION** - [What is the significance of the words, "How the mighty have fallen!" \(2 Samuel 1:19, 25, 27\)?](#)

**ANSWER** - At the end of 1 Samuel, Saul and Jonathan are killed in Israel's battle against the Philistines (1 Samuel 31:4–6). When [David](#) hears of their deaths, he sings a song of lament, called "the Song of the Bow" ([2 Samuel 1:18](#), BSB), that includes the words, "How the mighty have fallen!" (2 Samuel 1:19 and 27). The rest of the song, against the backdrop of David's relationships with Saul and David, illustrates the significance of those words.

Saul, from the tribe of Benjamin, was chosen by God and anointed by Samuel to be Israel's first king (1 Samuel 10:24). Saul's administration was still young when he disobeyed God and was rejected by God as king (1 Samuel 15:22–23). Still, he had been anointed as king, and even though David was chosen by God to replace Saul as king (1 Samuel 16:12), David did not want to raise

his own hand against the Lord's anointed (1 Samuel 24:6). It seemed as though David cared for Saul, even though Saul—growing increasingly threatened by David's popularity—attempted to assassinate David. While David demonstrated respect (at least) for Saul, he loved Saul's son Jonathan.

[David and Jonathan](#) were very close (1 Samuel 18:1), and Jonathan—even though, by lineage, he was heir to Saul's throne—made a covenant with David. Jonathan loved David as himself (1 Samuel 18:3). Saul and Jonathan had many mighty exploits and victories in battle themselves, but David had quickly ascended to popularity and was given command over Saul's men of war (1 Samuel 18:5). As David's popularity grew, so did Saul's suspicion of David (1 Samuel 18:9). Still, David would not threaten Saul's rule because of David's respect for Saul and for the God who had appointed Saul in the first place—perhaps also because of David's love for Jonathan.

As David sang his memorial lament for Saul and Jonathan, he three times repeated that “the mighty have fallen!” (2 Samuel 1:19, 25, 27). He referred to the king and prince as Israel's beauty (2 Samuel 1:19). He did not want the Philistines to rejoice in the deaths of Saul and Jonathan (2 Samuel 1:20). In the song, he even cursed the mountains of Gilboa, where they had died (2 Samuel 1:21). The two were valiant and successful in battle (2 Samuel 1:22). David expressed that many loved them and thought them pleasant, and that they were “swifter than eagles” and “stronger than lions” (2 Samuel 1:23). He reminded the people how much Saul was a blessing to them (2 Samuel 1:24) and added—as a woeful refrain—“How the mighty have fallen!” (2 Samuel 1:25). After expressing how much he loved Jonathan (2 Samuel 1:25–26), David repeated the refrain, “How the mighty have fallen!” (2 Samuel 1:27).

David introduces his song by exclaiming, “How the mighty have fallen!” (2 Samuel 1:19), repeats the refrain after a specific acknowledgment of Saul, and then again after direct reference to [Jonathan](#). “How the mighty have fallen!” seems to be a sort of eulogy to two mighty men in Israel's history, and David uses it poignantly. David's respectfulness and love are an excellent reminder that, even when someone tries to harm us (as Saul did David), it is still right and beautiful to treat him with respect as someone created by God. It seemed that David always saw Saul through God's eyes, rather than through his own hurt at being hated and even harmed. Even when his nemesis was killed, David took no joy in the occasion, but rather wept and sang sincerely, “How the mighty have fallen!” [GotQuestions.org](#)

**2 Samuel 1:20 "Tell it not in Gath, Proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon, Or the daughters of the Philistines will rejoice, The daughters of the uncircumcised will exult.**

- **Tell:** De 32:26,27 Jdg 14:19 16:23,24 1Sa 31:9 Mic 1:10
- **Philistines:** Ex 15:20,21 Jdg 11:34 1Sa 18:6 Eze 16:27,57
- **uncircumcised:** 1Sa 17:26,36 31:4,9
- 2 Samuel 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### **Related Passages:**

1 Samuel 18:6-7 It happened as they were coming, when David returned from killing the Philistine, that the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with joy and with musical instruments. 7 The women sang as they played, and said, “Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands.”



## DO LET THE PHILISTINES KNOW

**Tell it not in Gath, Proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon**(see map above) - These were two of the 5 chief cities of the Philistines, so that the women would not know to celebrate this temporary setback for Israel in the death of Saul (like the Hebrew women did in 1Sa 18:6-7).

**Ray Pritchard** on "tell it not in Gath" - David's main concern is the tragic death of Saul not become an occasion for the enemies of God to rejoice. Therefore, he says, keep it quiet. That is a good word for today. In the last few years we have experienced a series of sad and sometimes shocking scandals in the Christian community. And some of us have been too quick to share the news. "Did you hear that Jack and Sandy are getting a divorce?" "Did you know their daughter got pregnant at college?" "He lost his job because he couldn't get along with his boss." "I think she's started drinking again." And on and on and on it goes. How quick we are to spread bad news, how slow to spread the good. It is all too easy for us to gloat when a Christian brother who we don't like falls into sin. That sort of thing not only demeans us but it harms the cause of Christ. Whenever a good man falls, it gives the scoffers another reason to laugh at the Christian faith. **Please take this to heart. You don't have to share every piece of bad news you hear. So what if it's true? Why not keep it to yourself? "Tell it not in Gath!" Keep it to yourself. Shhhhh. Be quiet.** Keep your mouth closed about the weaknesses of others. Unless there is an actual biblical reason, and unless you are telling the news to the right people at the right time in order to bring about justice and to promote healing, why not just keep it to yourself? Not everything needs to be broadcast. And even if it's true, you don't have to share it with all your friends. ([The End of the Beginning](#))([The End of the Beginning](#))

