

STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF DAVID

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by

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Today we will be looking at I Samuel 31 & II Samuel 1. I think we make a real mistake if we look at the life and death of Saul without looking at Saul's end from the eternal perspective. In I Corinthians, Chapter 3, Paul has been arguing with the Corinthians that God is the one who is in charge of everything. He is the one who allows anyone to sow, to water or to have a harvest. He provides for the new converts for the church. Each person involved in that work, whether Paul, Apollos, Cephas or even Christ himself, is part of God's program. They are God's workmen to produce this crop of new Christians. Therefore each one shares in the harvest. In verse 10 he talks about building a foundation which others are building upon. This is what he did in the Corinthian church.

I Corinthians, 3:10 says:

According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation, [He started the Corinthian church] and another is building upon it. [Such as Apollos & Cephas, etc] But let each man be careful how he builds upon it. For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. [We all start out life as Christians with Christ as our foundation] Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day [That is the day of Christ, the Judgment Seat of Christ.] will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; [Each man's work will be revealed by fire] and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. [If it is gold, silver, precious stone, the fire will burn off the dross and leave it there purified.] If any man's work is burned up [wood, hay or straw. Gone! It's only ashes.], he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.

Skip down to I Corinthians, 4:5:

Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.

When the Lord comes he will bring two things to light. One, the hidden things of darkness; this facade we put on to look religious, to look Christian, to look like our great work is for God when deep inside we are actually doing it for ourselves. Second, he will bring to light the hidden motives of the heart. We may be stumbling all over the place as Christians. We may be too young, or too untaught, or just ignorant, when deep inside we earnestly desire to please Jesus Christ. One person may be "pleasing" him on the outside when his heart is wrong, and the other person, from the world's perspective, may be fouling up miserably, when his heart is right. So we can't tell by a person's actions where his heart is, and it is the heart God looks at. The gold silver and precious stones or the wood, hay and stubble, is not the number of souls you have saved or the number of Bible classes you have taught or the times you have stumbled and gone down the tube in your Christian life. It is what was your heart like when you were saving a soul or getting drunk or whatever. That is what God looks

at.

Now we want to look at Saul from God's perspective. Where was Saul's heart, not what were his outward actions. It is beautifully brought out in the 2 Chapters we will look at today. This is a picture, I think, of that passage in Philippians where Paul says:

Philippians 1:6:

For I am confident of this very thing, that He [God] who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus

God is going to win! You are going to make it. You are going to end up being what God wants you to be. There may be a lot of loss of reward. You may have blown a lot of things in your life, but when God gets through with you, you will be what he wants you to be. Now, as seen in I John 2, you may be a child, a young man or a father in your spiritual walk. You may only get to a child's stage, but that is where God wants you to be, and you will make it.

So let's proceed. Last week we saw that the appearance of Samuel during the seance with the Witch of Endor totally wiped Saul out emotionally. Because he had had nothing to eat, he was already destroyed physically. The Witch in her compassion, like the flesh always does, moved in, focused on the wrong problem and restored him physically. So, apparently without repenting and physically restored but with no emotional healing, he leaves. Well, God is going to wipe out the physical now. He's going to give Saul a chance to deal with Saul. When you get down to fundamentals, you begin to deal with things as they really are.

Remember Nabal. He had a stroke but was kept alive for 10 days to let him think. I personally believe God gave Abigail her husband, as we are told in I Peter 3. Wives submit to your husbands and love them for life, and God may just give them to you.

Here is God, now, moving in on Saul. Look at how hard it is for Saul to die. God was determined to keep him alive for some purpose. I personally think the purpose was repentance, and I think I will be able to prove it by the end of 2 Samuel, Chapter 1.

I Samuel 31:1:

Now the Philistines were fighting against Israel, and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines and fell slain on Mount Gilboa. And the Philistines overtook Saul and his sons; and the Philistines killed Jonathan and Abinadab and Malchi-shua the sons of Saul. And the battle went heavily against Saul, and the archers (not hit him but) found him; and he was badly wounded by the archers.

