

## 2 Samuel 1

- The book of 2 Samuel is the second half of a fascinating story
  - The Hebrew Bible originally contained a single book called Samuel
    - But when the elders of Israel translated the Hebrew Bible into Greek, they decided to divide the book into two books
    - And they changed the names to 1 & 2 Kingdoms, and that lasted until the fifth century or so
    - Jerome renamed the books 1 and 2 Samuel when he translated them to Latin and the new names stuck
  - VBVM I taught 1 Samuel a few years ago, and this study picks up where that earlier study left off
    - At that time I provided an introduction to the book, so I direct readers there for that background
    - But a couple of details are worth repeating here
  - First, the book was written by Samuel and probably one or two other prophets like Gad or Nathan
    - 1 Samuel covers the rise of kings in Israel and a rivalry between Israel's first kingdom Saul, and his successor, David
    - 2 Samuel picks up at Saul's death and tells the story of another rivalry but this time it's between David and himself
  - The story starts with David consolidating his power as the new king of Israel, and his early victories as he obeys God and leads well
    - But soon the story turns to David's temptations, his stumbles into sin and the consequences that follow
    - First, David's own son Absalom attempts a rebellion against his father
    - Later, God brings famine and other calamities as consequences for David's failures, leading to David's repentance in the end
  - So if 1 Samuel was a story of a strong man with an ungodly character, 2 Samuel is the story of a man of godly character who has weak flesh

- That's a story every believer should recognize, and therefore the lessons David learns are lessons for us too
- The Lord brings discipline to His children when we are unfaithful for the purpose of working out our sanctification
- And like David, the proper response to the discipline of the Lord is humility and repentance, which brings restoration
- Secondly, in 1 Samuel we learned that a major theme of the book was God's sovereignty, and that is no less true for 2 Samuel
  - At many points, the author takes care to show how events in David's life unfold according to the will of God
    - David was chosen by God and would be successful so long as he consented to God's will
    - We too need only consent to God to find the success God has planned for us...but do it in our own will, and we will fail
    - David could rely on God so long as he didn't take God's presence or power for granted nor try to impose his will on God's plan
  - Ultimately, our appreciation of God's sovereignty manifests in a heart attitude that seeks to please God and treat others in the same way
    - David's life story is that of a man who begins with this perspective, leaves it for a time but ultimately finds it again
    - And the events of his life are a testimony to the sovereignty of God as the Lord works patiently with David through it all
- So in 2 Samuel, we pick up essentially in the middle of the story, which necessitates a little recap of what happened in 1 Samuel
  - The books of Samuel cover the lives of three principle men in Israel's history from 1121 BC until 971 BC, a total of 150 years
    - The prophet Samuel, born in 1121 BC, and Israel's first two kings: Saul who dies in 1011 BC and David who dies in 971 BC
    - David's son, Solomon, only gets a brief mention in 2 Samuel
    - 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel focus on this period, while Solomon and the rest of the kings are covered in 1 & 2 Kings and Chronicles

- During these 150 years, Israel experienced a remarkable period of growth and development
  - As 1 Samuel starts, Israel is a small nation of oppressed people led by weak judges and harassed by numerous enemies
  - By the end of 2 Samuel, Israel is an emerging world superpower with a king soon to be the richest and wisest man in history
- This transition is all the more remarkable given the personal failures of Israel's judges and of the nation as a whole
  - Judges records the widespread failure of God's people to keep the Law and live in obedience to God's word
  - As 1 Samuel begins, the high priest, Eli, is a weak man with godless sons
  - Even Israel's first king, Saul, was a man chosen by the people for his appearance, not his godly character, against God's counsel
  - Eventually, Saul forgets God, becomes greedy and ultimately turns to witches for guidance
- But God continues to bless the nation by giving them their greatest king, David, who is introduced midway through 1 Samuel as a young shepherd boy
  - David is chosen by God to replace Saul's failed dynasty after Saul disobeyed God
    - The prophet Samuel informed Saul of God's decision this way

**1Sam. 15:24** Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned; I have indeed transgressed the command of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and listened to their voice.