**Or the daughters of the Philistines will rejoice, The daughters of the uncircumcised will exult**- David knew the women had celebrated his victories over the Philistines and now their "[turnabout would be fair play](#)" and he wanted to make sure they did not have a chance to celebrate Saul and Jonathan's death.

**2 Samuel 1:21 "O mountains of Gilboa, Let not dew or rain be on you, nor fields of offerings; For there the shield of the mighty was defiled, The shield of Saul, not anointed with oil.**

BGT 2 Samuel 1:21 ρη τ ν Γελβουε μ καταβ ὄρ σος κα μ ετς φ μς κα γρο παρχ ν τι κε προσωχθ σθη θυρε ς δυνατ ν θυρε ς Σαουλ ο κ χρ σθη ν λα

LXE 2 Samuel 1:21 Ye mountains of Gelbue, let not dew no rain descend upon you, nor fields of first-fruits be upon you, for there the shield of the mighty ones has been grievously assailed; the shield of Saul was not anointed with oil.

KJV 2 Samuel 1:21 Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain, upon you, nor fields of offerings: for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with oil.

NET 2 Samuel 1:21 O mountains of Gilboa, may there be no dew or rain on you, nor fields of grain offerings! For it was there that the shield of warriors was defiled; the shield of Saul lies neglected without oil.

CSB 2 Samuel 1:21 Mountains of Gilboa, let no dew or rain be on you, or fields of offerings, for there the shield of the mighty was defiled-- the shield of Saul, no longer anointed with oil.

ESV 2 Samuel 1:21 "You mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew or rain upon you, nor fields of offerings! For there the shield of the mighty was defiled, the shield of Saul, not anointed with oil.

NIV 2 Samuel 1:21 "O mountains of Gilboa, may you have neither dew nor rain, nor fields that yield offerings of grain. For there the shield of the mighty was defiled, the shield of Saul--no longer rubbed with oil.

NLT 2 Samuel 1:21 O mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew or rain upon you, nor fruitful fields producing offerings of grain. For there the shield of the mighty heroes was defiled; the shield of Saul will no longer be anointed with oil.

- **mountains:** 1Sa 31:1 1Ch 10:1,8
- **dew:** Jdg 5:23 Job 3:3-10 Isa 5:6 Jer 20:14-16
- **offerings:** Joe 1:9 2:14
- **anointed:** 1Sa 10:1 Isa 21:5
- 2 Samuel 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## DAVID'S CURSE ON GILBOA

**O mountains of Gilboa, Let not dew or rain be on you, nor fields of offerings-** This declaration amounts to a curse on Mt Gilboa so that it would now be arid and barren.

**NET Note** - Instead of the [Masoretic Text's](#) "fields of grain offerings" the Lucianic recension of the LXX reads "your high places are mountains of death." Cf. the Old Latin *montes mortis* ("mountains of death").

**For there the shield of the mighty** ([gibbor](#); Lxx = [dunatos](#) - possessing power) **was defiled** ([ga'al](#)) - How would it be defiled? Presumably by being splattered with blood.

**NET Note** - This is the only biblical occurrence of the Niphal of the verb גָּאֵל ([ga'al](#)). This verb usually has the sense of "to abhor" or "loathe." But here it seems to refer to the now dirty and unprotected condition of a previously well-maintained instrument of battle.

**The shield of Saul, not anointed with oil** - NIV = no longer rubbed with oil." In other words, since Saul was dead, his shield was of no use and would not have been **anointed with oil** which one did when caring for his shield (cf. Isa21:5b). On Mt Gilboa Saul's shield lay "unoiled" and cracked, a fitting symbol of his life for the Spirit, often symbolized by oil, had departed from him in 1Sa 16:14+.

**NET Note on not anointed with oil** - It is preferable to read here Hebrew מָשֻׁאֵךְ ([mashuakh](#)) with many Hebrew MSS, rather than מָשִׁיַךְ ([mashiakh](#)) of the [Masoretic Text](#). Although the Syriac [Peshitta](#) understands the statement to pertain to Saul, the point here is not that Saul is not anointed. Rather, it is the shield of Saul that lies discarded and is no longer **anointed**. In ancient Near Eastern practice a warrior's shield that was in normal use would have to be **anointed** regularly in order to ensure that the leather did not become dry and brittle. Like other warriors of his day Saul would have carefully maintained his tools of trade. But now that he is dead, the once-cared-for shield of the mighty warrior lies sadly discarded and woefully neglected, a silent but eloquent commentary on how different things are now compared to the way they were during Saul's lifetime.

