

## Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 479

1 Samuel 30-31

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### Episode Summary

After the Amalekites attacked Ziklag and took captive David's wives and other people, David and his men pursued and defeated the Amalekites, recovering all of the captives and goods. Meanwhile, Saul and his men were defeated and killed by the Philistines. David buried Saul and his sons with honor. Listen to find out how the gospel of Jesus can be found in these later chapters.

### Transcript

**TS:** Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 479: 1 Samuel 30-31. I'm the layman, Trey Stricklin and he's the scholar, Dr. Matthew Halsted. Thanks for joining us again!

**MH:** Hey, Trey! Super glad to be here again. I'm excited!

**TS:** Yeah, I can't believe that we're already all the way through 1 Samuel. And actually, you're going to be closing it out for us today.

**MH:** Yeah. I'm excited. These are some really good chapters that we're ending with. As I was preparing for the show, I was reminded just how fun this text is. But also, just how cool it is to be on the Naked Bible Podcast again. I love this audience and it's just an honor to be here.

**TS:** I appreciate that. And speaking of podcasts, how's your podcast going? What are you covering on yours right now?

**MH:** Yeah, no, that's great! It's *The Bible Unmuted* and it's going great. We are going through the book of Romans right now. I think we're on Romans 5. We're just nitpicking away at Paul's letter to Rome. It's been a lot of fun. It's funny because I wrote a book on Romans and I had to go back the other day to kind of reread what I wrote to remember what I think [laughs]. It was kind of fun to do that. It's a learning experience, hopefully, for those who are listening, and it certainly is a learning experience for me because I'm reacquainting myself with Paul's most famous letter. So it's a lot of fun.

**TS:** I always wondered, do you change your... Have you had any change in thoughts? Because once you go back and re-think how you thought, do you have new thoughts on how you think [laughs]?

**MH:** Yeah, that's a great question. And yeah... I haven't had any major substantive changes by any means, but I am noticing different things. Anytime you go back to scripture after a season away from, say, a particular text, you come back, quite honestly, a different person because you've had different experiences in life, you are reading it with fresh eyes, and so forth. And so yeah, you always come back and notice things you weren't noticing before that. I think it is a good exercise to always come back to scripture with a willingness to change your views, because if you're not willing to change your views, then you're not willing to be educated. And we should always be willing to be educated. That's partly why I really enjoyed going back through Romans, because there are things that I've not noticed before and there are things I've forgotten. And there are things that I go back and read through my book and, "Oh yeah, that's a great point; I still agree with myself!" [laughs] But yeah, it all comes into play. I'm sure there will be lots of things that I change my mind on and lots of things that I stay committed to. We'll see! It's a fun journey.

**TS:** I really do believe it's a living Word. For me personally, I can read a verse ten different times and I'll come away with ten different things at the time that I read it or whatnot. It's just amazing to me how it's really the only book that can do that.

**MH:** Yeah.

**TS:** It's just crazy how much one verse can mean so many different things right when you need it. You know what I mean? Different people can glean different things at different times. To me, it's just proof that it is a living Word.

**MH:** Yeah. You know, you're correct. It's not a dead book; it's a living Word. It's meant to speak to us in every season of life. I one hundred percent agree.

**TS:** Absolutely. Well, changing gears here, football is here. Can you believe that? We were talking about football before the show, and I know our audience is just dying to get some football talk in there because it is the season.

**MH:** [laughs] Yeah, that's right. I am stoked. Look, I am from Oklahoma. I'm a big Sooner fan. I don't know if I've lost part of the audience already by saying that, but I love OU football. I just love college football. There's so much fun that goes with it. There's a lot of teams that I like—other teams I follow, too. It's that time of year again and my sons and I just love it. It's a lot of fun and we're going to be watching a lot of football for sure.

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**TS:** It's definitely hitting me a little bit harder this year because with Mike and doing Fantasy Football with him, and we're not going to be able to do it any more... It's a bummer.

**MH:** Right. Mmm, hmm.

**TS:** I'm sure going to miss that aspect of Mike. It was a lot of fun, but it is what it is. Here we are.

**MH:** Yeah, for sure.

**TS:** All right, then. Well, Matt, I guess it is finally time to wrap up 1 Samuel. So with that being said, it's all yours!