As you will recall from last week, the Philistines are up in the Valley of Jezreel where the Battle of Armageddon will be fought someday. This valley runs just below Galilee across the plain of Palestine. It divides the land. The Philistines are seeking to cut Palestine in half. They are on one hill and the Israelites are on the other hill on the side of Mt. Gilboa, which is quite a height. The two armies come down into the valley to fight. The Israelites obviously are thinking if things go against them they can retreat up the hill and be safe in the hills. Well, they can't. God has given them over, you'll recall. He gave over not only Saul but also the Israelites. They were doing nothing about a king who was rebelling against God. They had not accepted God's anointed either and were still following Saul, the wrong king. It was common knowledge by that time that David was God's anointed. On two different occasions, Saul himself had publicly admitted that in front of his army.

So, the battle is joined. The Philistines rout the Israelites. They don't stop at Jezreel either. They chase the Israelites up Mt. Gilboa slaughtering them all the way. Three of the people slain in that slaughter are Jonathan, Abinadab and Malchi-shua, the sons of Saul, who stayed with him until the very end. Saul's desperate craving for the kingdom lost him his three most precious possessions. You never sin as an island. Not only do you get hurt, but those dearest to you get hurt. In this case Saul lost his three sons.

Also apparently there was a special unit of archers out looking for Saul. This was one of the tactics of those days. Kings led their armies into battle. So, if you assigned a special force to wipe out the king or leading general, whoever was in charge, you could destroy the morale of the army. When we get to David's life as king, we will see that eventually his men prevented him from going to battle because the enemy always sought to hone in on him. David WAS Israel. He was the unifying force of Israel. So, he was eventually prevented from going to battle lest he be killed.

The archers do "find" Saul, [That is literally what the verb in Chapter 31, verse 2 means.] and they badly wound him. He is not killed, just badly wounded. He is hurting badly, but he is still alive.

I Samuel 31:4:

Then Saul said to his armor bearer, "Draw your sword and pierce me through with it, lest these uncircumcised come and pierce me through and make sport of me."

The Philistines were extremely cruel people. We saw that in how they dealt with Samson, for example. They did like to make sport of their victims, and if they found a king alive, they would kill him slowly and make him squirm. They would humiliate and disgrace him, and Saul didn't want that. Saul still had a little pride left. So he said to his armor bearer, "Pierce me through lest they make sport of me." He cannot seem to die.

I Samuel 31:4b:

But his armor bearer would not, for he was greatly afraid. [This is God's anointed king. He is responsible for his king's life and he is scared to death. He won't do it.] So Saul took his sword and fell on it.

So Saul, like Judas, tried to take the matter into his own hands but he didn't do a very good job.

Right now, between 4 and 5, I believe we will see that II Samuel, Chapter 1 fills us in about the Amalekite and how Saul actually did die.

I Samuel 31:5:

And when his armor bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his sword and died with him. Thus Saul died with his three sons, his armor bearer, and all his men [in I Chronicles 10:3 it is "all those of his house." His own special retainers.] on that day together.

We'll see later that Abner, Saul's general, Saul's cousin, did escape, but Saul and those that are his, including his sons, his armor bearer and his local retainers all die together. God has now eliminated from the kingdom of God the man who would not give up the kingdom of God.

I Samuel 31:7:

And when the men of Israel who were on the other side of the valley, with those who were beyond the Jordan, saw that the men of Israel had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, they abandoned the cities and fled; then the Philistines came and lived in them.

When Saul and all the retainers were killed and the Israelites saw the battle raging on up the hill after them, they turned tail and ran. This allowed the Philistines to move right into the Valley of Jezreel, surge all the way to the Jordan, even cross the Jordan and cut Israel in half. They didn't even have to fight. The great fortress of Beth-shan, which comes into the action a few verses later on, was situated on a mountain in the middle of the plain and was literally the focal point for central Palestine. The Philistines didn't even have to fight for it. They just walked in and took it over. God "gave them over." When God gives you over, you are out. OUT! These were the people of God, and this was God's discipline for the kingdom.