**1Sam. 15:25** "Now therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me, that I may worship the LORD."

**1Sam. 15:26** But Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you; for you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel."

**1Sam. 15:27** As Samuel turned to go, Saul seized the edge of his robe, and it tore.

**1Sam. 15:28** So Samuel said to him, "The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to your neighbor, who is better than you.

**1Sam. 15:29** "Also the Glory of Israel will not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man that He should change His mind."

- Saul disobeyed the Lord by not utterly destroying the Amalekites when ordered to do so
- His heart had become so perverted that he rather keep their spoil for himself rather than protect his people
- So Samuel tells Saul his time is up, and Saul responds by crying crocodile tears begging for forgiveness
  - His repentance was not the kind of heartfelt return that could have received God's mercy
  - He was crying the way Esau cried when he realized he lost his family's inheritance to Jacob
  - He was sorrowful over his circumstances, not repentant for how his actions lead to those consequences
- Therefore, Samuel says God's decision will stand, because God had made His decree and God doesn't change His mind, the prophet says
  - But Samuel goes on to tell Saul that God's penalty was even worse than Saul realized
  - Not only was Saul being disqualified as king but so are Saul's descendants
  - In other words, Saul's dynasty was ending
- A dynasty refers to a line of kings of the same family who inherit the throne from their father in a succession from one generation to the next
  - A king's first born son is automatically heir to his father's kingdom, so when the father dies, the son becomes king
    - Dynasties usually lasted for centuries because only if the family fails to produce an heir or in a revolution does a dynasty end
    - But in Israel's case, God dictated who would be king, and He also decided the beginning and end of dynasties
  - So now Saul is hearing that God has rejected him as king and is putting an end to Saul's dynasty
    - In v.28 Samuel says that the Kingdom will be taken away from Saul and given to his neighbor

- The word neighbor in Hebrew means friend or companion, in other words a non family member
- So Saul learns that the Kingdom will be taken from his family and given to a new family, a new dynasty
  - Saul has failed so miserably that the Lord is rejecting Saul and his family line
  - In place of Saul's family, a new family will rule Israel, the family of Jesse, and specifically his youngest son, David
- God's decision sets the scene for the rest of the action in the books
  - The Lord raises David up to a position in Saul's court and ultimately to be commander of Saul's army
    - But after Saul learns that David has been anointed by Samuel in his place, he begins to wage all-out war against David
    - David eventually flees from Saul to live a decade in the desert wilderness running from Saul with a small, loyal band of men
  - During those ten years David suffers, prays, learns and ultimately matures into the powerful, compassionate leader we remember today
    - Though Saul seeks to kill David, David refuses to raise his hand against Saul, trusting God to defend him until David's day comes
    - In the meantime, David writes most of the psalms and becomes devoted to prayer and song and seeking the Lord's counsel
  - And remarkably, David also establishes a close relationship with Saul's son, Jonathan
    - Of all the people who should have been threatened by David's ascent to power, it should have been Jonathan
    - As the heir to Saul's throne, Jonathan represented the greatest threat to David's future dynasty
    - And David should have been Jonathan's greatest enemy since he would deny Jonathan his dynasty
  - Yet David and Jonathan are best friends, and David enters into a covenant promising to protect Jonathan when he rules

- In return, Jonathan secretly pledges allegiance to David's dynasty
- And David tells Jonathan he can serve in David's court
- So by the end of 1 Samuel, Saul has become obsessed and deranged by his pursuit of David and engaged in a full-fledged spiritual breakdown
  - Meanwhile, David continues waiting patiently for the throne and uses his reputation as an outlaw to deceive and defeat Israel's enemies
    - And as the book comes to an end, David and his small army of a few hundred men are in the south of Israel fighting Amalekites
    - While Saul and his three sons, including Jonathan, have gone with Israel's army to the north to battle the Philistines
  - David's men are victorious despite being greatly outnumbered because they were protected by God
    - While Saul's great army is routed by the Philistines, and Saul and his sons are killed in battle
    - The bodies of the king and his sons are beheaded and hung on the town walls of Bet She'an, just south of the Sea of Galilee
  - While the Philistines celebrate their victory over Saul in northern Israel, David and his men enjoy their victory in Ziklag in the south
    - News couldn't travel instantly in that day, so David doesn't yet know that Saul is dead and he has become king
    - It will take a few days for the news to reach David, and that's where the story resumes in 2 Samuel

1-2

**2Sam. 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.

**2Sam. 1:2** On the third day, behold, a man came out of the camp from Saul, with his clothes torn and dust on his head. And it came about when he came to David that he fell to the ground and prostrated himself.