**Walton** adds that "Israelite shields of this period were made of wood with leather stretched over the surface. They were either round or rectangular with rounded top. Oil was used to wipe the blood off after a battle and to treat the leather so it remained pliable. ([IVP Background Commentary-OT](#))

**Winter** points out, "This was David's way of saying that the mountains of Gilboa would stand for defeat, as Waterloo did for Napoleon. This was similar to Custer's last stand. Someone has said that there is enough good in the worst of us and enough bad in the best of us that none of us can condemn the rest of us. Saul had been a very wicked man, but there were good things about him. These were the things that David praised in his long song of the bow.

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**Defiled** ([01602](#)) [ga'al](#) means to abhor, to loathe or to reject. Ga'al describes an intense aversion which is expressed often in punitive or adverse action. To detest; abhor, loathe, vilely cast away. Note that 5 of the 10 uses are in Leviticus 26 in context of cursings and

blessings, the first and the last being affirmations by Jehovah that He will not reject them (Lev 26:11, 44), of the Jews abhorring His ordinances (Lev 26:15, 43), of God abhorring them for their practice of idolatry (Lev 26:30). In the Nihil form, word means "defiled" (2 Sa 1:21). The passage speaks of how the mountains of Gilboa should be cursed because here Saul's shield was not anointed with oil; rather it was defiled.

**2 Samuel 1:22 "From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, The bow of Jonathan did not turn back, And the sword of Saul did not return empty."**

- **the bow:** 1Sa 14:6-14 1Sa 18:4 Isa 34:6,7
- 2 Samuel 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

1 Samuel 20:20+ "I (JONATHAN) will shoot three arrows to the side, as though I shot at a target.

### COURAGE IN BATTLE

**From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, The bow of Jonathan did not turn back, And the sword of Saul did not return empty** - Jonathan was apparently a skilled archer (1Sa 20:20ff+) and the bow had helped David escape (1Sa 20:35-42+) This description is of Jonathan and Saul as mighty warriors who were effective in slaying their Philistine enemies.

**Ray Pritchard** - When David writes his eulogy, he dwells on three of Saul's admirable traits: First, his courage in battle. "The sword of Saul did not return unsatisfied" (2 Samuel 1:22). Second, his close relationship with Jonathan. "Saul and Jonathan-in life they were loved and gracious and in death they were not parted" (2 Samuel 1: 23). Third, his advancement of the nation in prosperity. "O daughters of Israel, weep for Saul, who clothed you in scarlet and finery, who adorned your garments with ornaments of gold" (2 Samuel 1:24). The great thing is what this eulogy does not say. David does not mention the things that brought Saul to a disgraceful end. He loved Saul too much to bring it up now. He will only speak of the good that Saul did while he was alive. What is the principle at work here? It is the principle of honoring those whom God has used in your life even when they have turned against you. In this case that meant honoring a man whose major goal in life had been to kill David. And yet the principle stands: From Saul, and through Saul, and because of Saul, God had been working in David's life. Saul had been God's instrument to prepare David for the throne. If David was a diamond in the rough, then Saul was God's chisel to remove the rough edges and expose the beauty within. Indeed, God had chosen David to be king and he had also chosen Saul to be the unwitting instrument of preparation.

If you put together the various lessons David has learned, three of them go together. When David spared Saul's life in the cave at En Gedi (1 Samuel 24), God was teaching him to **spare his enemies**. When David snuck into the camp after midnight and took the spear but did not kill Saul (1 Samuel 26), God was teaching him to **love his enemies**. And now that Saul is dead (II Samuel 1), God is teaching David to **honor his enemies. First to spare, then to love, then to honor. Great, Greater, Greatest.** This last lesson is the highest point of the spiritual life, and many of us never reach it. When David looks back and weeps for Saul and remembers his good accomplishments, he is not denying the evil he did. Indeed, the record has been written for 3,000 years. But David will have no part in defaming Saul's memory. Let others draw their own conclusions, but David will speak no evil. What David is doing simply illustrates the words of Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:5, "Love ... keeps no record of wrongs" Love doesn't keep score: love has a quick eraser.....I think we can say it this way. David ended up with a huge stack of I.O.U.s from Saul. When he died, David tore up those slips of paper and never thought about them again. What was done was done. The past was over and could not be changed. But David would not let the bitterness control his life. He chose to remember Saul's good points and he chose to forget everything else. And the lesson is, Go and do likewise. Incidentally, after I preached the sermon a man came up to my wife and said he had been deeply affected by this message. Then he pressed a piece of paper into her hands and asked her to give it to me. It was an I.O.U. from a friend who owed him \$300. I don't know any other details but I assume he has decided not to let that unpaid debt steal the joy from his heart. This doesn't mean that all of us should forgive every debt owed to us, but it does mean that some things are more important than other things. When the wrongs committed against us are beginning to weigh us down and suck out the joy, leaving us only the ugly residue of hardened bitterness, then it's time to choose by God's grace to let go so we can move on with life. Better to suffer a temporary loss than to be stuck forever, chained to the past by the misdeeds of others. ([The End of the Beginning](#))

**2 Samuel 1:23 "Saul and Jonathan, beloved and pleasant in their life, And in their death they were not parted; They were swifter than eagles, They were stronger than lions."**

BGT 2 Samuel 1:23 Σαουλ κα Ιωναθαν ο γαπημ νοι κα ρα οι ο διακεχωρισμ νοι ε πρεπε ς ν τ ζω α τ ν κα ν τ θαν τ α τ ν ο διεχωρ σθησαν π ρ ετο ς κο φοι κα π ρ λ οντας κραται θησαν

LXE 2 Samuel 1:23 Saul and Jonathan, the beloved and the beautiful, were not divided: comely were they in their life, and in their death they were not divided: they were swifter than eagles, and they were stronger than lions.