The tragedy here is the effect it can have on unbelievers when the people of God need disciplining. We hurt not

only ourselves, those who love us, the church of God and other brothers in Christ, but we have a terribly hardening effect upon unbelievers. If you are at all vocal and are known as a Christian, when you fall, unfortunately you drag down a lot of unbelievers with you. Look at verse 8.

I Samuel 31:8:

And it came about on the next day when the Philistines came to strip the slain, [They now possess the whole valley for this] **that they found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilboa.** [And the very thing Saul does not want to happen happens.] **And they cut off his head,** [Just like David did to Goliath to disgrace his body] **and stripped off his weapons** [and his armor per I Chronicles 10] **and sent them throughout the land of the Philistines, to carry the good news to the house of their idols and to the people. And they put his weapons in the temple of Ashtaroth, and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan.** [I Chronicles 10 says they put his head in the house of Dagon, their chief god]

What is the Philistines' "good news" instead of Yahweh's "good news"? Who has won in the eyes of the witnesses? Dagon! Dagon just beat Yahweh. Here is the gospel the Philistines preached, "Hey! our god IS God. He just creamed Yahweh. He clobbered Yahweh's people. We wiped out Yahweh's king, and here is the evidence." They proclaimed this news all over, to all their temples. The attendance in the temples doubled after that, I might add. The giving probably went up twice as much too. After sending the word to the people, they left the evidence strung up all over. In the temple of Ashtaroth, the goddess of fertility, the filthiest culture you can imagine, they hung Saul's armor. His head they fastened in the house of Dagon, their chief god. That was the house Samson destroyed one time a little earlier. Then they hung the bodies up on the greatest central Palestine fortress the Israelites used to possess, Beth-shan. They just strung up all four bodies, Saul and his three sons. Who won? Dagon. Who lost? Yahweh.

These people believed in local gods, ergo their god was far bigger than Yahweh. Who wants to turn to Yahweh when he doesn't win? We all like to be on the winning side. The tragedy was that the "good news" to the Philistines was that a false god was THE god. Unfortunately they are led into this by the rebellion of the people of God, the Israelites, because God allowed it to happen.

Let me say again, we do not sin as an island. One of the spiritual principles in Scripture is that when we fall we drag down with us not only believers but also unbelievers. It hardens their position of unbelief. Why should they accept our Lord as their Lord and their God if we demonstrate his total inadequacy for our problems, his total insufficiency to keep us out of sin, his total worthlessness to give us peace amid circumstances. Why should they change? They can go to pills, or the bottle or a psychiatrist's couch, and they can get peace there. Oh, there is a hangover, and it costs a lot of money on a psychiatrist's couch, but they find peace. Why should they go to Jesus when we are acting so up tight under the circumstances. That is the sadness of Christians falling. It would be better if we didn't name the name of Jesus Christ at all. At least people wouldn't know who we were supposed to be walking with and having faith in and gaining our strength and our life from. Unfortunately in this particular episode they know it is Yahweh. So the name of Yahweh is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of the Jews, as it is a thousand years later.

I Samuel 31:11:

Now when the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead [This is across the Jordan about 20 miles from Beth-shan] **heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, all the valiant men rose and walked all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-shan, and they came to Jabesh, and burned them there** [with fire]. **And they took their bones and buried them under the tamarisk tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days.**