**MH:** Great. Well, in today's episode, we're closing out our study on 1 Samuel, just like you mentioned, Trey. We're going to do so by looking over chapters 30 and 31, the final two chapters. What I've done is I've divided these two chapters into essentially four sections. In each of these sections, I want to focus on four themes or four topics. What I've done is I've put these four topics essentially under four headings. And those headings are these:

1. Contrasts
2. Replay
3. Fulfillment
4. Gospel

So those are the four sections and four headings for these two chapters. It probably doesn't make sense at this point, but as we proceed it will make more sense why I've done that.

But yeah, let's look at that first section that I'm calling "Contrasts." To do that, I want to read verses 1-10. So 1 Samuel chapter 30, verses 1-10. I'm reading from the New Revised Standard Version here in case you want to follow. It's pretty close to the ESV but there are some differences. Either way, no matter what version you're reading, you're going to get the same emphasis here. So let me start in verse 1.

**Now when David and his men came to Ziklag on the third day, the Amalekites had made a raid on the Negeb and on Ziklag. They had attacked Ziklag, burned it down,<sup>2</sup> and taken captive the women and all who were in it, both small and great; they killed none of them, but carried them off, and went on their way.<sup>3</sup> When David and his men came to the city, they found it burnt down, and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive.<sup>4</sup> Then David and the people who were with him raised their voices and wept, until they had no**

more strength to weep. <sup>5</sup> David's two wives also had been taken captive, Ahinoam of Jezreel, and Abigail the widow of Nabal of Carmel. <sup>6</sup> David was in great danger; for the people spoke of stoning him, because all the people were bitter in spirit for their sons and daughters. But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God.

<sup>7</sup> David said to the priest Abiathar son of Ahimelech, 'Bring me the ephod.' So Abiathar brought the ephod to David. <sup>8</sup> David inquired of the Lord, 'Shall I pursue this band? Shall I overtake them?' He answered him, 'Pursue; for you shall surely overtake and shall surely rescue.' <sup>9</sup> So David set out, he and the six hundred men who were with him. They came to the Wadi Besor, where those stayed who were left behind. <sup>10</sup> But David went on with the pursuit, he and four hundred men; two hundred stayed behind, too exhausted to cross the Wadi Besor.

So I want us to notice something very important from this passage. There are two verses here that support the larger narrative of 1 Samuel. Now that narrative, we should be reminded, is how Saul has been rejected by God and how David has been anointed in Saul's place. So how does this text that we just read support that larger narrative? Well, notice again verses 6 and 8 that I just read. In verse 6, we read,

**But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God.**

And in verse 8 we see that David inquired of the Lord and Yahweh answered him. Why is this important? Well, I think it's important because it pushes the narrative forward. For example, the fact that David clearly has access to God in his trials presents a striking contrast to King Saul, who does not have access to God any longer. Just for example as a recap, just two chapters prior to this one, we read how God is no longer listening to Saul's prayers. So listen again to 1 Samuel 28:3-7.

<sup>3</sup> Now Samuel had died, and all Israel had mourned for him and buried him in Ramah, his own city. Saul had expelled the mediums and the wizards from the land. <sup>4</sup> The Philistines assembled, and came and encamped at Shunem. Saul gathered all Israel, and they encamped at Gilboa. <sup>5</sup> When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. <sup>6</sup> When Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord did not answer him, not by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. <sup>7</sup> Then Saul said to his servants, 'Seek out for me a woman who is a medium, so that I may go to her and inquire of her.' His servants said

**to him, 'There is a medium at Endor.'**

So notice what's going on here. First, Saul is in a pickle. Like, he's terrified. He's afraid of the army of the Philistines. Secondly, Saul seeks Yahweh. But third, Yahweh does not listen to him. Fourth, what happens is Saul turns to a medium—to a witch. And of course, as you know, the rest is history.