KJV 2 Samuel 1:23 Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided: they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions.

NET 2 Samuel 1:23 Saul and Jonathan were greatly loved during their lives, and not even in their deaths were they separated. They were swifter than eagles, stronger than lions.

CSB 2 Samuel 1:23 Saul and Jonathan, loved and delightful, they were not parted in life or in death. They were swifter than eagles, stronger than lions.

ESV 2 Samuel 1:23 "Saul and Jonathan, beloved and lovely! In life and in death they were not divided; they were swifter than eagles; they were stronger than lions.

NIV 2 Samuel 1:23 "Saul and Jonathan-- in life they were loved and gracious, and in death they were not parted. They were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions.

NLT 2 Samuel 1:23 How beloved and gracious were Saul and Jonathan! They were together in life and in death. They were swifter than eagles, stronger than lions.

- **pleasant:** 1Sa 18:1 20:2
- **they were:** 1Sa 31:1-5
- **swifter:** 2Sa 2:18 De 28:49 1Ch 12:8 Job 9:26 Jer 4:13 La 4:19
- **stronger:** 2Sa 23:20 Jdg 14:18 Pr 30:30
- 2 Samuel 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Matthew 5:43-48+ "You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.' 44 "But I say to you, **love** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) your enemies and **pray** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. 46 "For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 "If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? 48 "Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

## ANIMAL METAPHORS DESCRIBE SAUL AND JONATHAN

**Saul and Jonathan, beloved** ([ahab/ahab](#); Lxx - [agapao](#) - unconditional love) **and pleasant** (delightful, lovely) **in their life** - **ESV** = "beloved and lovely" **NET** = "were greatly loved during their lives" Beloved is amazing coming from the lips of David considering Saul's relentless enmity toward him. David was an OT illustration of Jesus' charges in Mt 5:43-48!

**And in their death they were not parted** - **NET** = "not even in their deaths were they separated"

**They were swifter than eagles, They were stronger than lions** - David uses hyperbole who he says in essence were like eagles is swiftness and like lions in strength. David knew these characteristics of both men, Jonathan in his bold attack on the Philistines and Saul in his relentless hunting of David like an animal hunts its prey. Both descriptions however are positive without any negative words even of Saul who saw himself as David's enemy. This speaks volumes about the heart of David!

**Keil**, "The swiftness of the eagle and the strength of the lion were the leading characteristics of the great heroes of antiquity."

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**Love** (friend) ([0157](#)) [ahab/ahab](#) means to love and can convey the idea of liking things (like bribes - Isa 1:23, wisdom - Pr 4:6, wine - Pr 21:17, peace and truth - Zech 8:19, food - Ge 27:4, 9, 14). The most important uses in the OT are as an expression of God's love of people (Dt 4:37, Hosea 3:1), man's love for God (Ex 20:6, Ps 116:1) and man's love for his fellow man (Ge 29:32, Ru 4:15-note, 1 Kings 11:1 = a forbidden love by backslidden King Solomon!!!) The first use of ahab in the OT is instructive as it is found



in Ge 22:2 where Yahweh instructed his servant Abraham to ""Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah; and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you." Notice that at the outset, we see that an inherent quality of this love (in many contexts) is that it is costly. God wants us to love Him above EVERYTHING, even our own flesh and blood. Matthews writes that Ge 22:2 "is the final test of the man's faith, the closing bookend to his discovery of God's sufficiency to achieve the promises made at Haran." (New American Commentary)

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**F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily - 2 Samuel 1:23** Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives.

It was very lovely and pleasant of David to say so. He had no hesitation, of course, in saying this of his beloved Jonathan, every memory of whom was very pleasant, like a sweet strain of music, or the scent of the spring breeze; but he might have been excused for omitting Saul from the graceful and generous epithets he heaped on the kindred soul of his friend. But death had obliterated the sad, dark memories of recent days, and had transported the Psalmist across the dream of years to Saul as he was when he was first introduced to him. All that could be said in praise of the first Hebrew king was crowded into these glowing lines-the courage, martial prowess, swiftness to aid those who required help, his pleasantness and courtesy in address.

This is the love of God, which He breathes into the hearts of His children. They become perfect in love, as He is. "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." It is Godlike for His children to love their enemies, bless those who curse them, and pray for all who spitefully use and persecute them. Is such love ours? Do we forbear from thinking evil? Do we look on the virtues more often than the failures of our friends? Do we cast the mantle of forgiveness over the injuries done to us, and dwell tenderly on the excellences of our foes? Such is the love which never fails, but endures when faith has turned to fruition, and hope has realized its dreams.

We need most of all a baptism of love. A piece of clay will become fragrant if placed in contiguity to attar of roses. Let us lie where John did, on the bosom of incarnate love, till we begin to love as he.

