

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

(THE MOST ELOQUENT EULOGIES)

2 SAMUEL 1:19-20 & 26

Adeoye Emmanuel (Evangelist)

II Sam 1:19-20&25-26 NKJV

The beauty of Israel is slain on your high places! How the mighty have fallen!

Tell it not in Gath, Proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon —

Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,

Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.

"How the mighty have fallen in the midst of the battle! Jonathan was slain in your high places.

I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan.

You have been very pleasant to me.

Your love to me was wonderful, Surpassing the love of women.

The Lord prevented David and his men from assisting the Philistines in their battle against Saul and Israel, so David returned to Ziklag. There he discovered that the Amalekites had invaded and taken all the people and goods and had left the town in ruins. God in His providence led David to the Amalekite camp.

David routed the enemy, delivered the women and children, and reclaimed all the goods as well as the loot the Amalekites had collected in their raids. He then returned to Ziklag and awaited a report from the battlefield (**1 Sam 29-30**).

A deceitful messenger (2 Sam 1:1-10). On the day that David was slaughtering the Amalekites, the Philistines were over-powering Saul and his army at Mount Gilboa, where they killed Saul and three of his sons (**1 Sam 31; 1 Chron 10:1-12**).

The next day, while David was returning to Ziklag, the Philistines were humiliating Saul by desecrating his body and the bodies of his sons, and the Amalekite messenger was starting off to bring the news to David. It took him at least three days to get to Ziklag,

which was about eighty miles from the scene of the battle. So, it was on David's third day in Ziklag that he received the tragic news that Israel had been defeated and that Saul and three of his sons were dead.

Ashkelon is a coastal city in the southern part of Israel on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea. It is just north of Gaza and about 36 miles south of modern-day Tel Aviv. In biblical times, Ashkelon was the oldest and largest seaport in ancient Canaan.

Over history, it has been ruled by the Egyptians, the Canaanites, the Assyrians, the Greeks, the Philistines, and others. The geographical location of Ashkelon likely led to these various

nations and tribes vying to control it, as it would have been a highly desirable seaport for trade and military staging.

Scripture gives us three accounts of the death of Saul and his sons: **1 Sam 31**, the report of the messenger in **2 Sam 1:1-10**, and the record in **1 Chron 10**. According to **1 Chron 10:4-5**, Saul killed himself by falling on his sword, but the messenger said he had killed Saul to save him from experiencing further agony and humiliation.

1 Chron 10:14 informs us that it was God who killed Saul for his rebellion, especially the sin of seeking guidance from a medium. Only with great difficulty can the reports in **1 Sam 31** and **1 Chron 10** be reconciled with the report of the messenger; therefore, it's likely the man was lying.

There's no question that the man had been on the battlefield. While he was searching for spoils, he found the corpses of Saul and his sons before the Philistines had identified them, and he took Saul's insignias of kingship, his golden armband, and the gold chaplet he wore on his helmet.

However, the Amalekite didn't kill Saul as he claimed, because Saul and his sons were already dead. But by claiming that he did, he lost his own life.²

One of the key words in this chapter is *fallen*, found in *verses 4, 10, 12, 19, and 27*.

When Saul began his royal career, he was described as standing head and shoulders "*taller than any of the people*" (**1 Sam 9:2**; see **1 Sam 10:23 and 16:7**), but he ended his career a fallen king. He fell on his face in fear in the house of the spirit medium (**1 Sam 28:20**), and he fell on the battlefield before the enemy (**1 Sam 31:4**).

David humbled himself before the Lord, and the Lord lifted him up; but Saul's pride and rebellion brought him to a shameful end. "*Therefore, let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall*" (**1 Cor 10:12 NKJV**).³ Saul was anointed king at the dawning of a new day (**1 Sam 9:26-27**), but he chose to walk in the darkness (**1 Sam 28:8**) and disobey the will of God.

A grieving camp (**2 Sam 1:11-12**). The Amalekite messenger must have been shocked and then afraid when he saw David and his men tearing their garments and mourning the death of Saul. He thought that everybody in Ziklag would rejoice to hear the news of Saul's death, knowing that this meant the end of their dangerous fugitive way of life.