**2Sam. 1:3** Then David said to him, "From where do you come?" And he said to him, "I have escaped from the camp of Israel."

**2Sam. 1:4** David said to him, "How did things go? Please tell me." And he said, "The people have fled from the battle, and also many of the people have fallen and are dead; and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also."

[2Sam. 1:5](#) So David said to the young man who told him, “How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?”

[2Sam. 1:6](#) 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 horsemen pursued him closely.

[2Sam. 1:7](#) “When he looked behind him, he saw me and called to me. And I said, ‘Here I am.’

[2Sam. 1:8](#) “He said to me, ‘Who are you?’ And I answered him, ‘I am an Amalekite.’

[2Sam. 1:9](#) “Then he said to me, ‘Please stand beside me and kill me, for agony has seized me because my life still lingers in me.’

[2Sam. 1:10](#) “So I stood beside him and killed him, because I knew that he could not live after he had fallen. 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.”

- After his victory over the Amalekites, David and his men remain in the southern area of Judah in a town called Ziklag, located in Philistine territory
  - All of Israel knows that David has been hiding among the Philistines in southern Judah to stay out of Saul’s reach
    - Yet the nation also knows that David is Saul’s anointed successor and they know he has been attacked by Saul
    - So when Saul dies in battle in the north, the survivors of the battle instantly realize David is now their king
    - Yet someone needs to inform David of that fact, so this enterprising man escapes from the camp and travels south
  - That journey would have taken 4 days on foot walking a normal pace
    - Since David was in the far south outside the territory of Israel in that day, he will be among the last to hear the news
    - And for the one who brings the news to David, there is opportunity for reward but also great risk
  - And the fact that this messenger arrives in just 3 days suggests he ran most of the way to be sure he was first to inform David
    - He was hoping for reward, because he knew David was anointed Saul’s successor and has suffered under Saul for the last decade

- So he assumes David will be happy to hear that Saul is dead and therefore David might reward the one who delivers the news
- But there was also risk in being the one to inform David, because this man will have to convince David that he had nothing to do with the death
  - Typically, the history of warfare is told by the victors, because the losers don't survive to tell it, so this man's survival makes him suspect
    - Moreover, the one in possession of the king's personal effects is usually the one who kills the man, as David took Goliath's sword
    - Therefore, the fact this man survives *and* possess Saul's crown suggests he was at fault and now wants to exploit Saul's death
  - So David will naturally suspect this man had a hand in Saul's death, so the man's story will need to explain these details
    - And that sets up this fascinating exchange between David and the man as David tries to get to the bottom of things
    - In v.2 the man falls at David's feet asking for an audience and David tells the man to explain himself
  - He begins his story saying he came from the camp of Israel, which means he was fighting in the army of Saul in the north
    - This piques David's interest because he knows Saul had been battling Philistines in that region and wants to hear the result
    - So David asks for a report, and to the man's credit, he doesn't bury the lede
  - He says we lost and many died including the king and his son Jonathan
    - Before David reacts to the news, he demands proof of the man's report
    - So in v.6 the man begins telling the story that he no doubt had been rehearsing for three days
- He says during the battle he found himself on Mt Gilboa, which is located in the Jezreel Valley of Galilee, when he saw Saul leaning on his spear during battle
  - Leaning on his spear is a way of saying trying to commit suicide...Saul is literally pressing his body down on the tip of his spear to thrust it in