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**2 Samuel 1:24** "O daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, Who clothed you luxuriously in scarlet, Who put ornaments of gold on your apparel.

- Jdg 5:30 Ps 68:12 Pr 31:21 Isa 3:16-26 Jer 2:32 1Ti 2:9,10 1Pe 3:3-5
- 2 Samuel 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### ADVANCES IN ISRAEL UNDER SAUL

**O daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, Who clothed you luxuriously in scarlet, Who put ornaments of gold on your apparel** - Israel's economy and "per capita" income apparently flourished under King Saul.

[Don Anderson](#) - David speaks about their clothing, which he had made possible for them. Since Saul emphasized the external, clothes were so important to him.

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**2 Samuel 1:25** "How have the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! Jonathan is slain on your high places.

- **How:** 2Sa 1:19,27 La 5:16, Jdg 5:18 1Sa 14:13-15
- 2 Samuel 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### DAVID'S PERSONAL LAMENT AND LAUDING OF JONATHAN

**How have the mighty ([gibbor](#); Lxx = [dunatos](#) - possessing power) fallen in the midst of the battle! Jonathan is slain on your high places** - David repeats **fallen** - 2Sa 1:19, 27, here referring specifically to Jonathan.

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**2 Samuel 1:26** "I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; You have been very pleasant to me. Your love to me was more wonderful Than the love of women.

- **love:** 1Sa 18:1-4 1Sa 19:2 1Sa 20:17,41 1Sa 23:16
- [2 Samuel 1:26 Friendship](#)
- 2 Samuel 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passages:

1 Samuel 18:1-4+ Now it came about when he had finished speaking to Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and **Jonathan loved him as himself**. 2 Saul took him that day and did not let him return to his father's house. 3 Then Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. 4 Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his armor, including his sword and his bow and his belt.

1 Samuel 20:17+ Jonathan made David vow again because of his love for him, because **he loved him as he loved his own life**. (GENUINE SELFLESS, UNSELFISH LOVE)

## DAVID REVIEWS THEIR COVENANT LOVE

**I am distressed** ("grieve" - [tsarar](#)) **for you, my brother Jonathan; You have been very pleasant to me. Your love** ([ahabah](#); Lxx - agapēsis - see [agape](#)) **to me was more wonderful** ([pala](#)) **Than the love** ([ahabah](#)) **of women** - This passage recalls 1 Samuel 18:1+ "Now it came about when he had finished speaking to Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as himself" and 1 Samuel 20:17+ "Jonathan made David vow again because of his love for him, because he loved him as he loved his own life." Jonathan was his brother-in-law by relationship because of his marriage to Michal, but here he refers to Jonathan as a brother by the covenant of friendship. See discussion of "friend" as covenant term.

**MacArthur** on **love** of David for Jonathan - The bond between David and Jonathan was strong. However, this does not mean that their friendship was necessarily superior to the bond of love between a man and a woman. The commitment shared between the two of them was a noble, loyal, and selfless devotion (cf. 1Sa 18:3), which neither of them had ever felt for a woman. Unlike love between a man and a woman in which a sexual element is part of the strong attraction, this love between these two men had no such sexual feature, yet was compellingly strong.

**Distressed** ([06887](#)) [tsarar](#) means to be narrow, to be cramped, to be straitened, to be constricted, to hem or be hemmed in. Figuratively tsarar means to oppress or harass and thus to be hostile or be an adversary or enemy, the best known use being Ps 23:5 "in the presence of my enemies (tsarar)." Figuratively tsarar also means to feel hard pressed and thus to be distressed (13/36 uses), troubled, oppressed, cramped, anxious or worried. In contrast, that which is wide-open or broad gives a picture of freedom and/or deliverance. In Job 20:22 the idea is to be in narrow straits, to be in a bind, connoting the idea of pressure, stress or trouble.

**Love** ([0160](#)) [ahabah](#) from [ahab/ahab](#)) describes a powerful, intimate love between a man and a woman (Gen. 29:20; Song 2:4, 5, 7); love between friends (2Sa 1:26); God's love for His people (Isa. 63:9; Hos. 3:1). Frequently, it is associated with forming a covenant, which enjoins loyalty (Dt. 7:8). This Hebrew word is used of love between God and man, but usually refers to love between people. **Love** is the basis of covenants made in the OT. Jonathan and David made a covenant of friendship in 1 Sa. 18:3 and reaffirmed it in 1 Sa 20:17. God keeps his promises because He loves his people (Dt. 7:8) (**ED**: AND BECAUSE HE KEEPS HIS COVENANT WITH ABRAM!). And those who love the Lord keep his covenant (Isa. 56:6).

**Ahabah** - Gen. 29:20; 1Sa 20:17; 2 Sam. 1:26; 2 Sam. 13:15; Ps. 109:4; Ps. 109:5; Prov. 5:19; Prov. 10:12; Prov. 15:17; Prov. 17:9; Prov. 27:5; Eccl. 9:1; Eccl. 9:6; Cant. 2:4; Cant. 2:5; Cant. 2:7; Cant. 3:5; Cant. 3:10; Cant. 5:8; Cant. 7:6; Cant. 8:4; Cant. 8:6; Cant. 8:7; Isa. 63:9; Jer. 2:2; Jer. 2:33; Jer. 31:3; Hos. 11:4; Zeph. 3:17

### 2 Samuel 1:11,17-27 Lament For A Friend

I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; you have been very pleasant to me. —2 Samuel 1:26

As a pastor, I was often asked to lead funeral services. Typically, the funeral director would give me a 3 x 5 index card with all the particulars about the deceased so I would be informed about him or her. I never got used to that, however. As practical and necessary as it may have been, it seemed a bit trite to take a person's earthly sojourn and reduce it to an index card. Life is too big for that.

