

Commentary on 1 Samuel 31 and 2 Samuel 1, by Chuck Smith 1.5.22

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January memory verse, Jeremiah 32:26-27 (NKJV)

²⁶ Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying,

²⁷ "Behold, I *am* the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?"

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1 Samuel Chapter 31

Now the Philistines fought against Israel: the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa. And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Malchishua, Saul's sons. And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him; and he was sore wounded from the archers. Then Saul said to his armourbearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through with it; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me. But his armourbearer would not; for he was afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it ([1Sa 31:1-4](#)).

So Saul was hit by an arrow, and he knew he was gonna die, but he was afraid that the Philistines would come and mutilate his body, torture him when they got him. So he asked his armourbearer to kill him, but he was hesitant to do so. Saul set out his spear, and he fell on his spear. But even then he didn't die. It said, "then he died." But actually the next chapter as we get into second Samuel, we'll find that actually he still hadn't died, he was still lying there, and this Amalekite came by and he raised himself up, and pleaded with the Amalekite to kill him, which he did.

And when his armourbearer saw that Saul was dead, [That is he thought he was dead.] he fell likewise upon his sword, and he died with him. So Saul died, his three sons, his armourbearer, and all of his men, the same day together. When the men of Israel that were on the other side of the valley, and those that were on the other side of Jordan, saw that the men of Israel had fled, and Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities, and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them. And it came to pass on the morrow, that the Philistines came to strip the slain, and they found Saul and his three sons fallen in mount Gilboa. And they cut off his head, and stripped his armour, and sent it into the land of the Philistines round about, to publish it in the house of their idols, and among the people. And they put his armour in the house of Ashtaroth: and they fastened his body to the wall of Bethshan ([1Sa 31:5-10](#)).

Now Bethshan is right at the northern edge of Mount Gilboa. It's the end of the range, it was a city that-the ruins are still there. In fact, the walls of Bethshan still stand today, that is the ancient ruins. They've been excavated some. The Philistines cut off his head,

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and then pinned his body on the wall there at Bethshan. It is near Mount Gilboa, a city that was nearby and so...

The inhabitants of Jabeshgilead [Now Jabesh-gilead was over on the other side of the Jordan River.] when they heard what they had done to the body of Saul; The valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Bethshan, and they came to Jabesh, and they burnt them there ([1Sa 31:11-12](#)).

So they cremated Saul and his sons.

Now occasionally people ask me my opinion of cremation, and it is just this, as far as I'm concerned, cremation is only a speeding up of the natural processes. Cremation will do in thirty-seven minutes, what eremacausis will do in thirty-seven years. It's just the speeding up the processes of the destruction of this body. Ultimately, your body even in the grave is gonna deteriorate and go back to dust. Cremation only hastens the process.

I see no spiritual kind of a reason for not being cremated. I don't think that it's wrong if a person wants cremation. I don't see anything wrong with cremating a person's body. I don't see any spiritual significance at all to the whole thing. Saul and his sons were all cremated, and the Bible doesn't say anything against it, or "Oh, that was so horrible," or "that was so wrong," or whatever. So actually it's only a shell, it's only a tent that has been worn out and is no longer of any value.

What they do to my body after my spirit moves out, I could care less. If my cornea in my eyes are of any value to anybody, they're welcome. If my kidneys are of any value, they're welcome. If my heart is of any value, they're welcome. They can do whatever they want to this old body once my spirit moves out, I could care less. If they want to save money and cremate the thing, fine. Because I'm not gonna be around to worry about it. I'm gonna be so stoked with the new model that's been given to me, that I have no desire to hang on to the remnants of this old thing. Appreciate the body that God has given to me, I appreciate the good years, but this old house isn't what it used to be. As time goes on, it's becoming less all the time.

So they took the bones, and they buried them under a tree at Jabesh, and they fasted for seven days ([1Sa 31:13](#)).

