

MAY 22

With this reading you are beginning the 10th book of the Old Testament. Celebrate with a *Frappuccino*® or whatever else sounds good. When was the last time you read all of these books? And for one more landmark to look forward to, tomorrow you begin Psalm 119, where more than any other place, you see what it means when it says that David was a man after God's own heart.

2 Samuel 1:1-2:11

2 Samuel 1

Vs. 1-16 Notice that this guy tells David of both Saul and Jonathan. He knew the mention of Jonathan would catch David's interest.

Since this account of Saul's death is different than the one found in 1 Samuel 31, it appears that this is a lie. It would have been ironic that the guy who finally killed Saul was an Amalekite since Saul had disobeyed God regarding the Amalekites. The fact that he came to David in Ziklag with Saul's crown indicates that he expected this to be good news to David and expected to be rewarded. What would make him even more of a hero, he thought, was that he had ended Saul's life.

Vs. 11-12 are a summary of the effect of this news on David and his men, but actually vs. 13-16 were carried out right away.

Can you imagine? This guy was probably expecting some reward from David. Saul's own armor bearer wouldn't lift his hand against Saul, but this guy said he did. David didn't think too highly of that.

Vs. 17-27 I don't doubt that David actually loved Saul, but he certainly loved Jonathan. I think in all of this there is also some grieving for the entire tragedy of the past 10 years. Notice the repetition of *how the mighty have fallen*.

Vs. 20 and 21 are a curse of sorts. David will finally defeat the Philistines.

Vs. 25-26 This is David's tribute to Jonathan. It was a true bond as brothers and something David was blessed with, but something that few men will ever experience.

2 Samuel 2:1-11

Vs. 1-4 I'm impressed that *David inquired of the Lord*. The fact that he did this and it was recorded makes you wonder about times when David did stuff and it wasn't mentioned, like going with the Philistines to fight against Israel, even if that was a ploy. I think David was like us in this regard. Normally he didn't ask God, but when he was in a hard situation, he asked, and then remembered to ask for a while after that until everything was normal again. However, when he was in control, like us, he didn't think he needed to ask.

David was made king in Hebron over the tribe of Judah. Verse 4 should have been cut in half. The second half of the verse actually belongs to the conflict story.

Vs. 5-11 David blessed the men of Jabesh-gilead. As a point of interest, the rescue of Jabesh-gilead in 1 Samuel 11:1 was Saul's first battle as king of Israel. The people there never forgot that. When they learned of the humiliating way the bodies of Saul and his sons were displayed on the wall at Beth-shan, they returned the kindness of Saul's rescue of their city. See the [Bible Knowledge Commentary-OT](#), p. 455.

When David blessed the men of Jabesh-gilead, he also invited them to accept his kingship...BUT, v. 8. Abner intervened. It appears that Abner drove the civil war which ensued, perhaps wanting to be king himself. I say this because it is interesting that all the dates and times

mentioned in vs. 8-11 paint a very funny picture. Abner must have finally made Ish-bosheth (man of shame?, BKC, p. 458) the king after five and a half years of civil war. We know the war lasted seven years and six months and ended at the assassination of Ish-bosheth. Abner was the real guy in power. This is another reason why Joab, David's military commander, hated Abner. The big reason he hated Abner comes tomorrow.

As disciples following Jesus, there is always the sense of living in tension. I don't know when life ever gets easy, especially following Jesus in the harvest and working to reach people and make disciples. There is always a point of conflict somewhere, a relationship that isn't working out. So what do you do?

In David's life this was the same. You would have thought that the entire nation would have been ready to unite around David and get redemptive history cleaned up and looking respectable. But the sin of Saul had a long reach and was rooted in the heart of his followers, particularly Abner. Abner had his own ambitions too.

When a disciple becomes proven in service, it means having gone through many times of upheaval and disappointment. Especially after being hit by "friendly fire," drawing ever closer in that pain and suffering to Christ is a must or you just become bitter. He is the only one who makes sense of all this baloney, and He alone is the one who keeps our passion alive and healthy, and our vision clear. This is how you learn to abide in Christ.