After David received news of Jonathan's death, he spent time recalling the life of his friend—even writing a lament that others could sing as a way to respect Jonathan (2 Sam. 1:17-27). David recalled his friend's courage and skill, and he spoke of the grief that caused him to lament deeply. He honored a rich, pleasant, heroic life. For David, it was an intense time of mourning and remembrance.

When we grieve for a loved one, it is vital to recall the cherished details and shared experiences of our lives together. Those memories flood our hearts with far more thoughts than an index card can hold. The day that grief visits our hearts is not a time for short summaries and quick snapshots of our loved one's life. It is a time to remember deeply, giving God thanks for the details, the stories, and the impact of an entire life. It's time to pause, reflect, and honor. — by Bill Crowder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

At journey's end, take a long look back  
At the details of the story;  
Take time to review the godly life  
Of your loved one now in Glory.  
—Branon

**Precious memories of life can temper the profound sadness of death.**

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### **C H Spurgeon - Morning and Evening - "Thy love to me was wonderful." 2 Samuel 1:26**

Come, dear readers, let each one of us speak for himself of the wonderful love, not of Jonathan, but of Jesus. We will not relate what we have been told, but the things which we have tasted and handled—of the love of Christ. Thy love to me, O Jesus, was wonderful when I was a stranger wandering far from thee, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind. Thy love restrained me from committing the sin which is unto death, and withheld me from self-destruction. Thy love held back the axe when Justice said, "Cut it down! why cumbereth it the ground?" Thy love drew me into the wilderness, stripped me there, and made me feel the guilt of my sin, and the burden of mine iniquity. Thy love spake thus comfortably to me when, I was sore dismayed—"Come unto me, and I will give thee rest." Oh, how matchless thy love when, in a moment, thou didst wash my sins away, and make my polluted soul, which was crimson with the blood of my nativity, and black with the grime of my transgressions, to be white as the driven snow, and pure as the finest wool. How thou didst commend thy love when thou didst whisper in my ears, "I am thine and thou art mine." Kind were those accents when thou saidst, "The Father himself loveth you." And sweet the moments, passing sweet, when thou declaredst to me "the love of the Spirit." Never shall my soul forget those chambers of fellowship where thou has unveiled thyself to me. Had Moses his cleft in the rock, where he saw the train, the back parts of his God? We, too, have had our clefts in the rock, where we have seen the full splendours of the Godhead in the person of Christ. Did David remember the tracks of the wild goat, the land of Jordan and the Hermonites? We, too, can remember spots to memory dear, equal to these in blessedness. Precious Lord Jesus, give us a fresh draught of thy wondrous love to begin the month with. Amen.

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### **QUESTION - [What was the relationship between David and Jonathan?](#)**

**ANSWER** - We know from 1 Samuel 18:1 that [Jonathan](#) loved David. [Second Samuel 1:26](#) records David's lament after Jonathan's death, in which he said that his love for Jonathan was more wonderful than the love of a woman. Some use these two passages to suggest a homosexual relationship between David and Jonathan. This interpretation, however, should be rejected for at least three reasons.

**First, the Hebrew word for "love" ([ahab/ahab](#)) used here is not the typical word used for sexual activity.** This word for "love" has clear political and diplomatic connotations (see 1 Samuel 16:21 and 1 Kings 5:1).

**Second, David's comparison of his relationship with Jonathan with that of women is probably a reference to his experience with King Saul's daughter.** He was promised one of Saul's daughters for killing Goliath. But Saul continued to add conditions upon this marriage with the underlying desire to have David killed in battle (1 Samuel 18:17, 25). The love David had received from Jonathan was greater than anything he could have received from Saul's daughter.

**Third, the Bible clearly and consistently denounces homosexuality** (Genesis 1:26-27; Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Romans 1:18-25). Extolling a homosexual love between David and Jonathan would be contradicting the prohibitions of it found throughout the Bible.

The friendship between David and Jonathan was a covenantal relationship. In [1 Samuel 18:1-5](#), we read of David and Jonathan forming an agreement. In this agreement, Jonathan was to be second in command in David's future reign, and David was to protect Jonathan's family ([1 Samuel 20:16-17](#), [42](#); [23:16-18](#)).

Obviously, these two men were also very good friends. In their relationship we can see at least three qualities of true friendship.

