

Life of David

A Man After God's Own Heart

Saul and His Sons Slain

- The Philistine armies fought against the armies of Israel [1 Sam 31:1].
 - David was not fighting on either side of this battle.
 - The armies of Israel were summarily defeated and fled the battle.
- While fighting with their father Saul, three of Saul's sons were slain [1 Sam 31:2].
- Saul was the father of four sons [1 Chr 8:33].
 - Jonathan – YHWH has given
 - Malchi-shua – my king is wealth
 - Abinadab – my father is noble
 - Eshbaal – man of Baal
 - ✦ Also known as Ish-bosheth [2 Sam 2:8] – man of shame
 - ✦ Jonathan had a son who went through a similar name transformation: Merib-baal (Baal is my advocate) to Mephibosheth (dispelling the shame).
- Saul was severely wounded by archers during the battle [1 Sam 31:3].
 - The root of the word “archers” is יָרָה (yarah) which means to “throw” or “shoot”.
 - This same word is used of the teaching (direction) with regard to the Law [Deut 33:10; 17:10-11].
 - Because Saul ignored the teaching, he was overcome by the archers.
- Saul asked his armor bearer to put him to death [1 Sam 31:4 cf. Jdgs 9:53-54].
 - Saul was concerned that the Philistines would torture him to death.
 - Saul's armor bearer refused to kill him because of fear [1 Sam 24:6].
 - Saul decided to take matters into his own hand, leading to his armor bearer doing the same [v. 5].
- When the people of Israel saw the utter defeat of their armies, they fled [1 Sam 31:7].
 - The defeat of their armies was bad enough, but the death of their king was devastating to them.
 - The Israelites fled from their cities into the wilderness.
 - The Philistines wasted no time in taking over the abandoned cities.
- The Philistines found the bodies of Saul and his sons and put them on public display along with their weapons [1 Sam 31:8-10].
 - They decapitated Saul as David had done to Goliath [1 Sam 17:51].
 - As an insult, they put Saul's weapons in the temple of their pagan god Ashtaroah and impaled their bodies upon the city wall in Beth-shan.
- Out of respect for Saul and his sons, brave men from Jabesh-gilead retrieved their bodies and cremated them [1 Sam 31:11-13].
 - The city of Jabesh-gilead was only 10 miles from Beth-shan on the other side of the Jordan.
 - They burned their bodies to hide the mutilation done by the Philistines.
 - Saul had rescued Jabesh-gilead [1 Sam 11:1-11].
 - David would honor this act of valor when he became king of Judah [2 Sam 2:4-7].
 - David would have their bones exhumed and buried in the land of Benjamin [2 Sam 21:11-14].