

November 5

Scriptures: Read 2 Samuel 1

Key Verse: “How the mighty have fallen, And the weapons of war perished!” (2 Samuel 1:27)

Overview

2 Samuel is a continuation of Israel’s salvation history and picks up where 1 Samuel 31 left off. Saul had died while David was busy with the rescue of the women and children that the Amalekites had stolen away (1 Samuel 30:18-19). Shortly after his return, when they were no doubt trying to rebuild ruined Ziklag and reorganize their lives, another Amalekite, who would not have known that David had just been in conflict with them, came with the news of the deaths of Saul and Jonathan.

The Amalekite’s story is not accord with the account in 1 Samuel 31:3-4, which we know to be the true account. It is most probable that the Amalekite messenger fabricated the story, giving some accurate details but lying about the actual way in which Saul had died. We know from the account of 1 Samuel 31 that Saul committed suicide after his mortal injury. It may have been that the Amalekite was waiting or hiding upon Mount Gilboa to rob from the corpses that fell in battle. Possibly he saw, and may have heard, what had transpired between Saul and his armour bearer. In any case, he happened upon the body of Saul before the Philistines and removed his gold crown and bracelet. The Amalekite expected David to look on him with favour for putting an end to his arch enemy and give him a reward in return (2 Samuel 4:10).

David’s first reaction to the terrible news of Israel’s defeat, and the deaths of king Saul and his beloved friend Jonathan, was to tear his clothes — the sign of mourning for a loved one. The death of Jonathan must have brought him much sorrow, for Jonathan, his covenant partner, was as close as a brother to him, as the song he wrote beautifully expresses (1:26). Jonathan and his father had opposite views about David, yet Jonathan remained a true and faithful son and, as David’s song relates, “in their death they were not divided” (1:23).

David never wanted to see any harm come to Saul, for he respected him as God’s anointed king. When the ungodly Amalekite messenger told David he had killed Saul, David understood this to be a very serious offense, not only high treason against his king but a religious offense as well. When Samuel anointed Saul, he was from that point on to be considered consecrated to God. That demanded respect; clearly, the Amalekite had no respect for Saul as an anointed king chosen by God. With indignation, David ordered him executed. If it was indeed a lie he told, that lie cost him his life (1:14-15).

Filled with emotion, David wrote a beautiful elegy about Saul and Jonathan entitled “Bow”, which, as well as being recorded here, is said to have been included in the Book of Jasher (1:18). Not much is known about this book, for it has never been found; however, it was a collection of stories, poems, and songs about Israel’s early heroes.

The “Bow” was to be learned by the children of Judah so that they would always remember fondly the first king God had given them and his noble son Jonathan. The theme of the lamentation song is, “How the mighty have fallen!” (1:19, 27). The sad thing is that because Saul

was mighty in his own eyes, it ultimately led to his fall, not only physically, in death, but spiritually as well. “Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall” (Proverbs 16:18).

Prayer

Lord, help us to mourn with those who mourn and rejoice with those who rejoice. We mourn those who’ve fallen in death, but we mourn even more those who’ve fallen into spiritual death. We rejoice at the birth of new babies, but we rejoice even more at the new birth to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.