

Journey Through the Bible (52)

# The United Kingdom (6) Saul's tragic end

**1 Samuel 27-31**

# The United Kingdom

- We are continuing the 9<sup>th</sup> of 17 time periods of Bible history – the United Kingdom. This was a period where Israel is governed by a king.
- This period lasted 120 years under 3 kings – Saul, David and Solomon. From ~1050-930 BC.
- It was a period of relative peace and expansion
- Biblically - **1 Sam. 8 – 1 Kings 11, 1 Chronicles 1 - 2 Chronicles 9.**  
Also, the period of much poetic literature.

# The United Kingdom

- In our last lesson, we addressed Saul pursuing David. He knew that YHWH had rejected him and that David was the anointed. Therefore, He determined to destroy David, but failed (as if he could stop God's plans)
- Twice David had the chance to kill Saul and did not. He left it in God's hands. As we concluded our lesson, Saul went home and David moved on into the wilderness.

# David flees to the Philistines

- **1 Sam. 27** – Rather than remaining in Judah, David goes to Gath of the Philistines where he (sort of) allies himself with Achish. Saul hears and ceases to pursue him - **4**. In time, David and his 600 men are given the city of Ziklag to dwell in for 16 months. Achish believes David is totally loyal to him. David and his men attack various cities south of Judah. But he lies to Achish when asked where he has been. Achish makes David's troops part of his army.

# David flees to the Philistines

- **1 Sam. 28** – Saul continues his downward spiral. As the Philistines prepare to battle Israel, Saul seeks counsel from YHWH, but He does not answer. So he goes to a medium in En Dor because he wants to speak to Samuel. The witch is startled when Samuel actually appears and rebukes Saul for disturbing him.
- He then tells Saul that he and his sons will perish the next day in battle.
- Saul is devastated and has to be encouraged to eat.

# David flees to the Philistines

- **1 Sam. 29** – As the Philistines are gathering their army at Aphek to engage Israel at Jezreel. They pass before the various lords and King Achish. At the back, David and his troops pass by. The other lords are concerned and do not want David to go with them to battle. David acts offended. Reluctantly David and his men are sent back to Ziklag.

# David flees to the Philistines

- **1 Sam. 30** – As David returns to Ziklag he finds that the Amalekites have invaded the city and burned it. They took the spoils and all the women and children captive.
- David's men are disheartened and angry at David. But he inquires of YHWH through Abiathar and he is told they would successfully defeat the Amalekites.
- They go, but on the journey about 200 are too exhausted to continue, so they are left behind to guard the equipment.

# David flees to the Philistines

- **1 Sam. 30** – On their way to confront the Amalekites they find an Egyptian slave abandoned by his master and starving. They feed him and ask him to help them find the enemy. He agrees on condition he is spared and not turned over to them.
- They find the army of Amalek dancing and celebrating. They attack them and wipe them out except for 400 who escaped on camels.
- They delivered their families and gathered much spoil.
- As they return to meet the 200 men who stayed behind, some worthless men wanted to withhold sharing their spoils. David refuses and enacts a law that this should never happen.
- He also shares some of the spoil with various cities of Judah.

# David flees to the Philistines

- **1 Sam. 31** – The Philistines battle against Israel. As Samuel had prophesied Saul's 3 sons, Jonathan, Abinab and Malchishua are killed. Saul is mortally wounded with an arrow and asks his armor bearer to finish him. He refuses so Saul falls on his own sword. The armor bearer also kills himself.
- The next day, the Philistines find the bodies of Saul and his sons. They cut off their heads and take their armor and parade it throughout their territories. The armor and the head of Saul are placed in the temple of their gods (Dagon).