- Closing in on wounded Saul were chariots and horsemen of the Philistine army
- Saul was in danger of capture or worse at the hands of his enemies, but he hasn't the strength to finish the deed
- So Saul calls this man over for help and asks his identity, and the man tells Saul he was an Amalekite
  - The messenger's inclusion of this detail in his story results in a moment of intrigue between David and the messenger
  - Early in his reign, Saul failed to destroy all the Amalekites as God commanded, which is why Saul lost his dynasty to David
  - And David had just returned from destroying some Amalekites so clearly David isn't afraid to carry out God's request
- And now David learns that this messenger is none other than an Amalekite, so how will that impact David's response?
  - Undoubtedly the messenger feared this truth would come out at some point, so he's skillfully woven the disclosure into his story
  - He's hoping that as David learns about his true identity in this round-about way, he will let it pass unnoticed
- For now David says nothing and allows the man to continue telling his story, and in v.9 the man gets to the main point
  - The Amalekite claims Saul was already mortally wounded and destined to die, so takes Saul's life as an act of mercy
  - He expects David to overlook his violence against the king since Saul requested it and his life was lost anyway
  - So that explains how he came into possession of the king's crown, but it doesn't explain how he escaped the Philistines
- So finally, David responds to this man's story

**2Sam. 1:11** Then David took hold of his clothes and tore them, and so also did all the men who were with him.

**2Sam. 1:12** They mourned and wept and fasted until evening for Saul and his son Jonathan and for the people of the LORD and the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword.

- David's first priority was showing honor to Israel's fallen king
  - David tears his clothes on his body, which was a traditional way of displaying mourning in Israel
  - He wouldn't have done it violently but ritually, to demonstrate he was in a period of mourning and then his men followed suit
  - Then also fasted for the remainder of that day, which wasn't very long by the standards of that day
  - And I suspect they might have fasted longer except that the times were now very dangerous and David had to act quickly
- After this brief period of public mourning, David returns his attention to the messenger

**[2Sam. 1:13](#)** 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."

**[2Sam. 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?"

**[2Sam. 1:15](#)** And David called one of the young men and said, "Go, cut him down." So he struck him and he died.

**[2Sam. 1:16](#)** 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.'"

- Because David knows the man is an Amalekite, he's curious to understand how he came to be in the camp of Israel
  - The man says he is the son of an alien, which means he was born in Israel to an Amalekite father who immigrated into Israel
    - According to the law, this man was a protected alien...not Jewish but under the protection of Jewish Law
    - The man expects his status as a protected alien will protect him from David harming him
    - He knows David is obligated to give him due process under Jewish Law like any Jew under the Law
  - But in this case, the fact that he's under the Law instead serves to convict him

- Notice in v.16 David says this man has confessed to a murder by his own testimony
- The man admits to killing Saul, and though he claims it was a mercy killing, there's no provision in the Law for such a killing
- In the same way, we can't kill a person today simply because the person is in pain or terminally ill or asks us for that help...
- If we did kill them, we would be prosecuted for murder, and the same was true for this Amalekite
- Under the Law of Moses, murder is punished by death, and since this man has confessed to the killing, no further adjudication was required
  - David orders that the man die immediately for his offense, and justice in that day was swift
  - David asks this man how he dared to raise his hand against God's anointed and then come claiming credit for it?
  - David is amazed the man thinks killing the anointed of God is ever a good thing, and this comment shows David's growth
- Earlier in 1 Samuel, David dared to raise his hand against Saul by cutting off a corner of the king's robe to show the king he could have done worse
  - Though that gesture seems fairly harmless to us, David later regretted that decision greatly
    - David realized that his offense wasn't merely harming or embarrassing Saul
    - His offense was in challenging the authority and honor of the man that God had placed in power
    - David was disobeying God and showing contempt for God's choices, which was contrary to David's heart
  - So once David realized his mistake, he repented and from that moment forward, David never dared to oppose God's anointed again
    - Even as Saul committed even greater wrongs against David, David respected Saul and demanded that others do likewise
    - If God had anointed Saul as king, then David rightly believed that only God could remove the king in His timing

