



A BETTER KING

A SERIES IN 2 SAMUEL



2 Samuel 1 – Does Crime Pay?

February 26, 2023

Introduction

Background

News From The Battle

After the death of Saul, when David had returned from striking down the Amalekites, David remained two days in Ziklag. 2 Samuel 1:1 (ESV)

And on the third day, behold, a man came from Saul's camp, with his clothes torn and dirt on his head. And when he came to David, he fell to the ground and paid homage. 2 Samuel 1:2 (ESV)

David said to him, "Where do you come from?" And he said to him, "I have escaped from the camp of Israel." 2 Samuel 1:3 (ESV)

And David said to him, "How did it go? Tell me." And he answered, "The people fled from the battle, and also many of the people have fallen and are dead, and Saul and his son Jonathan are also dead." 2 Samuel 1:4 (ESV)

And David said, "As the LORD lives, the LORD will strike him, or his day will come to die, or he will go down into battle and perish." 1 Samuel 26:10 (ESV)

Then David said to the young man who told him, "How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?" And the young man who told him said, "By chance I happened to be on Mount Gilboa, and there was Saul leaning on his spear, and behold, the chariots and the horsemen were close upon him. 2 Samuel 1:5-6 (ESV)

And when he looked behind him, he saw me, and called to me. And I answered, 'Here I am.' And he said to me, 'Who are you?' I answered him, 'I am an Amalekite.' 2 Samuel 1:7-8 (ESV)

And he said to me, 'Stand beside me and kill me, for anguish has seized me, and yet my life still lingers.' 2 Samuel 1:9 (ESV)

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 armlet that was on his arm, and I have brought them here to my lord." 2 Samuel 1:10 (ESV)

How do we reconcile the two contradictory accounts of Saul's death from 1 Samuel 31 and 2 Samuel 1?

1. Remember, 1 and 2 Samuel were originally one book. This is not a mistake. The author put these two accounts side-by-side on purpose.
2. If you must choose between trusting the author's account of Saul's death in 1 Samuel 31 or the account of an evil Amalekite in 2 Samuel 1, it shouldn't be hard to decide.
3. The Amalekite's account has the markings of a lie. It is missing important details.
4. The Amalekite's account claims King Saul was alone dying on the mountain. That doesn't seem probable when an army defended the king on the mountain.
5. In 2 Samuel 4:10, David tells us the Amalekite was looking for a reward. He twisted the story to make himself the hero of the story.

...when one told me, 'Behold, Saul is dead,' and thought he was bringing good news, I seized him and killed him at Ziklag, which was the reward I gave him for his news. 2 Samuel 4:10 (ESV)

Crime doesn't pay.

Then David took hold of his clothes and tore them, and so did all the men who were with him. And they mourned and wept and fasted until evening for Saul and for Jonathan his son and for the people of the LORD and for the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword. 2 Samuel 1:11–12 (ESV)

"For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord GOD; so turn, and live." Ezekiel 18:32 (ESV)

And David said to the young man who told him, "Where do you come from?" And he answered, "I am the son of a sojourner, an Amalekite." 2 Samuel 1:13 (ESV)

David said to him, "How is it you were not afraid to put out your hand to destroy the LORD's anointed?" 2 Samuel 1:14 (ESV)

Then David called one of the young men and said, "Go, execute him." And he struck him down so that he died. And David said to him, "Your blood be on your head, for your own mouth has testified against you, saying, 'I have killed the Lord's anointed.'" 2 Samuel 1:15–16 (ESV)

What lessons can we learn?

1. We have to respect the office, even if we struggle to respect the man in the office.
2. Euthanasia is wrong. If someone is dying, it is murder to take their life prematurely.
3. It is not our job to get revenge. We leave that in the hands of God.

"Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." Romans 12:19 (ESV)

"But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you." Luke 6:27–28 (ESV)

...he who is glad at calamity will not go unpunished. Proverbs 17:5 (ESV)

4. How we respond when we hear about others' suffering reveals the truth about our hearts.

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Matthew 6:33 (ESV)

David laments for Saul and Jonathan.

- When someone dies, we are to remember the good that was lost.

And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and Jonathan his son, and he said it should be taught to the people of Judah; behold, it is written in the Book of Jashar. He said: 2 Samuel 1:17–18 (ESV)

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

Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised exult. "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. 2 Samuel 1:20–21 (ESV)

"From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and the sword of Saul returned not empty. 2 Samuel 1:22 (ESV)

"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. 2 Samuel 1:23 (ESV)

"You daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you luxuriously in scarlet, who put ornaments of gold on your apparel." 2 Samuel 1:24 (ESV)

"How the mighty have fallen in the midst of the battle! "Jonathan lies slain on your high places. 2 Samuel 1:25 (ESV)

As soon as he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. 1 Samuel 18:1 (ESV)

I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; very pleasant have you been to me; your love to me was extraordinary, surpassing the love of women. 2 Samuel 1:26 (ESV)

This is NOT describing a homosexual relationship.

1. The words “pleasant” and “love” in Hebrew are used to describe close friendship. They are NOT Hebrew words used to describe a sexual relationship.
2. David describes Jonathan’s loyal love for him as greater than a wife’s loyal love for her husband. This describes loyalty in a relationship. It is not talking about sexual love.
3. It would make no sense to see homosexuality celebrated by Israel's righteous king, while it is also described as a sin deserving the death penalty under God's law.

If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them.
Leviticus 20:13 (ESV)

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality,... 1 Corinthians 6:9 (ESV)

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

Conclusion

Life Group Questions

1. Read 2 Samuel 1 in your Bible or on this sermon handout. What did you learn that was new? What parts of this message were a surprise?
2. The Amalekite twisted the story of Saul's death to make himself look like the hero. How do we subtly bend the truth to make ourselves the hero of our story? Why does deception work with earthly rulers in this life but never before a righteous king like Jesus?
3. Does crime ever pay?
4. The Amalekite claimed he assisted Saul in his death, which he viewed as a good thing. David saw it as a wicked thing. What do these verses tell us about assisting people in their death? Job 6:8-11; 7:15-16. Job wanted to die when he was suffering. 1 Kings 19:4-8 - Elisha wanted to die until he was strengthened by God. 1 Chronicles 10:4 - Saul's armor-bearer refused to assist him in his suicide. Job 36:21 - Elihu warns Job that when we are suffering, it is tempting to turn to sin.
5. David refused to carry out revenge on Saul, even after all the evil Saul had done to him. What do these verses teach us about avoiding revenge and leaving vengeance in God's hands? 1 Peter 3:9, Proverbs 24:29, Leviticus 19:18, 1 Thessalonians 5:15, Mark 11:25, Proverbs 20:22, Matthew 6:14-15
6. **Read 2 Samuel 1:17-27.** What can these verses teach us about how to respond when someone dies?
7. While David began as a righteous king, halfway through 2 Samuel, David committed adultery and murder. From there, his kingdom declined. How does David whet our appetite for a kingdom of righteousness but leave us longing for the kind of righteous kingdom only Jesus can provide?