Somewhere in all of this, probably in Hebron during those seven years, David wrote his own copy of the law. It was also probably during this time that he wrote Psalm 119. We'll begin reading that psalm tomorrow, and it will show why David was able to survive this continued time of trial.

John 12:20-50

This is Tuesday. Jesus had just cursed the fig tree on the way to the temple. Upon arriving He cleansed the temple for the second time and made the leaders deadly mad; but they couldn't get to Jesus for fear of the crowds, because the people hung on Jesus' every word. Sometime in this day, probably earlier than later, the Greeks show up. It is significant that they came after Jesus cleansed the court of the Gentiles and taught saying that the temple was to be a house of prayer for the nations.

Vs. 20-23 Who knows why they came to Phillip. Phillip had a Greek name and Bethsaida was on the edge of the more Gentile area of Galilee. But really, who knows other than that God directed them to Philip.

As Jesus was told of this request and maybe seeing the men at the back of the court where He was teaching, the Spirit must have nudged Him. Jesus now understood that the Father had done something, and Jesus officially knew that His hour had come. These Greeks were "God-fearers" and were close to Judaism, the same as the centurion whose slave Jesus had healed, and later Cornelius, also an Italian and a centurion and an important person in the gospel going to the Gentiles. I would think that the request of these Gentiles was a signal from the Father, almost like the Gentile world saying, "even if the Jews have rejected your offer for now, we're ready to receive it."

V. 24 This parable is very important. Not only is it used by Paul later in 1 Corinthians 15, but also in John 15, Jesus uses it to define glorifying the Father and proving to be His disciple. You always hear people wondering what kind of fruit Jesus is talking about in John 15. Here, and therefore in chapter 15, the meaning of the fruit is obvious: Jesus must give His life so that many more will experience life. The *fruit* is people who will come to faith and obtain eternal life through the giving of His life.

Vs. 25-26 Notice how Jesus immediately repeats here, what He has said previously in the context of discipleship to His disciples. Notice that Jesus intensified the 'losing' one's life to 'hating' one's life in this world. To serve Jesus, you must follow Him. This comes with two promises. First, you have the promise of His presence; and second, you have the promise of being honored by the Father.

Knowing Christ means following. Discipleship is not an option, yet, we have made it that way. This is why the Great Commission says to make disciples, not "lead them to belief, and then later, try to persuade them to follow if it's not too much trouble for them." If Jesus is presented as who He is, God who became man and gave His life for us, that He is God inherently means He is worthy of worship/service. Following is a natural part of the message of turning away from sin and turning to Him for forgiveness and life. We make it hard on ourselves when we think knowing Jesus means salvation, but not necessarily following. Jesus didn't think that.

Vs. 27-36a His hour having arrived, the reality of what He would have to endure also hit Him. Jesus the man, the Son of God, and Son of Man, knew what He was going to have to suffer. His humiliation and physical beating, vividly shown in the movie, "Passion of the Christ," was *simply* the path that brought Him to His real work, hanging on a tree, being cursed and punished by His Father. Only what He endured on the cross, the spiritual judgment and rejection, made forgiveness possible. *Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree (Gal. 3:13)*. We are impressed, and rightfully so, with His suffering before He got to the cross; but it was what happened on the cross that purchased our pardon. Jesus willingly endured that, to get to the cross for us. Figuratively, we are healed by His stripes, but it was His death on the cross which bought forgiveness. It was when the animal was on the altar that it became a sacrificial offering. What Jesus is visualizing here is the spiritual aspect of what He will have to endure for mankind.

V. 28 Jesus lived to glorify the Father. The Father said He would do it again too. If you look at Jesus' life, the arrival of angels and the voice of His Father came at very crucial times. This was a critical time.

V. 31 Wow! "Now" was the judgment that would be complete with His crucifixion and resurrection, but we are still waiting until that judgment is fully executed.

V. 32 It is the cross where it all goes down. When Jesus said this, *lifted up* must have meant "crucifixion" to the people, therefore, the response of the people in v. 34.

