

## January 13

**Scriptures:** Read 1 Chronicles 10 & 11

**Key Verse:** “Then David went on and became great, and the Lord of hosts was with him.”  
(1 Chronicles 11:9)

### Overview

From this point on, the book of Chronicles begins to deal mainly with King David as the founder of the divinely appointed royal dynasty. The life and reign of Saul is not dealt with, since his kingship had been rejected by God. Only the death of Saul is recorded in Chronicles; this is proof of God’s rejection of him and his family as royal rulers over Israel. This account of Saul’s death is merely an introduction to the way in which David came to the throne. However, by relating this account, the chronicler gives an important message through contrasting the lives of Saul and David: disobedience to God brings destruction (10:13-14), but faithfulness to Him brings blessing.

We have confirmation here, as history records, that Saul committed suicide (10:4; 1 Samuel 31:4); he was not killed by the Amalekite who came to David with his false report (2 Samuel 1:6-10). What a tragic end for one who had been so humble and promising in his younger days. We read that the Philistine archers mortally wounded him (10:3), found his body, decapitated it, and hung his head as a trophy in their heathen temple. How sad that the pagan god Dagon received the glory for Saul’s defeat and death! The Lord God, however, was the One in control. We read that because it was His plan to turn the kingdom over to David, “He killed him” (10:14).

We are given the reasons for Saul’s death in 10:13 and 14: “he did not keep the word of the Lord” which had been spoken to him through the prophet Samuel. Saul’s life reflects a series of failures. He put his own desires above the desires of God and transgressed by going beyond the limits set by God. The Lord was to be obeyed as the supreme sovereign ruler of Israel. Saul was disobedient in not waiting for Samuel to offer the sacrifices (1 Samuel 13:8-9). He disobeyed God’s specific command to exterminate the Amalekites and displayed his pride and self-glory by letting Agag, king of the Amalekites, live as his trophy (1 Samuel 15). He continued to do things against the will of God, like trying to kill God’s chosen and anointed king, David, and ruthlessly killing the priests at Nob (1 Samuel 22:17-19).

Saul did not truly humble himself before God. Even though we read in 1 Samuel 28:6 that he tried to inquire of the Lord, his heart was not right to ask or to receive anything from the Lord. Instead, “he consulted a medium for guidance”; this was the second reason given for his death (10:14; 1 Samuel 28). What an insult to the Lord who was able to give guidance which would lead to life; but Saul chose the witch’s guidance of Satan which always leads to death (similar story in 2 Kings 1:3-4). God hates witchcraft, for it is really worship of Satan (Deuteronomy 18:10-12).

Apparently, the chronicler presumes the readers’ knowledge of the books of Samuel and Kings and therefore omits some historical facts (e.g. the general statements about Saul in 10:13-14). No

mention is made of David's seven-year reign over the tribe of Judah in Hebron, but the history is taken up at the point of David's unanimous kingship over all Israel, as God had ordained.

We are also told of his first official action as king in taking the Jebusite stronghold of Jerusalem for his royal capital city (cf. 2 Samuel 5:6-9). We are also told of how Joab, David's nephew, retained his position as commander and then won the position of "chief and captain" over the unified army of Israel by being the first to penetrate the strong fortifications of the city (11:6). With this victory, "David went on and became great." The writer says the reason for David's greatness was that "the Lord of hosts was with him" (11:9). The title given to the Lord expresses the truth that God fought David's battles. Those who have God on their side will ultimately see victory!

Many other heroes are named who came to the support of David while he was still a fugitive hiding from Saul. They are honoured, not only for their feats of bravery, but for helping David become king of Israel. The note is made that they acted in accordance to the will of God, and their support of David was in the providence of God (11:10). God, Himself, orchestrated the events of history in order to see His will accomplished. He sent these men to His servant David to help and encourage him. In a time of difficulty, such as David's time as a fugitive in the wilderness, it is sometimes hard for us to see any good that might come out of it, but God has everything in control. He brings people into our lives to help us, and He truly does work out things for our good. Finally, God brought David out of the wilderness and put him on the throne in Jerusalem.

## **Prayer**

O Lord, as 'You were with David, You've promised to be with us. Grant that Your greatness will be seen as we walk before You, not like Saul in our own desires, but like David, as people after Your own heart.