- David couldn't strike Saul just because he knew God intended to replace Saul with David one day to come
  - David knew that God doesn't just control who becomes king of Israel, but God also decides when the change happens
  - And therefore, trying to impose his own timetable on God's plan was just as much disobedience as ignoring the plan
  - It took David a while to learn that lesson while he was running from Saul, but he has come to understand it well
- And now he's prepared to teach this Amalekite the same, by holding him accountable to the law of Moses, which requires a life for a life
  - David orders the man killed on the spot, and one of David's men carries out the order instantly
    - In this way, David ensures no one will suspect him of celebrating the death of Israel's king though he benefited from it
    - This is the kind of decision that David will become known for... honoring God at all costs
  - And in this case, there was a cost for David because he's currently living in Philistine territory in Ziklag
    - David has spent the last few years pretending to be allied with the Philistines against Saul so he could spy on them and attack
    - By now killing this man at the news of Saul's death makes clear where David's allegiance lies, so there's no turning back
    - David must leave Ziklag and return to Israel having forfeited any possibility of an alliance with the Philistines
    - But that's what God wanted...and that's what drove David more than anything
  - And what of the man's story...did he tell the truth about Saul's death??
    - Because the man confessed to murder, David never had to determine whether the man's story was true
    - But looking at the details, the man was almost certainly lying
- We find the biblical account of Saul's death and the death of his sons at the end of 1 Samuel

[1Sam. 31:2](#) The Philistines overtook Saul and his sons; and the Philistines killed Jonathan and Abinadab and Malchi-shua the sons of Saul.

[1Sam. 31:3](#) The battle went heavily against Saul, and the archers hit him; and he was badly wounded by the archers.

[1Sam. 31:4](#) Then Saul said to his armor bearer, "Draw your sword and pierce me through with it, otherwise these uncircumcised will come and pierce me through and make sport of me." But his armor bearer would not, for he was greatly afraid. So Saul took his sword and fell on it.

[1Sam. 31:5](#) When his armor bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his sword and died with him.

[1Sam. 31:6](#) Thus Saul died with his three sons, his armor bearer, and all his men on that day together.

- The Bible's account in 1 Samuel says that Saul committed suicide unassisted, which means that the Amalekite's story was false
  - Jewish historian Josephus tried to reconcile the two accounts by claiming that the Amalekite helped Saul fall on his sword
  - But it seems unlikely Saul's armor bearer would have stood by while an Amalekite killed his king
- More likely, the messenger witnessed Saul kill himself, and seeing what happened, he hatched a plan to exploit the death
  - When he saw the armor bearer die also, he seized the opportunity to take the king's personal effects
  - Then he ran to David to tell his story hoping for reward
- Whether true or not, the Amalekite miscalculated badly, because he didn't possess David's godly perspective of God's anointed king
  - Saul wasn't David's enemy, as far as David was concerned
  - The Lord had placed Saul in power, and as badly as Saul treated David, he was still the Lord's anointed
  - Which meant that anyone who opposed Saul was opposing God, and anyone who killed Saul was striking against God Himself
- In our present day, the fight for political power has increasingly become an existential struggle and it's led some Christians to forget David's example

- Even as we oppose those on the other end of the political spectrum, we have to remember that leaders are appointed by God
  - And when a regime change takes place, the Lord is selecting the winners for reasons of His own
  - And so when we oppose leaders in unlawful ways or dishonor them, we are challenging God
  - And even when those we opposed strike out at us, our proper response is not to strike back or lower ourselves to their tactics
- Like David we must maintain a respect for those God appoints knowing that God's ways are higher than our ways
  - If David can defend Saul's honor even after all Saul did to harm David, then surely we can show our opponents decency too
  - Our witness lies in the balance, to say nothing of our obedience to God
- David honored Saul's rule not because he necessarily liked the man himself... but because David's heart was fully submitted to the Lord
  - As much as any sinful person can, David's heart remained subject to God's will in everything he did
    - In 1 Samuel 13:14 David is called a man after God's own heart, which means that David had a heart to want what God wants
    - Of course, David stumbled at times because he was a man of sin like every person apart from Christ
    - But David's heart followed after God to a degree few have equalled
    - And that obedience to God was all the more remarkable given his power and wealth as king of Israel
  - Saul was not that kind of man, as 1 Samuel records, and the way Saul's life ended was emblematic of his entire rule over Israel
    - Saul's life ended leaning on his spear, which in a sense was the way that Saul lived his entire life as king
    - Saul leaned on himself, his own abilities, his own strength instead of seeking the Lord and walking in His strength