So the end of Saul's career, a sad, and tragic career. A man endowed by God with tremendous abilities, good looks, great physique, a man who had once experienced the anointing of God upon his life, came to a place of rebellion against God, disobeying the voice of God. Thinking that he didn't have to yield to God any longer, and because he rejected God from ruling over him, God rejected him from ruling over Israel. The sad, and the tragic end of the man who played the fool. Body mutilated by the Philistines, cremated by his friends, buried.

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Now we, start into second Samuel, get into the story of David in full swing. This man who is so human, and yet the man whom God loved.

2 Samuel Chapter 1

First Samuel dealt with the reign of King Saul over Israel, and it ends with the death of Saul at the hands of the Philistines. Saul, the tragic story of a man who had many natural abilities, and many God-given opportunities; yet, his was a wasted life, and never achieving the full potential of his being. A life of failure because he failed to submit himself totally to God.

As the prophet Samuel said to him, "Because you have rejected the Lord from ruling over you," and that was the basic flaw of Saul's life, he had rejected the Lord from ruling over his own life. He was a self-determined, self-governed man, self-willed, and that destroyed him from achieving and attaining those things that God intended for his life. The story of failure. Dying at the hands of the Philistines, his body being mutilated, hung on the wall of the temple in Bethshan, until the men of Gilead came and cut it down, and buried it over in Gilead, the other side of Jordan.

Now the fact that the men of Jabeshgilead broke through the lines of the Philistines and rescued the bodies of Saul and his sons is interesting because Saul's career as king sort of began with the situation that developed at Jabeshgilead. There was an invading king who came to Jabeshgilead and demanded that the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead surrender. So they cried unto Saul for help, who came with the army of Israel, and destroyed this invading army.

So the city of Jabeshgilead was saved by Saul, and that was the thing that sort of catapulted Saul into prominence and into acceptance by the people as king over Israel. Up until that time there were men who were saying, "Saul rule over us, who is he?" and there were those that were objecting to Saul's reign. But when he came to the rescue of Jabeshgilead led the armies of Israel to victory, then he was catapulted into the limelight, became the king over Israel. So it is significant that the men of Jabeshgilead who came and rescued his body, they of course felt a great obligation and debt to Saul.

Now Saul's greatest failure perhaps was his failure to obey the commandment of God, to utterly wipe out the Amalekites. God sent him down against Amalek. With the instructions he's to utterly wipe them out. When he came back from the victory, and Samuel came out to meet him, he greeted Samuel with the words, "As the Lord liveth, I have done everything the Lord commanded me to do." That was a giant lie. He had not done everything the Lord had commanded him to do. He had not utterly destroyed the Amalekites. He had left many of them alive. He utterly destroyed the weakest of the cattle, the ill-favored sheep, but he kept the best of cattle, the best sheep, he kept king Agag alive, plus he allowed many of the other Amalekites to live.

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Now in scripture there is interesting typologies, so that Egypt becomes a type of our old life in the bondage of sin in the world. The Red Sea becomes a type of baptism where I come out of the old life and into a new relationship with God. The wilderness becomes a type of that life, though redeemed; yet still dominated by the flesh. Coming into the Promised Land is a type of coming into the full walk and life of the Spirit. In biblical typology Amalek is a type of the flesh life. There are many places in the scriptures where Amalek is given as a type of the flesh, and the life of the flesh. Thus, when God ordered the utter destruction of the Amalekites, God was ordering in a sense, the utter destruction of the flesh.

In Romans eight, it said, "If we thereby do mortify the deeds of the flesh," or put to death "the deeds of the flesh, we shall live. Know ye not that your old man was crucified with Christ?" As Paul declares, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

Now God has not developed any programs of reform for your flesh. God has only one edict for your flesh, and that's let it be crucified. The Bible says, "Give no place for the flesh to fulfill the desires thereof." God ordered its utter destruction. It's not to rule over you. By the Spirit mortify the deeds of the flesh, in order that you might live. For the mind of the flesh is death. God doesn't seek to reform, or modify our fleshly activities, He said, "Don't give any place for them, let it be crucified." Thus the command to utterly, utterly wipe out the Amalekites is an important command in a spiritual sense.

