

I. Introduction and review.

II. David reacts to the news of Saul's death. v. 1-16

How would you respond if your worst enemy finally got what is coming to him?

- A. David is still in Philistine territory (Ziklag) when he learns about Saul's death. v. 1
- B. An Amalekite messenger brings news of Israel's defeat and Saul's death. v. 2-9
 - 1. Why has this man come to David? v. 2
 - 2. The Amalekite claims to have finished off Saul (mercy killing). v. 5-10
 - 3. Is this Amalekite telling the truth? I Sam. 31:5-6
 - 4. David's response to this news is totally unexpected.
- C. David leads his men in mourning over Saul, Jonathan and Israel. v. 11-12 I Sa. 4:12
- D. David executes the man who was 'dying' to say that he killed Saul. v. 13-16
 - 1. David judges him by his own testimony. v. 13-14,16 I Sam. 24:6 26:9ff 31:4
 - 2. This is not the only time in which David responds in an unexpected way to news of an enemy's death. 3:26ff 4:9ff 18:19ff
- E. David is shown to have obtained his kingdom honorably.
- F. Jesus, David's greater Son, also gains the kingdom honorably without grasping inappropriately. Phil. 2:5ff Mt. 4:1ff
- G. Application.
 - 1. We are not authorized by God to participate in euthanasia (so-called mercy killing). Ex. 20:13 Gen. 9:5-6
 - 2. Rather trying to advance yourself, trust God to exalt you as and when He sees fit.
 - 3. May God give us honorable rulers who fear Him instead of opportunistic, power hungry and manipulative leaders.
 - 4. Be sure your sin will find you out. Acts 5:1ff Luke 12:2-3 Ro. 2:16
 - 5. Respect those whom God has placed in authority over you. I Pe. 2:17ff Ro. 13:7 Heb. 13:17 Eph. 6:1ff

III. David laments the deaths of Saul and Jonathan. v. 17-27

- A. David expresses what is on his heart by composing an elegy. v. 17-18 3:13ff Je. 9:17ff
- B. David's ode to Saul and Jonathan: heroes of Israel. v. 19-27
 - 1. Theme: How the mighty have fallen. v. 19
 - 2. Sorrow over the loss of mighty leaders. v. 20-24
 - a. Silence the blasphemous joy of the Philistines. v. 19-20 I Sam. 31:9 Ps. 94:3
 - b. A curse be on Mount Gilboa where Saul, the anointed king fell. v. 21 Am 1:2
 - c. Saul and Jonathan fought valiantly and died bravely. v. 22-23
 - d. Saul brought stability and prosperity to Israel. v. 24 14:47ff 18:6-7 Pr. 31:21
 - 3. Sorrow over the loss of a dear friend, Jonathan. v. 25b-26 Ps. 133:1
 - a. Jonathan was a faithful covenant brother to David. 18:1-4 20:1ff 23:16ff
 - b. His love for David was unsurpassed.
 - c. Does verse 26 imply anything romantic or sexual about the relationship between David and Jonathan? Isa. 63:9 Jer. 31:3
 - 4. Conclusion: How have the mighty fallen. v. 27

- C. David shows himself to be a worthy leader of God's people.**
1. He is neither vengeful nor grasping.
 2. He exhibits a generous spirit by celebrating that which is praiseworthy about Saul while ignoring his faults.
 3. He is zealous for the LORD's honor. Ps. 79:10 94:3ff 69:9
- D. Application.**
1. Are you gracious to your enemies? Mt. 5:43ff Luke 7:27-28 Pr. 24:17-18 17:5
 2. There is a time to mourn. 3:31 Ecc. 3:4 I Sam. 25:1 Ge. 23:2 Jo. 11:35f Mt. 5:4
 3. How should we memorialize the death of an unbeliever? Phil. 4:8-9 Eph. 4:29,25
 - a. Thank God for the common grace blessings we have received from our unbelieving loved one.
 - b. We don't have to bring up their sins and failures or their likely destiny.
 - c. We are not authorized, however, to lie! Eph. 4:25
 - d. We also can use the death of an unbeliever as an opportunity for evangelism.
 4. Being honest doesn't mean saying everything which we could say. Eph. 4:29
 5. Music is a powerful means of expressing both truth and emotion.
 6. True loving friendship is a rare and precious blessing. Pr. 17:17 27:6
 7. The righteous often don't receive their reward in this life.

IV. Concluding applications.

- A. If such a wonderful song can be composed about King Saul and his son Jonathan, how much more gloriously should we praise King Jesus!**
1. He is most beautiful and pleasant. v. 19,26b Song. 5:10 Isa. 4:2
 2. His death was both heroic and tragic -- the Mighty One fell. v. 19 Zech. 12:10,12
 - a. The wicked who rejoiced in His death, thinking they had triumphed, later fell under judgment. v. 20
 - b. His death caused physical upheaval. v. 21 Mt. 27:54 Mark 15:33
 - c. In His death, the enemy fell slain. v. 22b Gen. 3:15
 3. He kept covenant for us, renouncing His rights for our good. v. 26a I Sam. 18:1-4 Phil. 2:5ff
 4. His love is better than romantic love. v. 26b John 15:13 I Jo. 4:10 Rom. 8:35ff
- B. Jesus invites you to be His friend.**
1. Don't let your end be like that of Saul or the Amalekite, both of whom failed to honor the LORD.
 2. You are invited to a memorial service for Jesus tonight. I Cor. 11:24ff

Discussion questions

1. How did David's response to the news of Saul's death surprise the Amalekite messenger?
2. How do those who are of God see events differently than those who are of the flesh?
3. How can we know that David was not overly ambitious for power?
In what circumstances do you need to wait for God to elevate you?
4. Why is 'mercy killing' wrong? How is that illustrated in this passage?
5. How can you show love to your enemies?
6. What should and should not be said at the funeral of an unbeliever?
7. What is the nature of the love between Jonathan and David?
8. What is the importance of II Samuel 1?
9. Have you ever composed a song or poem of praise to Jesus? Are you willing to try?