# David flees to the Philistines

- **1 Sam. 31:11-13** – The men of Jabesh-Gilead hear of Saul's defeat and mutilation and travel all night into dangerous territory to retrieve their bodies. They bring them home, burn them (respectfully), bury their bones and mourn for 7 days.
- Recall, Jabesh-Gilead was the first city Saul saved after becoming king (**1 Samuel 11**)

# David flees to the Philistines

- **1 Chronicles 10** – We are now introduced to this book.
- In many ways the **Chronicles** parallel **2 Samuel** and **I & II Kings**. But like the synoptic gospels, there are some differences in details. When they parallel study them together.
- **Kings** will record the “divided kingdom” while **Chronicles** focuses on the tribe of Judah (and the united kingdom).
- The first 9 chapters are genealogies establishing various blood lines for the tribes.

# David flees to the Philistines

- **1 Chronicles 10** – Parallels the account of Saul's death with the following extra details:
- **10:10** – records that Saul's head is fastened to the wall in the temple of Dagon.
- **10:13-14** summarizes the unfaithfulness of king Saul and why he was rejected by YHWH.
- **1 Chronicles 12:1-22** gives us further details about David's small army including men of Benjamin (Saul's tribe) who defected to him – warriors who were very accurate with bows and slings. We also read of men from Manasseh, Judah and Gad joining David.

# Lessons to Consider

- God protects those who belong to Him – a dark time in David's life, yet YHWH was with him, even as he flees into enemy territory.

**Romans 8:31** – if God be for us, who can be against us.

**1 John 4:4** – He who is in you...

- Fear can lead to lies – David, in enemy territory does what he thinks he needs to do to preserve himself. Do you put yourself in danger situations?

**2 Corinthians 6:14**

Lying is a sin! **Ephesians 4:25, Revelation 21:8, etc.**

# Lessons to Consider

- The folly of the occult – Saul KNEW how God felt about mediums and witches, etc. –  
**Deuteronomy 18:10-14, Leviticus 20:27.**  
**Galatians 5:19-20, Revelation 21:8** – sorcery  
**Acts 19:19** – in Ephesus they burned their magic books;  
**Acts 8:9-11** – Simon the sorcerer repented
- Where disobedience leads – Why did Saul go to a medium? Because he had rejected YHWH. He was desperate for answers. WHEN we turn from God, to whom can we go? **Cf. John 6:67-68**

# Lessons to Consider

- The deafening silence of God – God's silence meant that He was not with Saul. While God does not speak today as back then, when we are out of favor, how can we expect Him to hear us? **Psalm 66:18** – *If I regard iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear.*

**Isaiah 1:15, 59:2**

- God can accomplish His will – even in the land of the Philistines, God preserves David. He had been anointed king by God.

# Lessons to Consider

- God provides a way out for David – again, while circumstances today are different, God is able to make the way of escape –  
**1 Corinthians 10:13, Hebrews 2:18**
- Seek God in times of trouble – David puts his trust in God (when returning to Ziklag). God's word and God's people are our source of guidance

# Lessons to Consider

- Don't give up when facing troubles – After Ziklag, David continues to move ahead. He regrouped.
- Compassion for the weary – the 200 too exhausted to move ahead. Also the Egyptian slave – they showed compassion. We too are to be compassionate in these matters – **2 Corinthians 1:3-6,**  
**Matthew 9:36**

## Lessons to Consider

- The importance of those working behind the scenes – most good works have a “support staff” – **cf. 1 Corinthians 12:12-27**
- Show your gratitude – David shared spoils with several cities in Judah (likely, from time to time they had helped him as he wandered). **Colossians 3:15** -*And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.*

- The ultimate downfall of pride – Saul never overcame his pride – he perishes.  
**Proverbs 16:18**
- The reality of death – **Hebrews 9:27**
- Show due respect for the dead – The men of Jabesh-Gilead showed respect for the remains of Saul and his sons.  
Showing respect reminds us of the value of a soul, both theirs and ours.

# Concluding remarks

- The history of God's people is filled with lessons to learn. Here we find the end of a tragic chapter in Israel's history.
- But we also find the beginning of a new hope in David.
- Life is filled with good and bad events. We may not be able to control many of them, but we CAN control how we react AND we must never forget who is always in ultimate control.

Where are you headed?