As we get into the first chapter of second Samuel, we see something very interesting indeed.

Now it came to pass after the death of Saul, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites ([2Sa 1:1](#)),

Now you see the Amalekites were still very much alive, David had had an experience with them when he took his men and went up to join with Achish in the battle because the city of Ziklag where he was living was emptied of all of the men. The Amalekites came in and stole all of their things, burned their city, and took all of their wives and children captive. Now had Saul utterly destroyed the Amalekites, they couldn't have done this. You know if you leave a place for the flesh, it's going to come back to haunt you. If you leave a foot hold of the flesh in your life, it's gonna come back to destroy you.

So David and his men were two days in Ziklag; And it came to pass on the third day, that, behold, a man came out of the camp from Saul with his clothes torn, and he had earth upon his head: [Or he put dirt upon his head.] and so it was, when he came to David, that he fell to the earth, and he did obeisance. And David said unto him, Where have you come from? And he said, Out of the camp of Israel I have escaped. David said unto him, How did the battle go? I pray thee, tell me. And he answered, The people are fled from the battle, and many of the people are fallen and dead; and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also. And the young man that told him said, As I happened by chance

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there on mount Gilboa, behold, Saul leaned upon his spear; and, lo, the chariots and the horsemen were following hard after him. And when he looked behind him, he saw me, and he called unto me. And I answered, Here I am. And he said unto me, Who are you? And I answered him, I am an Amalekite. [One from that nation that God ordered Saul to utterly destroy.] And he said to me again, Stand, I pray thee, upon me, and slay me: for anguish is come upon me, because my life is yet whole in me. 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 his bracelets, and I have brought them to you ([2Sa 1:1-10](#)).

Now one of two things here. In the last chapter we read that Saul fell on his sword and died. It may be that this Amalekite is making up this story about Saul, thinking that he's gonna get in good with David, because he killed David's-it would be wrong to say David's enemy, because actually Saul was never David's enemy. David was an enemy of Saul. But the one who had been trying to destroy David, David's adversary. And maybe he felt that by making up a story, "I killed him," that he would find favor in David's eyes. It could be this is a lie, and it could be that it is true.

In the last chapter we read that Saul turned to his armourbearer and said, "Kill me," because he had been shot through with an arrow. He figured he was gonna die, and he didn't want the Philistines to catch him, and torture him actually. He was afraid of being tortured by them, as they'd get him alive. So he asked his armourbearer to kill him, but the armourbearer was afraid to do it. So Saul set out his sword in front of him, and he lunged himself out on his sword to run it through him to kill himself. When his armourbearer saw that Saul had fallen upon his sword, he set his sword out and he fell upon his sword also.

Now it could be that the young man is telling the truth. Even after running himself through with his own sword, falling on his sword, it could be that still he had not fully, still he was alive, and he saw this young man, said, "Who are you?"

"I'm an Amalekite."

"Kill me please I don't want the Philistines to torture me, catch me and torture me." It could be that he did slay him, or it could be that he's making up this story, that he came and found Saul dead, ripped off his crown and bracelets and made up the story. I don't know. You're only left to speculation. Nobody really knows for certain.

However there is an interesting thing here, if indeed this young man did kill Saul, it would make an interesting spiritual analogy concerning our flesh, and that is if we don't utterly destroy the flesh, ultimately the flesh is going to destroy us. Had he utterly wiped out the Amalekites, then this young Amalekite boy could never have killed him. But his failure to obey the Lord, and utterly wipe out the Amalekites, it came back and a young Amalekite boy killed him. It is true that God tells us to put to death the flesh, the things of the flesh because if we don't, if we keep making allowances and tolerate our flesh,

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you can be sure the flesh is gonna come back and destroy you. Make no provisions for the flesh life, walking after the flesh, but walk after the Spirit.