V. 34 To be fair, the disciples didn't get it either. It wasn't until after the resurrection that they understood why the Christ had to suffer. The disciples didn't get it, but they still believed He was the Christ. That's the difference.

Vs. 35-36a This was a warning for the people to force themselves to think spiritually while He was still there to be seen. Jesus was the message. Regardless of what they had heard, they needed to see Him and believe in Him. Jesus will refer to this in a few verses.

Vs. 36b-50 is a kind of summary from John, regarding Jesus' public ministry to this point. Notice that at this point Jesus hid Himself. He needed time to chill.

Vs. 37-43 These verses explain why the people didn't understand. Part of this prophecy is Isaiah 53, and part is Isaiah 6:10. In both places, the rejection of the Messiah and rejection of the truth are the result of sin and not being desperate to understand the truth. This isn't God blinding their eyes as much as it is not making them desperate to seek Him. This falls in line with Jesus' use of parables. If people were desperate and tired, they understood. It also falls in line with what Isaiah said of the Messiah in Isaiah 53, *and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him*.

He wasn't what they were looking for because they were not desperate for the truth. They wanted what they wanted. God's work in Israel at the close of this age will be that Israel will be so

desperate and needy in seeking the Lord that they will cry out, *Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord*. And this Jesus that they are rejecting here will return for them, and in the Tribulation they will want Him.

V. 41 is interesting if you link it to v. 42. Isaiah said this about Israel because He saw God's (Christ's) glory and spoke of Him. It made Isaiah jealous for God. He saw and he spoke. Now notice that many of the people and the leaders saw Jesus' glory, but they didn't speak of Him. I find that interesting.

Vs. 44-50 Sometime toward the close of the day Jesus again appeared in the temple. Whatever crowd was there heard this amazing declaration. Jesus just never gave up.

Vs. 44-46 couldn't be clearer. Jesus was God in the flesh and the light of men. This sounds like the first verses of John.

V. 47 is a transition verse. Jesus came to save, not to judge the world; but you can tell by what He says, there will be judgment. He came to save the world, not a country or language group or western cultural mindset. He came to save every person. There is no other way. There is no other Savior.

Vs. 47-50 are an incredible warning. To understate the case, Jesus' words are not to be taken lightly. Everyone will be judged by them. And to think, all of this came into motion, as the hour struck when a couple of Greeks came to see Jesus.

For us in the harvest, it is an encouragement to us to get the word out. Many will respond to the Lord and become disciples. Most will reject His Word. Our job in the harvest is to follow Him, reaching the lost and making disciples, who make disciples. And as we abide in Christ, we watch Him work and we follow.

Psalm 118:19-29

It's interesting that in this last part of the psalm, there are two references to Jesus and one reference to a song. This is the danger of hacking up The Psalms like this. Now that we can see that some reference is made to Jesus, we can read back over the first part and see that the suffering it refers to might also have some connection to His suffering. It must have been strange for the Jewish leaders who rejected Jesus, because this psalm is quoted by Jesus during those final conflicts in Jerusalem before His death and resurrection.

Vs. 19-21 The writer (David?) asks the Lord to open the gates to him to enter into His presence. Because God had saved him, he knew that the Lord had opened up to him.

Vs. 22-24 Here is that salvation, the rejected stone. Not only was the Father's working in this marvelous, but it became the day of salvation.

V. 25 This is the plea of David and Israel and mankind.

Vs. 26-27 The Lord came to the city and to the house. He is the *light* and He is the *sacrifice*.

Vs. 28-29 Notice how the declaration, *You are my God*, is repeated. He is not only our Savior; He is our God. And at the end of the day, we give thanks because of His *steadfast love* and how it *endures forever*.

You probably saw vs. 22 and 23. So where did Jesus say v. 26?

What a great psalm foreshadowing Jesus.

Proverbs 15:27-28

It is interesting that v. 27 says that the result of this pursuit of stuff is that the entire family is troubled. Most people have more gifts from God than they realize, that can give them a solid, healthy family. Wanting more often kills a family, even if you don't want to obtain it unjustly.

That sense of pondering, going to God and really seeking answers, builds a solid foundation in life.