First, they sacrificed for one another. In [1 Samuel 18:4](#), we read that Jonathan gave David his clothes and military garb. The significance of this gift was that Jonathan recognized that David would one day be king of Israel. Rather than being envious or jealous, Jonathan submitted to God's will and sacrificed his own right to the throne. Second, in [1 Samuel 19:1-3](#), we read of Jonathan's loyalty toward and defense of David. King Saul told his followers to kill David. Jonathan rebuked his father and recalled David's faithfulness to him in killing Goliath. Finally, Jonathan and David were also free to express their emotions with one another. In [1 Samuel 20](#), we read of a plan concocted by Jonathan to reveal his father's plans toward David. Jonathan was going to practice his archery. If he told his servant that the arrows he shot were to the side of the target, David was safe. If Jonathan told his servant that the arrows were beyond the target, David was to leave and not return. Jonathan told the servant that the arrows were beyond the target, meaning that David should flee. After releasing his servant, Jonathan found David and the two men cried together.

Rather than being evidence for a homosexual relationship in the Bible, the account of David and Jonathan is an example of true biblical friendship. True friendship, according to the Bible, involves loyalty, sacrifice, compromise, and yes, emotional attachment. That is what we should learn from David and Jonathan. The idea that David and Jonathan were practicing homosexuals (or bisexuals) has no biblical basis. [GotQuestions.org](#)

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## NOTES FROM MY COMMENTS ON 1 SAMUEL 18:1-4

**WHAT WAS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DAVID AND JONATHAN?** - Some writers have suggested that the "love" between Jonathan and David was indicative of a homosexual relationship. A use of love which helps see that Jonathan's love for David was not homosexual is found earlier when "David came to Saul and attended him, and Saul loved ([ahab](#)) him greatly; and he became his armor bearer." (1Sa 16:21). Also against this "homosexual" interpretation is the fact that the Hebrew verb '**ahab**' is never used in the Old Testament to signify what is clearly (from [context](#)) a homosexual desire or activity. Instead the Old Testament uses the Hebrew verb, [yada](#), which means "to know" to indicate close relationship in a sexual sense in both heterosexual and homosexual relationships. Thus **yada** refers to homosexual relationships in the following texts.

Before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, surrounded the house, both young and old, all the people from every quarter and they called to Lot and said to him, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may **have relations** ('[yada](#)) with them." (Genesis 19:4, 5)

While they were making merry, behold, the men of the city, certain worthless fellows (literally "sons of belial", belial being transliterated as a synonym for Satan in 2 Cor 6:15), surrounded the house, pounding the door; and they spoke to the owner of the house, the old man, saying, "Bring out the man who came into your house that we **may have relations** ('[yada](#)) with him." (Judges 19:22).

Finally, note that the verb [yada](#) is never used to describe the relationship between Jonathan and David.

**Wiersbe** adds "To make anything more out of their friendship than the mature affection of two manly believers is to twist the Scriptures. Had there been anything unlawful in their relationship, the Lord certainly would never have blessed David and protected him, and David could never have written Psalm 18:19–27 ten years later." (Borrow [Be successful](#))

**Even the secular source [Wikipedia](#) gets it correct** (mostly correct - they make one off handed allusion to homosexuality but without any support whatsoever - the tenor of their explanation is **platonic**) - A platonic interpretation for the relationship between David and Jonathan has been the mainstream view found in biblical exegesis, as led by [Christian](#) writers. This argues that the relationship between the two, although strong and close, is ultimately a [platonic](#) friendship. David and Jonathan's love is understood as the intimate camaraderie between two young soldiers with no sexual involvement.[10] The euphemisms the Bible uses for sexual relations are not present, and nothing indicates that David and Jonathan had a sexual relationship.[citation needed] Neither of the men is described as having problems in their heterosexual married life. David had an abundance of wives and concubines as well as an adulterous affair with Bathsheba, and apparently suffered impotence only as an old man, while Jonathan had a five-year-old son at his death.[11]

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**Norman Geisler** - [go to page 149 in When Critics Ask](#) for discussion of 1 SAMUEL 18:1–4—Were David and Jonathan homosexuals?

**PROBLEM:** This Scripture records the intense love David and Jonathan had for each other. Some see this as an indication that they were homosexual. They infer this from the fact that Jonathan "loved" David (18:3); that Jonathan stripped in David's presence (18:4); that they "kissed" each other with great emotion (1 Sam. 20:41). They point also to David's lack of successful relations with women as an indication of his homosexual tendencies. Is this a valid conclusion to draw from these texts?

**SOLUTION:** There is no indication in Scripture that David and Jonathan were homosexual. On the contrary, there is strong evidence that they were not.

**First** of all, David's attraction to Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11) reveals that his sexual orientation was heterosexual, not homosexual. In fact, judging by the number of wives he had, David seemed to have too much heterosexuality.

**Second**, David's "love" for Jonathan was not sexual (erotic) but a friendship (philiic) love. It is common in eastern cultures for heterosexual men to express love and affection toward one another. (**ED: RECALL KING SAUL ACTUALLY "LOVED HIM GREATLY"** - 1Sa 16:21±).

**Third**, Jonathan did not strip himself of all his clothes in David's presence. He only stripped himself of his armor and royal robe (1 Sam. 18:4) as a symbol of his deep respect for David and commitment to him.

**Fourth**, the "kiss" was a common cultural greeting for men in that day. Furthermore, it did not occur until two and a half chapters after Jonathan gave David his clothes (1Sa 20:41). (**ED: RECALL SAMUEL "KISSED" SAUL WHEN HE ANOINTED HIM** - 1Sa 10:1±).