Back when Saul first became king and he was God's man, Jabesh-gilead was besieged by the Ammonites (sons of Lot). They came out of the hills on the eastern side of the Jordan and surrounded the town. The town said, "We can't fight you. You are too big. What can we do to make a deal?" Nahash, king of the Ammonites said, "O.K., if you surrender we will let you live, but I'm going to gouge out everyone's right eye as a reproach on all Israel." The right eye, of course, was the key eye. You held your shield in the left hand and your sword in the right hand. Without a right eye the shield would blank out the only eye you had, and there

would be a blind spot on the right. You would have to switch hands to fight, and you would still have a blind spot. Your value as a warrior would be destroyed. Nabash's intent was to deliberately disgrace Israel. So, what happened? The Spirit of the Lord came mightily on Saul, and he called Israel together. He subsequently defeated the Ammonites and rescued Jabesh-gilead. This was when he was God's man. Jabesh-gilead remembered that. They didn't think about all the things that happened after that. They only remembered that when they needed him most, Saul was there, and he was God's man, and he did win for them. So they honored him. They went on this 20 mile night walk to retrieve the four bodies. Apparently the bodies had been badly abused so they burned off their flesh off so they could never again be viewed in that state. Then they buried the bones under a tamarisk tree. The Philistines continued their incursion all the way to the Jordan but were never again able to get the bodies to disgrace them.

In I Chronicles 10:13 we have this sentence.

So Saul died for his trespass which he committed against the Lord, because of the word of the Lord which he did not keep

This speaks of when he was supposed to totally destroy the Amalekites, man, woman, child, infant, sheep, oxen, camels, donkeys because they were a picture of the flesh. However, he wouldn't do it. He kept the best of the flesh, remember, best of the sheep, oxen, camel, donkeys, and he kept the king alive. He couldn't bring himself to destroy the "best," and it cost him his kingdom at that time. That is when God told him, "I am ripping the kingdom from you because of this. It is no longer yours. You could have had it, but it is not yours any more." Also he died for that trespass.

I Chronicles 10:13b:

"And also because he asked counsel of a medium, making inquiry of it and did not inquire of the Lord."

He did try to inquire of the Lord, remember, but the Lord would not answer him. So he probably did not inquire with a pure heart. James says, "You ask and receive not because you ask with the wrong motives." Saul apparently did just that. God would not respond to the wrong motives, and since God did not respond, Saul went to a medium which he knew to be wrong. He knew the penalty was death. For inquiring of a medium, for going to a medium, or for being a medium you were to be slain. So God killed him for #1 not wiping out the flesh, the Amalekites, and #2 deliberately disobeying the law of God which he had himself enforced by eliminating all the spiritists and mediums in Israel.

And it goes on to say, I Chronicles 10:14:

"Therefore he [God] killed him [Saul] and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse."

This is the tragic end of the people's desire. What was the desire of the people when they got Saul? Remember what they were asking? "We want a king," and what kind of a king? "One like all the other nations have." They wanted someone who looked good, looked kingly, looked regal, who would lead them into battle. What did Saul look like? Physically he was everything you would want a king to be. He was head and shoulders above all of Israel. He came from a very godly line. He had excellent parentage. He was a wonderful father. His three sons went to their deaths with him. He was really quite a man humanistically and naturalistically speaking. The tragedy was that spiritually he was nowhere. So the people got exactly what they were asking for, a king like all the other nations had, and God had to remove him from office the hard way.

This is what it looks like from the human perspective. Now let's go to chapter 1 of II Samuel and look at it from God's perspective.

II Samuel 1:1:

Now it came about after the death of Saul, when David had returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites, that David remained two days in Ziklag. And it happened on the third

day, that behold, a man came out of the camp from Saul, with his clothes torn and dust on his head. [That is a sign of deep mourning.] **And it came about when he came to David that he fell to the ground and prostrated himself. Then David said to him, "From where do you come?" And he said to him, "I have escaped from the camp of Israel." And David said to him, "How did things go? Please tell me." And he said, [One] "The people have fled from the battle, [Two] and also many of the people have fallen and are dead; [Three, and this is what he knows David really wants to know] and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also."**

Because of his trickery, David is accepted by neither the Israelites nor the Philistines. So he has to sit in Ziklag, in that burned out town, wondering what his future is going to be. Who is going to win? What is it all about? This young man apparently seeks David out because he is expecting a reward. We will see why here in a minute.