- So just as Saul killed himself by leaning on that spear, so also he brought his dynasty to an end by relying on himself
- Saul was all style but no substance...all hat, no cattle...selected by the people because he looked the part but his appearance was a facade
  - Saul is the Bible's poster child for the folly of God's people seeking spiritual leaders based on earthly qualities
  - And David is God's rebuttal...the youngest son of an average family, a shepherd boy with no training for war or politics
  - Yet he defeats Goliath with a slingshot, rises to commander of Israel's army and is anointed Israel's king
- From outward appearances, David is not impressive, but inwardly he's a man after God's own heart
  - So if you can choose between a man who has the looks or the one who has the character, go with character every time
  - Even though sometimes you can find someone with good looks and godly character in one package...
- But never assume that a pretty wrapper means spiritual goodness
  - External beauty is temporary and prone to failing, especially when it conceals a corrupt heart
  - But someone who has a heart for God will become increasingly beautiful over time, and that's the story of David
- David's devotion to God's sovereign will is on full display in the song that he composes to end Chapter 1

[2Sam. 1:17](#) Then David chanted with this lament over Saul and Jonathan his son, [2Sam. 1:18](#) and he told them to teach the sons of Judah the song of the bow; behold, it is written in the book of Jashar.

[2Sam. 1:19](#) "Your beauty, O Israel, is slain on your high places!

How have the mighty fallen!

[2Sam. 1:20](#) "Tell it not in Gath,

Proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon,  
Or the daughters of the Philistines will rejoice,  
The daughters of the uncircumcised will exult.

[2Sam. 1:21](#) "O mountains of Gilboa,

Let not dew or rain be on you, nor fields of offerings;  
 For there the shield of the mighty was defiled,  
 The shield of Saul, not anointed with oil.

[2Sam. 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.

[2Sam. 1:23](#) "Saul and Jonathan, beloved and pleasant in their life,  
 And in their death they were not parted;  
 They were swifter than eagles,  
 They were stronger than lions.

[2Sam. 1:24](#) "O daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,  
 Who clothed you luxuriously in scarlet,  
 Who put ornaments of gold on your apparel.

[2Sam. 1:25](#) "How have the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!  
 Jonathan is slain on your high places.

[2Sam. 1:26](#) "I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan;  
 You have been very pleasant to me.  
 Your love to me was more wonderful  
 Than the love of women.

[2Sam. 1:27](#) "How have the mighty fallen,  
 And the weapons of war perished!"

- In v.17 David chants a song in memory to Saul, and the Hebrew word for chant refers to a lament or dirge sung at a funeral
  - In v.18 David instructs his men to teach all generations of Israel to sing this song as well, and it has come to be known as the "Song of the Bow"
    - In fact, the author notes that this song was ultimately recorded in the book of Jashar, an ancient text lost to history
    - The book is first mentioned in Joshua, and it contained history from Joshua's day and David's day
    - The only way that could be true is if it was a living work of history, being updated continuously as a Jewish history record
    - So it wasn't scripture and it was eventually lost to antiquity as Scripture took its place



- Looking at the content of the song, you can see how it reflects David's respect for Saul as he notes many of Saul's accomplishments
  - In v.19, David says that the nation lost a part of its beauty as its king is disfigured on the high place of Mt Gilboa
  - In v.20 David says may the news never be repeated in Gath or Ashkelon, cities of the Philistines
  - The Philistines were by far the greatest of Israel's enemies during this time of history
  - And David couldn't bear the thought of those people celebrating Saul's death
- And even the place of Saul's death is called to suffer as a result of its role in diminishing the Lord's anointed
  - David asks that the mountains of Gilboa see no rain nor should any fields of the mountain become offerings to the Lord
  - Because that's where the shield of Saul was defiled by Gentile soldiers and Saul's shield wasn't anointed to save him
  - Notice even in that comment David acknowledges that the Lord ordained Saul's death by not anointing his shield
- And then the lament shifts focus to include the man whose death certainly saddened David the most: Jonathan
  - Jonathan is the closest thing David has ever had to a friend to this point in his life
    - David has other men who have stood by him in his conflict with Saul or who have fought with him
    - But Jonathan was the one man who David knew as a close confidant and friend
    - Every other man respected David because of his position as Israel's future king
  - But Jonathan befriended David *despite* David's position as God's anointed
    - Jonathan valued David's friendship more than he coveted the throne, and he loved David as one believer loves another

