

1 Samuel Lesson 55 Saul and His Sons Die in Battle

- The connection between our obedience and our relationship to God
- God opposes the proud and exalts the humble
- Despite human evil, God is working out His purposes in history
- Kingship in Israel and God's plan to one day raise up an anointed divine king

Background:

"Kings who were captured alive " in the ancient Near East were often mutilated and then subject to a life of humiliation. Common practices were to put out their eyes, and/or cut off their thumbs or big toes. They were then made to beg for food or displayed in the public square for anyone to humiliate at will.

" Displaying the armor of a defeated king" in a temple symbolized the defeat of that king and his god and the victory of the winning army's own god.

"unburied body" In the ancient Near East to dismember a body and leave it unburied was the height of disgrace and shame for the victim.

"Beth Shan" was a Philistine town where a temple to Ashtoreh was located. It was near to the location of the battle. The impaling of dead bodies in view of the enemies was a common practice in the ancient Near East.

Read 1 Samuel 31: 1-13 1 Chronicles 10:1-14

1. Read 31:1-2 and describe the beginning of the battle which took place between the Philistines and the Israelites. What did the men of Israel do in the face of the enemy and who was killed?

2. According to 31:3 what happened to Saul in the battle? How did Saul respond in 31:4a? . What does Saul's response to his own pending capture reveal about Saul's heart? Where was his focus?

3. According to 31:4b what was Saul's solution to his pending capture? Why do you think his armor bearer was unwilling to obey Saul? See 2 Samuel 1:1-16 How did Saul's death finally come about?

4. According to 31:6 who all died together in the battle that day? How was this a fulfillment of God's Word through Samuel to Saul in 1 Samuel 13:13-14 and 15:22 ,28. See also 1 Chronicles 10:13-14. What do you learn from this about the fulfillment of God's Word, unrepentant sin and God's judgment?

Application: In 1 Samuel 15:23 Samuel tells Saul his disobedience is the sin of rebellion. How did Saul's unrepentant sin of rebellion eventually affect himself and those around him? his family? his servant? his nation? How can our disobedience affect those we love, or those we lead?

5. Not only did Saul's unrepentant sin lead to death, but it also led to disgrace? According to 31:7-10 how did the loss of the battle lead to disgrace for Saul and his sons?

6. 1 Samuel ends on a somewhat positive note? What did the people of Jabesh-Gilead do for Saul and his sons? See 31:11-13 What may have prompted them to do this at probable risk of their lives? See 1 Samuel Chapter 11