II Samuel 1:5:

So David said to the young man who told him, "How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?" [The thing David is really concerned about is Saul and Jonathan.] **And the young man who told him said, "By chance I happened to be on Mount Gilboa, and behold, Saul was leaning on his spear. And behold, the chariots and the horseman pursued him closely** [They were about to catch him alive and then be able to make sport of him] **And when he looked behind him, he saw me and called to me. And I said, 'Here I am.'** [Saul had to call him, of course, because his armor bearer was afraid to put him to death] **And he said to me, 'Who are you?' and I answered him, 'I am an Amalekite.'** [I am a type of the flesh. I do not fear God. I don't care about Jehovah. I can do what others can't do.] **The he said to me, [Saul apparently knows him] 'Please stand beside me and kill me; for agony** [Literally "cramps". He 's impaled on his sword, is in a horrible death throw, but he can't die. He can't kill himself because he apparently is so weak he can't extract the sword , and yet he can't die. The word is not agony it is cramps. He is thrashing around] **has seized me because my life still lingers in me.' So I stood beside him** [the Amalekite speaking] **and killed him, because I knew that he could not live after he had fallen. [He had fallen on his own sword, but he hadn't done the job.] And I took the crown which was on his head and the bracelet which was on his arm, and I have brought them here to my lord. [to David]"**

#1. Since the Amalekite had no fear of Jehovah, he could kill Yahweh's anointed, and so he killed Saul. #2. How much is Saul possessed by the kingdom rather than Saul possessing the kingdom? Saul knows he is going to die in battle. What does Saul do? How does Saul go out to battle? What does he have on his head, a helmet? No, a crown! What does he have on his arm? The gold bracelet of a king. He is going to be king until the day he dies. Nobody is going to take his kingship away from him, and if it costs him his life he is going to die with a gold crown. By the way a gold crown is very soft metal. A blade will go through a gold crown like you wouldn't believe versus a nice rounded iron helmet. The king is going to be king until he dies. So God has got to cut him down to size, and God does it agonizingly and slowly. He is finally killed by an Amalekite.

Kind of interesting. What does that tell you about the Amalekites, about the flesh? Either you get it, or it will get you. Saul refused to destroy the Amalekites, and he ended up being destroyed by an Amalekite, by a mercenary. Now they had mercenaries in Judah's army. Intriguing thing is God had an Amalekite down there, the one type of person that all through Scripture never feared Jehovah. Deuteronomy 25 states the Israelites were to blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven because he did not fear Yahweh. The Israelites, in desperation, were hiring Amalekites to fight for them and had made peace with them when God had said to destroy them. So Saul is finally slain by what he will not deal with.

Of course, the young man embraces David, because, look what he has done for David. What does he expect from David? He's got a gold crown and a gold bracelet. That would melt down to a pretty good nugget of gold, but what do you think he really expects from David? Yes! He is handing David the kingdom. "I killed Saul. He is gone. Jonathan , the heir apparent is dead. The kingdom is yours, and I should get a piece of the action." No thought about killing God's anointed. Just thought about himself. I think he expected to stay with David for the rest of his natural life. Unfortunately for him, David was not impressed.

II Samuel 1:11:

Then David took hold of his clothes and tore them, and so also did all the men who were with him. And they mourned and wept and fasted until evening for Saul and his son Jonathan and for the people of the Lord [worshippers of Yahweh] and the house [nation] of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword.

Intriguing, the only two that are recorded as mourning for Saul are the one that he rescued many years before and the one he had hunted for many many years. Those two mourn him.

Now the Amalekites. II Samuel 1:13:

And David said to the young man who told him, "Where are you from?" And he answered, "I am the son of an alien, an Amalekite." [That finished him]

What do the Israelites consider Amalekites to be? Aliens. They are flesh and are never to be absorbed into the house of Israel. This man is not a proselyte. He is an alien. The flesh will always be alien in our lives. It no longer has any right to be in the life of a Christian though it will fight to get back in. It will help you, in quotes. It will join your side, in quotes. It will fight with you, in quotes, and it will cut your head off at the right time, in quotes. It is always an alien. It has no right to be in your life.