**Finally**, the emotion they expressed was weeping, not orgasm. The text says, "they kissed each other and wept together—but David wept the most" (1Sa 20:41NIV).

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### James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose - DAVID AND JONATHAN 1 Samuel 18:1–4; 2 Samuel 1:26

"All through life there are wayside inns,  
Where man may refresh his soul with love;  
Even the lowest may quench his thirst  
At rivulets fed by springs from above."  
—LONGFELLOW.

"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God" (1 John 4:7). In this little portion of Scripture we have "apples of gold in pictures of silver" (Prov. 25:11). The love of Jonathan for David seems a pure unclouded reflection of that love of God which is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost. It was wonderful.

**I. His Love was Real.** "He loved him as his own soul" (v. 1). It was no mere formal business connection. Jonathan had taken David and all his interests home to the secrets and carefulness of his own soul. The love that fails to do this is shallow and selfish. How can we say that we love Christ if His interests do not appeal as powerfully to us as our own. Paul had done this when he said, "To me to live is Christ" (Phil. 1:21).

**II. His Love was Surpassing.** It passed the love of women (2 Sam. 1:26). To say this suggests that it was supernatural. The highest form of human love is found in the true motherly heart. The love that excels this is that "greater love" manifested in the only begotten Son of God (1 John 4:9), and begotten in our hearts by the Holy Spirit (1 John 4:19). The believer's love to Christ is more than mere natural love, for the carnal mind is enmity against God. The natural heart is an alien to the Holy One.

**III. His Love was Inseparable.** "Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him" (v. 3) True love will always constrain to a closer bond of union; mutual affection culminates in the marriage tie. The love of Christ constrains us. What to do? Why, like Jonathan, to yield our life's concerns into the hands of Him whom God hath exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour (Chap. 20:14–16). Hear the whisperings of Christ's dying love in those never-to-be-forgotten words, "Do this in remembrance of Me" (1 Cor. 11:24).

**IV. His Love was Self-Sacrificing.** "Jonathan stripped himself ... and gave to David" (v. 4). Love will not hide; "It doth not behave itself unseemly: it seeketh not her own" (1 Cor. 13:5). Love gives till the giving is felt as a sacrifice. It was so with the love of Christ, who for our sakes stripped Himself and became of no reputation, that we through His poverty might be made rich (2 Cor. 8:9). The love of Christ was manifested in that poor woman who, when overtaken by a snowstorm, stripped herself to save her child. In stripping ourselves for the honour and glory of the Christ of God we are proving the reality of our confidence in Him. If He is to triumph for us, let us give Him "even to our sword and our bow." Self-aggrandisement is always inconsistent with the glory of God.

**V. His Love was Well Deserved.** No doubt there were many personal attractions about David to draw out the full flow of Jonathan's affections, for David "behaved himself wisely" (v. 5), and was to Jonathan the fairest and chiefest among ten thousand. But the secret of the strength of his love lay in the fact that he knew David as the Lord's anointed and the coming king of Israel (chap. 20:15). Surely the tenderest affections of his pure soul were well spent when lavished unreservedly on the beloved of God. A greater than David is here! One who spake as never man spake, and whose behaviour has been such that neither God, man, nor devil could find fault in Him. And He says, "Lovest thou Me?"

**VI. His Love was Reciprocated.** "The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David" (v. 1). These two souls were knit together in their desires and motives, as the warp and woof of a web. The knitting together shows that the affections of David responded in full

measure to the love of Jonathan, so that the vital interests of the one were intertwined with the vital interests of the other. This is something deeper than mere belief in outward conformity; it is the very essence of "the unity of the Spirit." Jesus Christ was moved by that yearning fathomless LOVE when he prayed that "they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in them." This deep spiritual union can only be brought about where there is the entire surrender of all on both sides for mutual advantage through the constraining power of love. This is what Christ has done for us. What response are we making to Him? "He that loveth not knoweth not God: for God is love" (1 John 4:8). Our Lord is abundantly willing that His life should be knit with our life. Are we equally willing that our life should be knit together with His life, and so become one in heart and purpose for the glory of God?

## 2 Samuel 1:27 "How have the mighty fallen, And the weapons of war perished!"

- **How:** 2Sa 1:19,25
- **weapons:** 2Ki 2:12 13:14 Ps 46:9 Eze 39:9,10
- 2 Samuel 1 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### HOW THE MIGHTY HAVE FALLEN

**How have the mighty** ([gibbor](#); Lxx = [dunatos](#) - possessing power) **fallen, and the weapons of war perished** - David repeatedly uses mighty to describe Saul and Jonathan (except for the use in 2Sa 1:22 all others refer to Saul and Jonathan - 2Sa 1:19; 2Sa 1:21; 2Sa 1:25; 2Sa 1:27). Given the fact that **weapons of war** were still in use it is possible that David is using "weapons" as a metaphorical description of Saul and Jonathan.

**Utley on weapons** - The Philistines captured Saul's and Jonathan's weapons and they confiscated all the agricultural implements used as weapons by Israel's soldiers (cf. 1 Sam. 31:8). Many commentators (e.g., John MacArthur) think "the weapons" referred to Saul and Jonathan themselves.