- His love was agape love, to use the New Testament term, a self-sacrificial love, and it impressed itself on David's heart
- But now that his one true friend David is gone, David feels very much alone
- So in the lament, David connects the two men in death as they were in life
  - In v.22 David sings of the blood and courage of these men who faced death in battle without shrinking back
  - Jonathan's bow engaged the enemy and Saul's sword did not return empty having killed Philistines before he fell
- And then notice in v.23 David says both Jonathan and Saul were beloved and pleasant in life even as they remained united in death
  - This isn't simply the case of saying nice things about the dead...
  - David is sincerely honoring Saul's memory by noting his goodness along with Jonathan's
  - To understand how forgiving and loving David was, ask yourself could you be this generous in a eulogy for your worst enemy?
- Concluding the song, in vs.24-27, David asks the people of Israel to join him in lamenting Saul's passing
  - The daughters of Israel who enjoy fine clothing and jewelry should mourn Saul, because under his leadership Israel became wealthy
    - And that was true and it reminds us that even those we oppose may be used by God for good purposes
    - That reason alone is cause to restrain our tongues in criticism
  - And the lament ends with David expressing his feelings for Jonathan, the mighty friend slain in battle
    - David says he was distressed for his brother, Jonathan, who was very pleasant to him
    - The word for pleasant in Hebrew is often translated lovely but it can mean beloved or full of love
    - David was beloved by Jonathan, and for David, having a friendship like that was better to David than the love of women

- David means that he found a deeper connection with Jonathan than he had obtained even in his relationships with women
  - Predictably, some today will make the perverse suggestion that David is expressing romantic homosexual love for Jonathan here
  - That's a crude and intentionally slanderous suggestion which has no basis in the context much less in the biblical record overall
- Any man who has established a close personal friendship with another man knows exactly what David is describing here
  - Romantic love is special and desirable, and nothing in life can equal the relationship a man has with his wife
  - But at the same time, no woman can offer a man the relationship that two men can establish in friendship (and vice versa)
- A special bond is formed that transcends other relationships, especially when two men have fought together in war, as these two had done
  - The relationship is not sexual in the least, yet it is a deep and abiding and hard-to-replace friendship
  - It's the kind of bond that will lead one man to give his life for his friend in battle
  - And in Jonathan's case, it led him to forfeit the kingdom of Israel so he could support the future reign of his friend, David
  - David was mourning the loss of that special friendship
- David's tribute to Saul demonstrates one of those attributes of God's own heart: limitless forgiveness for his enemies
  - Forgiving someone who has hurt us repeatedly and deeply is truly a God thing and not something that comes easily for anyone
    - Of all Old Testament characters, perhaps only Joseph equals David's capacity to forgive enemies who have hurt him
    - And David's ability to forgive served him well his whole life, especially when he declined the opportunity for revenge as king
  - Secondly, we see something here that drives David for the rest of this story

- David starts his reign a lonely man without his friend Jonathan, and that loneliness is a driving force in David's life
- The loss of Jonathan becomes a subtext to the whole story as we watch a man struggling to replace what he lost
- Trying to find those he trusts, trying to find love, trying to trust God even
- David's feeling of loneliness may have been the secret to his genius
  - I believe it allowed David, the leader and warrior, to become that much more dependent on God
  - And it inspired David, the poet and musician, to write some of the most inspiring Scripture in all the Bible
- Perhaps the best known passage of the entire Bible was written by David: the 23rd psalm
  - And if there was ever a psalm about how to respond to loneliness and fear in a godly way, that one is it
  - And it's appropriate that the story of David's rise to king of Israel should begin with a poem set to music praising David's enemy
  - It shows the man's talent and his heart after God