II Samuel 1:14:

Then David said to him, "How is it you were not afraid to stretch out your hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?" And David called one of the young men and said, "Go, cut him down." So he struck him and he died. And David said to him, "Your blood is on your head, for your mouth has testified against you saying, 'I have killed the Lord's anointed.'"

The tragedy is that the flesh is always against God's anointed. God says the only thing acceptable to him is the life of Christ. Therefore, the life of Christ living in me and through me is the only thing God will accept. Anything with the slightest taint of Bob the Slob is worthless. It is unacceptable in the sight of God. But the Amalekites obviously think that is not really the truth. There's a little good in me. I'm a nice father. I dress nicely on Sunday. I'm not naked. I have a nice tie on. "I can really help you out, God." I'm not that bad. I really don't need Jesus Christ to do the job. That is what I will always say. I really can make it on my own. Oh, I may call upon the Lord when I get stuck or something, but deep down inside the flesh tells me I've really got what it takes to do the job.

II Samuel 1:17:

Then David chanted with this lament over Saul and Jonathan his son, and he told them to teach the sons of Judah the song of the bow; behold, it is written in the book of Jashar.

David calls this beautiful lament, this beautiful elegy "The Song of the Bow" and he has it put in the book of Jashar, which is a book of epic poems about national heroes, particularly very pious heroes.

Now we will look at Saul's epitaph. II Samuel 1:19:

Your beauty, O Israel, is slain on your high places [The beauty obviously is Saul and Jonathan, and the high places is Mt. Gilboa].

How have the mighty fallen! [Each one of these phrases "How the mighty have fallen" represents a stanza. There's a long one here, Then shorter on in verse 25, and a wind up stanza very 27]

**Tell it not in Gath,
Proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon;** [These are two of the major cities on the Philistines]
**Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice.
Lest the daughter of the uncircumcised exult.**

In those days when conquering armies returned from battle, the women came out dancing and singing and

playing musical instruments to celebrate the victory. They did that when David slew his tens of thousands and Saul his thousands. Remember how the women came out with tambourines dancing and singing their "Hit Parade Song" of David. Now David is saying, "Don't let the Philistines hear about what happened. It will just increase our sorrow. We have had a tragedy in Israel."

II Samuel 1:21:

O mountains of Gilboa, [A curse on the site where the death occurred]
Let not dew or rain be on you, nor fields of offerings [The fields that produced the first fruit offerings. Why curse that land?]
For there the shield of the mighty was defiled,
The shield of Saul, not anointed with oil.

Saul's shield which should have protected his life was now stained with his own blood. Worse than that it was hanging in the temple of Ashtaroah, the goddess of fertility, rusting away and stained with the dried blood of Saul. It was totally defiled. Its location was even defiled.

Then he points out that while they did get killed, they took some Philistines with them. II Samuel 1:22:

From the blood of the slain from the fat of the mighty,
The bow of Jonathan did not turn back,
And the sword of Saul did not return empty.

The Scriptures speak of arrows as drinking the blood of the enemy and of swords devouring the flesh of the enemy. So what he is saying here is that the bow of Jonathan drank the blood of the slain and the sword of Saul pulled itself full from the fat of the mighty. They died, but they took a lot of the enemy with them. They were really mighty men even in their death.

Then there is this beautiful remembrance of Saul and Jonathan.

