



# Finer Grounds Bible Study

## 2 Samuel

### Lesson 2: 2 Samuel 1-2

How do you react when you hear that someone who hurt you, or hurt others you loved, died? Have you ever felt an initial reaction of “good riddance!” When Nancy Reagan died, I witnessed how people’s reactions to her death varied based on political affiliation. If you agreed with her politics, the loss of her life was mourned as people remembered her charitable work. If you disagreed with her politics, she was demonized as a bigot and called other disparaging names. People tend to either celebrate or mourn someone’s death based on how they perceived that person.

But how does God’s king deal with the death of someone who sought to kill him? That is the question that the first chapter of 2 Samuel tackles. King Saul had attempted to murder David on several occasions (1 Samuel 19:1, 19:9, 23:7-8), had caused him to go into exile, had taken his wife Michal away from him, and had murdered the priestly families in Nob. In today’s terms, we would say that Saul had ruined David’s life, and had taken several other lives in the process.

**Be honest. How would you react if you heard that someone who had treated you like Saul had treated David had died?**

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Before we start with 2 Samuel, let’s review the events of the last chapters of 1 Samuel. Remember that 1 and 2 Samuel were originally one book, so 2 Samuel 1 is really a

continuation of the events from the end of 1 Samuel.

**Read 1 Samuel 30**

**What happens to David and his men in this chapter?**

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**What enemy do they fight?**

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Remember that at this point in the story, David had allied himself with the Philistines. David said he was prepared to fight against Israel but was providentially sent away from the battle by the Philistine king, Achish. Achish’s allies feared that David would switch alliances in the heat of battle. Upon returning to his home in Ziklag, David finds it burnt and his and his men’s families missing. He soon learns that the Amalekites, Israel’s ancient enemy, raided the town and carried away his family. With God’s direction, David recovers the wives, the children, and great treasure which he eventually shares with the leaders of Judah and the other cities that had aided him and his men.



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### Read 1 Samuel 31

**What happens to Saul and his sons in this chapter?**

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**Who is responsible for Saul's death?**

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**Who rescues the bodies of Saul and his sons?**

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King Saul is wounded in battle against the Philistines. Seeing that he is close to death, Saul asks his armor-bearer to kill him. The armor-bearer is unwilling to kill his own king, so Saul chooses to end his own life. Eventually, the Philistines discover that Saul and his sons are dead and displays the bodies as trophies of battle. The people from Jabesh-Gilead rescue the bodies and give them a proper burial.

It finally happens. Saul is dead. God had selected David to take over the throne after Saul over a decade earlier. In that time, Saul had tormented David out of jealousy and fear. Now David's enemy was out of the picture. We would expect him to rejoice and celebrate, perhaps even thank God for rest from Saul's pursuit.

### Read 2 Samuel 1:1-12

**How does David react to the news of Saul and Jonathan's deaths?**

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Does David rejoice over the death of Saul and mourn the loss of his friend Jonathan? Does David point out all of Saul's faults and misdeeds? Does David say, "good riddance?" No! David mourns the death of Saul, Jonathan, and the men of Israel. He does not start to evaluate them based on deeds. He mourns them because it is right and good to acknowledge the sorrow of death.

### Read 2 Samuel 1:13-16

You may have noticed that the Amalekite's account of Saul's death does not match the account in 1 Samuel 31. The Amalekite's story is not true; Saul took his own life on Mount Gilboa. The writer makes the discrepancies obvious so that the reader understands the Amalekite's motivation in coming to David.

**Why would the Amalekite tell David that he took Saul's life? Consider David's history with Saul. Also consider that the Amalekite brought Saul's crown and armband, signs of his kingship, to David.**

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The Amalekite knew of the animosity between Saul and David. He no doubt figured that David would reward him for killing Saul and for bringing the symbols of kingship to him. After all, most of Israel knew that God had selected David to be king. The battles between Saul and David had consumed the country for years at this point. Wouldn't any



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normal person expect David to be pleased to hear that his adversary was out of the picture? The Amalekite was dead wrong.

Instead of receiving a reward for his efforts, the Amalekite receives justice for his actions. David condemns the Amalekite to death for taking Saul's life. Even though he did not commit the crime, he did confess to it, condemning himself to death.

**According to David, what words condemned the man (see v. 16)?**

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David refused to strike the Lord's anointed, a phrase used to describe God's appointed king. He even regretted taking a corner of Saul's garment when he hid from Saul in the cave near Engedi, because Saul was God's anointed king (see 1 Samuel 24:4-7). David respected God's choice and refused to hurt Saul, even when it would have been beneficial to him. When the Amalekite confessed to killing Saul, David had him executed for taking the life of the "the Lord's anointed."

It is interesting to note here that the man was an Amalekite. Remember, David had just returned from fighting people of this nation when he heard of the death of Saul. The Amalekites also figure into Saul's story, as he failed to completely destroy them when God asked him to do so.