By the way, I should add here that I don't think Saul turns against God because God refused to be in relationship with Saul. I think it's the other way around. God refuses a relationship with Saul because Saul's heart is turned away from God first, and it actually has been turned away from God for a long time. I say this because God is not vindictive. He's not capricious. Everything that God does, he does with logic and with a reasonableness. So in the whole of 1 Samuel (like the entire story, specifically when you read about Saul's character and his heart), you really get the impression that Saul is not all that interested in a sincere relationship with God. One really gets the hint here in this text that Saul is reaching out to God only in the sense that he needs God, much like a junk food addict needs a vending machine. In other words, Saul only wants God when things go south. Today, we might say that Saul only wants Yahweh as his savior but not as his Lord. But here's the thing: God is too loving for that. God is not interested in toxic relationships. See, toxic people only accept other people for what they can give, not for who they are. And toxic people use other people. They're only interested in taking, not giving. You know, it's never wise to enter into or fan the flame of a toxic relationship. Why? Well, it's just not safe for you, and it's also not healthy for the toxic person. So the more you let a toxic person be toxic, the more the toxic person disintegrates into something quite terrible. And if you enable them, they're going to unravel and they'll sadly disintegrate. If you say no to toxic people, you're not being mean. What you're actually doing is extending to them an offer of freedom. You're inviting them to something better. And it's up to them, of course to choose. They may not repent. They may not change their ways and accept your healthy terms of a relationship. Or they might, I don't know. All you can do is your part. Either way, by saying no to toxicity, you are saying yes to honesty. And perhaps the toxic person will change their ways in response to your no.

Why am I going into all of that? Well, I think the same goes for God. You can have God for all he is on healthy and honest terms, or you can not have him at all. See, I don't think God is interested in dishonest and hypocritical relationships. That's why he says no to people who only want him as a cosmic vending machine. It's your choice, just as much as it was Saul's choice. And Saul does not respond well to God's no. His heart seems bent on his own resources. It's bent on his own wisdom, and it has been for a long time. I think that's why it's so easy here for him to go visit a medium. When Saul comes face to face with the reality of God, his choice is not to humbly repent and say, "Lord, I know that I'm no longer to be king. I know that I've done wrong. But Lord, allow me to live my

life in humble and obscure obedience to you so that I can support your new king." See, Saul never says that. He's not interested in the obscure and humble life. He insists on fame. He insists on safety. And he'll do anything to secure those things, even to the extent of seeking out the council of a witch.

15:00 Now all of this is in striking contrast (see there's that word—the first heading I mentioned: Contrast)... All of this is in striking contrast to David. Now don't get me wrong here, the Old Testament does not depict David as a better person. His character is neither faultless nor innocent. In fact, at times he commits rather repugnant acts and brings shame on not only himself, but on his family and on his nation. And yet David is of much different cloth than Saul. I mean, you can think of some stories here, right? When David is confronted with his sin, his heart is one that repents and weeps and accepts the consequences of his actions. See, David is the type to resign himself into the hands of God no matter how uncomfortable that might be at times. He's a man after God's own heart. You know, he doesn't really have God's heart all the time, but he's a man after that—he's pursuing that.

So all of that here... I just want us to see the contrast between Saul on the one hand and David on the other hand. Because I think this text that we're reading is presenting that contrast because it wants to remind us of that overall narrative or story that has been painted for us all throughout 1 Samuel. So as we wrap up 1 Samuel today, we want to keep all that's been said in mind. We want to keep chapter 28 in mind, we want to keep everything in mind because it's coalescing—it's climaxing—into something really big here.

So that's Contrast. That's that first heading—the contrast between David and between Saul. So let's jump to the second part of our text. That theme is Replay. What do I mean by Replay? Well, to get a sense of that, let's read 1 Samuel 30:11-20.