II Samuel 1:23:

Saul and Jonathan, beloved and pleasant [the word literally means "kind"]
in their life,
And in their death they were not parted; [Father and Son went down together]
They were swifter than eagles,
They were stronger than lions, [These are typical characteristics attributed to heroes in the Old Testament days and David attributes them to Saul and Jonathan. And here is the last lament for Saul]
O daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,
Who clothed you luxuriously in scarlet,
Who put ornaments of gold on you apparel,

He harks back to the days when Saul was truly a godly king. He was a tremendous king for awhile, and he won many battles. He brought rich booty to Israel. The women did dress in this gorgeous scarlet, and they did put gold ornaments on their apparel because of Saul. Daughters of Israel you are to remember that. Remember the kind of man he really was.

Then he reserves stanza just for Jonathan. II Samuel 1:25:

How have the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!
Jonathan is slain on your high places [Gilboa].

I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; [Remember when his own brothers would not accept him, Jonathan, who was probably double his age, heir apparent to the throne, David's rival for the throne, took David and make him his brother. He even took second place to David. This was the real thing.]

You have been very pleasant to me.

**Your love to me was more wonderful
Than the love of women.**

There was a tremendous bond between David and Jonathan. Incidentally when I read the above I was struck by the tragedy. This is the destruction involved in multiple marriages and multiple wives. David had no concept of a one flesh relationship. He had at least five wives at this time. He had another five wives and concubines later on. He had no idea of one flesh relationship with one woman for life. So he had a deeper affection, a closer relationship with a man [This was not homosexuality. This was a brother] than he did with a wife. It is a beautiful picture of Jonathan but a tragic statement on multiple wives.

Then the final stanza of grief. II Samuel 1:27:

**How have the mighty fallen,
And the weapons of war perished.**

Now, who wrote this elegy? Who wrote this elegy? The Holy Spirit of God wrote this elegy, my friends, not David. David was the penman. This is the Bible, the inspired Word of God. This is God's last word about Saul. Saul was chosen of God to be king of Israel. He was changed by God, we are told in earlier passages, to be God's man. Saul was mightily filled with the Spirit of God to be ruler over Israel. Saul's line would have ruled over Israel forever if he had obeyed God. God said so remember? God did not set Saul up to fail. He set him up to succeed.

From the eternal perspective did Saul succeed? Did he end up as gold, silver and precious stones? What does it say? Yes! Oh, yes, he lost a lot of wood, hay and straw. He lost his wars, and whatever that entailed as far as eternal value. I am not minimizing that, and there was a lot of wood, hay and straw in Saul's life. God burned that up at the judgment seat of Christ. It is gone. All those opportunities to be God's man are gone. But what did God say. He said he looks at the motives of man's heart not at his outward actions, and Saul deep down had real agonizing struggles. Deep down there was gold, silver and precious stones, and when it was all done and the dross was burned off God looked only at the remainder. He forgave Saul's sin and forgot them. His elegy is God's view of Saul's life after he dealt with Saul's rebellion. Saul did become what God wanted him to become.

It is just like Lot. Lot in the book of Genesis is a wipe out. However, II Peter 2 calls him a righteous man whose soul was tormented daily by the lawless deeds he saw about him. He lived in Sodom. Now, he was hooked on Sodom, and he couldn't leave it, but deep down he was torn asunder because he was God's man and he was righteous. Two thousand years after Lot's last word in the book of Genesis, God said he was a righteous man.

Don't ever judge by the outside. You may be 180 degrees out of step with God. My friends, we are going to make it. We may have a lot of wood, hay and straw in our lives which will be burned up, and for which we will lose rewards. I don't want to minimize that, but we are going to end up gold, silver and precious stones in the sight of God. All our sins will be forgiven and all our sins will be forgotten. God is going to see us only as gold, silver and precious stones and everybody in this room that names the name of Jesus shall have praise from God. I Corinthians 4 says so. That is the kind of God we have. Don't make him too small. Don't sell him short. He is something.

Father, we just thank you so much that you are something. We don't understand you. We can't figure you out. You are really something. Oh, boy, how we appreciate you. Now we thank you for your desire, your commitment, your sovereignty that is going to make us gold, silver and precious stones if you have to kill us. Father, we thank you so much in Jesus' name.

[Back to Bob Roe's Index Page](#)