**Read 1 Samuel 15:17-29. How does this passage connect to the Amalekite giving David Saul's armband and crown to David?**

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The fact that an Amalekite came to claim credit for the death of Saul is meant to remind us of the circumstances that led to Saul's death in the first place. The reader witnesses God's word, proclaimed through Samuel, coming true in the death of Saul. This scene also affirms in the reader's mind that David is the one to whom God would give the kingdom.

**Read John 19:8-11, Hebrews 13:17, 1 Peter 2:17, 1 Peter 5:5 and Romans 13:1.**

**Following David's example and the guidance in these passages, how should we act towards our earthly leaders (in and out of the church)?**

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God is sovereign and he allows all leaders to have the power they have. All means all. Even the leaders who commit terrible crimes and act in evil ways. When we live in a world of sin, our leaders are going to be sinful, just as we are sinful. One day, when Jesus returns, the world will be restored, and we will live under the rule of the perfect King. Until that day, we must trust that God is working all things, including the actions of an evil ruler, together for good for those that love him and are called according to his purpose (Romans 8:28).



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While God has the power to give authority, and take it away, that does not mean that all who have authority are going to act in a way that he condones!

**What should we do if we do not agree with a leader or if they act sinfully? Use scripture to support your answer.**

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### Read 2 Samuel 1:17-27

David expresses his sorrow over the deaths of Saul and Jonathan in an elegy. Verse 17 specifies that it should be sung as the sons of Judah are taught to use a bow. In this way, every military trainee of Judah would remember the death of Saul and Jonathan.

**How does David praise Saul in his lament?**

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**How does David praise Jonathan in his lament?**

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David begins his lament by praising both Saul and Jonathan for their bravery on the battlefield and for their service to their nation. In verse 25, the lament focuses on the death of Saul's son Jonathan who was also David's dearest friend. Before David fought Goliath, it was Jonathan who defeated a Philistine garrison and sought to drive God's enemies out of the promised land. When David defeated Goliath in the name of God, Jonathan recognized their shared zeal for the

Lord. This was the basis for a friendship that defied all odds.

As Saul's eldest son, Jonathan would have likely inherited his father's place as king. In sharp contrast to his jealous father, Jonathan was willing to relinquish his claim and willingly helped David, God's choice, to take over the kingdom instead. He should have hated David. Instead, Jonathan did everything in his power to help David. David can hardly put his love for Jonathan into words. He describes its value by estimating it as greater than the romantic love of a man and woman.

### Read 2 Samuel 2:1-7

**Where does David go next and why?**

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**Who does David commend in 2:4-7?**

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Imagine being in David's shoes. You know that God has selected you as the next king over Israel. Now, Saul and his three sons are dead, and the throne of Israel is empty. Your home in Ziklag has just been destroyed and your homeland, Israel, is in drastic need of a leader after a crippling defeat. In your hands, you hold the physical crown of the king of Israel and the royal arm band. What would you do next?

Most would say "march on over to Saul's capital city and declare yourself king." After all, all the signs point to it, right? But I love what God's king does next. He asks God for direction. He asks where to go and if he should go at all! Just because David knows the



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ending, he doesn't pretend to know how he is going to get there. He leaves it to the Lord to direct his steps.

**In what area of your life could you use God's guidance? Hint: the answer is every area, but what area is most pressing at this moment. How must you submit yourself to God's plans for you in this matter?**

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When David arrives in Hebron, the men of Judah anoint him king over Judah. At this time in Israel's history, Judah was the largest tribe, and often operated independently of the other tribes. The elders felt that David was a suitable ruler for their tribe and ceremonially anointed him king over Judah.

In those times, the first thing a king did was to get rid of anyone who was a threat to his reign, whether that was a relative of the old king or any supporters of the old regime. But what does God's king do? He commends the bravery of the men of Jabesh-Gilead, who risked their lives to retrieve the bodies of Saul and his sons. David is not concerned with clearing out those who were loyal to Saul. Instead, he praises the noble qualities of loyalty and bravery in his subjects. He also asks them, since their old king is dead, to be loyal to him as the new king of Judah.

**Read 2 Samuel 2:8-11**  
**Who becomes king over Israel?**

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Abner, Saul's uncle and commander of the Israelite army, is a cunning man. He knows that with Saul gone, David could easily

take over the kingdom. Likely motivated by fear and self-preservation, Abner declares Ish-bosheth, Saul's remaining legitimate son, king over Israel. He quickly moves Ish-bosheth from Gibeah, Saul's capital city, across the Jordan river to Mahanaim putting both physical distance and a natural barrier between him and David's men.

Now, Israel has two kings: one for Judah and one for Israel. Even though Saul is gone, David must wait at least two more years before God's promise to him is realized.

**Which one of David's actions in this section stands out to you?**

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**How can you show love and concern for someone who has mistreated you?**

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**Compare David's actions and attitudes in this section to God's true king, King Jesus.**

- **David caring for his enemy, Saul (see Romans 5:6-11)**

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- **David's love for his friend, Jonathan (see John 11:30-36)**

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- **David's praise for the righteous and faithful (see Matthew 8:5-13)**

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- David's faith in God's plan (see Luke 22:42 and surrounding verses)

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What is one way you are going to imitate Jesus today?

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