So David, when he got this news, wept and he fasted. He wouldn't eat anything. And he began to mourn the death of Saul and Jonathan.

Then David took hold of his clothes, and he just ripped them; [Of course this was always a sign of great emotion and feeling, you just ripped your clothes.] he mourned, and wept, and fasted until the evening, for Saul, and Jonathan, and for the people of the LORD, and for the house of Israel; because they had fallen by the sword. And David said to the young man that told him this, Who are you? And he answered, I am the son of a stranger, I'm an Amalekite. And David said to him, Weren't you afraid to stretch forth your hand against the anointed of the Lord ([2Sa 1:11-14](#))?

"How is it that you would destroy God's anointed?" Now again it is interesting the tremendous respect David had for the anointing of God. This marvelous respect for God's anointing upon a person's life. Because of that anointing upon Saul, because he had been anointed to be king, David wouldn't touch him.

Now David did prophesy, "God will either strike him, or he may fall in battle," and as David said, "he may fall in battle," that is exactly exactly what did happen to Saul, he fell in battle. But David wouldn't touch him. "I'll not stretch forth my hand to touch God's anointed."

So when this young man came and said that, "He begged me, and I killed him." David said, "Weren't' you afraid to touch God's anointed?"

And he called one of his young men, and he said, Fall on him [with your sword because he dared to touch the anointed of God. And so one of David's young men fell upon him,] and killed this young man. [Who thought no doubt that David would promote him, and give him a position of honor, maybe even give him a reward for what he had done, and David rewarded him, but not as he thought.] And David said, Your blood be upon your head; because from your own mouth you've testified against yourself that you have slain the Lord's anointed. And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son: [This beautiful lamentation of David.] (Also he had them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow: behold, it is written in the book of Jasher.) [And this is his lamentation.] The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places: how are the mighty fallen. Tell it not in Gath, [Which was one of the principal Philistine cities.] publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon; [Which was another of the five major cities of the Philistines.] lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph ([2Sa 1:15-20](#)).

Actually when the men came back from the war with the victories and all, the young girls would get their tambourines and they would come out in their dances. They would go through their dances praising the men for their battle, and their valor, and their victories

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and all. David could see the celebrations in his mind that were going on in these Philistine cities. Because this mighty man Saul, and this beloved friend Jonathan were slain. So he's crying out, "Don't publish it in Gath. Don't publish it in Ashkelon lest the daughters of the Philistines come out in their dances, and they rejoice."

Then he turned to the Mount Gilboa where Saul fell, and he said,

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, and the shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with oil. From the blood of the slain, and from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and the sword of Saul returned not empty. 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 ([2Sa 1:21-23](#)).

Now this sort of curse upon Mount Gilboa, because Saul had fallen. "Let there not be the dew of heaven, or rain fall upon thee. Let there not be wheat fields grow upon thee." Very interesting because you go to Israel today, and look at Mount Gilboa, and it's barren, a rocky, barren mountain. Now all around it the mountains are just covered with trees lush, beautiful, and green. But Gilboa stands out because of its barrenness.

Now I guess the people of Israel sort of helped this prophecy out because in all the reforestation of Israel, they planted millions of trees, but they won't plant trees on Mount Gilboa because of this lament of David.

So it is interesting that Mount Gilboa remains barren to the present day, in fulfillment of this lament of David. It's always just sort of interesting to look at Gilboa, and see the barrenness of it, and then remember "Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be any rain upon you, or fields of offerings."

Then he addresses himself to the daughters of Israel,

Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, and with other delights, who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel. How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle. O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women. How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished ([2Sa 1:24-27](#)).

Now there are some perverted minds who declare that David and Jonathan had homosexual relationships, a homosexual relationship going between them because of this declaration of David, and such thing is the worst kind of trash. It's blasphemous. No such thing is inferred from this in the Hebrew text at all. It's blasphemous.