He probably expected to be rewarded for bringing such good news, but he obviously didn't know the heart of David. In David's eyes, Saul was never his enemy (**2 Sam 22:1**); and on the two occasions when David might have slain Saul, he made it clear that he would never lay hands on the Lord's anointed (**1 Sam 24:1-7; 26:1-11**).

The messenger claimed that he was an Amalekite, the son of a resident alien (**2 Sam 1:13**). But if he had been living in the land of Israel, he surely would have known that the king of Israel was the anointed of the Lord. If a loyal Jew had found the four corpses, he would have sought to hide them and protect them from the enemy.

but the Amalekites were the enemies of Israel, the very people Saul was supposed to wipe out (**1 Sam 15**). It's likely that the messenger was a genuine Amalekite but not a resident alien in Israel. He was more likely a "camp follower" who made his living scavenging after the Philistine army.

By claiming to be the son of a resident alien, the man was asking for certain privileges specified in the Law of Moses, privileges he certainly didn't deserve (**Ex 22:21; 23:9; Lev 19:33; 24:22; Deut 24:17**).

A righteous judgment (2 Sam 1:13-16). At evening, when the time of mourning had ended, David further interrogated the messenger and concluded that the man deserved to die. If the story he told was true, then the man had murdered God's anointed king and deserved to die.

If the story was not true, the fact that the Amalekite fabricated a tale about killing the king revealed the depravity of his heart. "Out of your own mouth I will judge you" (**Luke 19:22 NKJV**).

The Jews had been commanded to annihilate the Amalekites (**Ex 17:8-16; Deut 25:17-19**), so, when David ordered the messenger to be slain, he was simply obeying the Lord, something Saul had failed to do (**1 Sam 15**).

In slaying the messenger, David vindicated Saul and his sons and demonstrated publicly that he had not been Saul's enemy and did not rejoice at Saul's death. This was a dangerous thing to do, for David and his men were living in Philistine territory, and the Philistine king still thought David was his friend and ally.

For David to take his stand with the dead king of Israel could be considered an act of treason. But the Lord had vindicated David and David had vindicated Saul, and David wasn't afraid. The conduct of David and his camp, when reported to the Jewish people, would help to convince them that David indeed was chosen by God to be their king.

He speaks to his beloved friend Jonathan (2 Sam 1:25-26). It's common in funeral dirges to name and address the deceased. "Jonathan my brother" carries a double meaning, for they were brothers-in-law (David was married to Michal, Jonathan's sister) and brothers in heart and spirit.

David and Jonathan were beloved friends who had covenanted together to share the throne, David as king and Jonathan as second in command (**1 Sam 23:16-18**).

To read homosexual over-tones into David's expressions of his love for Jonathan is to misinterpret his words. Solomon described the love of husband and wife as "strong as death" (Song 8:6 NKJV), and the friendship of David and Jonathan was that strong. **1 Sam 18:1** NIV says,

"Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself." David closed his lament by repeating the poignant refrain "How are the mighty fallen" and comparing Saul and Jonathan to weapons of war that had been lost and could never be used again.

In composing and teaching this elegy, David may have had several purposes in mind. For one thing, he gave honor to Saul and Jonathan and taught the people to respect the monarchy. Since Saul was Israel's first king, the people might conclude that all their kings would follow his bad example and possibly ruin the nation, so, David sought to strengthen the concept of monarchy.

The song also made it clear to everybody that David held no grudges against his father-in-law and sovereign. Finally, David set an example for all of us to follow in paying loving tribute to those who have died in battle to protect their country.

LESSONS

1. LOVE IS NON-NEGOTIABLE-1 JOHN 3:1, 1 JOHN 4:7
2. OUR LOVE SHOULD SURPASE WHAT WE CHERISH MOST-2 SAM1:26, ROM 5:8
3. WE ARE COMPEL TO LOVE OUR ENEMIES -PROV 25:21 ROM 12:20