**<sup>11</sup> In the open country they found an Egyptian, and brought him to David. They gave him bread and he ate; they gave him water to drink; <sup>12</sup> they also gave him a piece of fig cake and two clusters of raisins. When he had eaten, his spirit revived; for he had not eaten bread or drunk water for three days and three nights. <sup>13</sup> Then David said to him, 'To whom do you belong? Where are you from?' He said, 'I am a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite. My master left me behind because I fell sick three days ago. <sup>14</sup> We had made a raid on the Negeb of the Cherethites and on that which belongs to Judah and on the Negeb of Caleb; and we burned Ziklag down.' <sup>15</sup> David said to him, 'Will you take me down to this raiding party?' He said, 'Swear to me by God that you will not kill me, or hand me over to my master, and I will take you down to them.'**

**<sup>16</sup> When he had taken him down, they were spread out all over the ground, eating and drinking and dancing, because of the great amount of spoil they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from the land of Judah. <sup>17</sup> David attacked them from twilight until the evening of the next day. Not one of them escaped, except four hundred young men, who mounted camels and fled. <sup>18</sup> David recovered all that the Amalekites had taken; and David rescued his two wives. <sup>19</sup> Nothing was missing, whether small or great, sons or daughters, spoil or anything that had been taken; David brought back everything. <sup>20</sup> David also captured all the flocks and herds, which were driven ahead of the other cattle; people said, ‘This is David’s spoil.’**

I can't help but notice that a sort of replay is going on here, okay? It's a sort of replay of the previous story found once again in 1 Samuel chapter 28. See, it was there when the prophet Samuel reminds Saul that the kingdom had been taken away from him due to his having spared the Amalekites. Just briefly, listen again to verses 16 through 19 of 1 Samuel 28.

**<sup>16</sup> Samuel said, ‘Why then do you ask me, since the Lord has turned from you and become your enemy? <sup>17</sup> The Lord has done to you just as he spoke by me; for the Lord has torn the kingdom out of your hand, and given it to your neighbour David. <sup>18</sup> Because you did not obey the voice of the Lord, and did not carry out his fierce wrath against Amalek, therefore the Lord has done this thing to you today. <sup>19</sup> Moreover, the Lord will give Israel along with you into the hands of the Philistines; and tomorrow you and your sons shall be with me; the Lord will also give the army of Israel into the hands of the Philistines.’**

So here in this text, the kingdom is taken away from Saul because of his willful act of disobedience of sparing the Amalekites. But in our text today here in chapter 30, the narrative is replayed, only this time by David, who does everything in his power to avenge what the Amalekites have done. When you take into account the entire context of the whole of the story, you get the sense once again that what Saul has failed at doing, David has succeeded.

See, the parallels and the mirroring of the stories are, I think, difficult to miss. Clearly, the author of this text wants readers like you and me to compare Saul and David. I think that's the point—to compare Saul with David. The tension that the Saul story creates... There's been a lot of tension with Saul, right? Lots of things have been building up with Saul. And that tension that the Saul story created is alleviated by the David story that we just read. I think readers clearly walk away with the idea that David is to be the heir of the kingdom. He is to be the successful anointed one. Where Saul failed, David succeeds. And in the next



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passage that I'm going to read here, you also get a peek of sorts into David's heart. I think this is really important because it captures the commitment of David's heart to justice and to kindness and mercy. Again, like I said before, David is far from perfect. But I think scripture does give us peeks into his heart, such that we can walk away thinking, "He's pursuing righteousness. He doesn't always get it, but he's pursuing it in a way that Saul certainly never did."

So let's read 1 Samuel 30:21-25. We're just working our way through chapter 30 here. Verse 21 says:

**<sup>21</sup> Then David came to the two hundred men who had been too exhausted to follow David, and who had been left at the Wadi Besor. They went out to meet David and to meet the people who were with him. When David drew near to the people he saluted them. <sup>22</sup> Then all the corrupt and worthless fellows among the men who had gone with David said, 'Because they did not go with us, we will not give them any of the spoil that we have recovered, except that each man may take his wife and children, and leave.' <sup>23</sup> But David said, 'You shall not do so, my brothers, with what the Lord has given us; he has preserved us and handed over to us the raiding party that attacked us. <sup>24</sup> Who would listen to you in this matter? For the share of the one who goes down into the battle shall be the same as the share of the one who stays by the baggage; they shall share alike.' <sup>25</sup> From that day forward he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel; it continues to the present day.**

The issue here is that some in the army thought that they had done more work and were therefore more entitled or deserving of the spoils—of the reward. But David takes exception to this way of thinking. And what was David's reasoning? Let's go back. Let's re-read verses 22 and 23 to really get the sense of it.

**<sup>22</sup> Then all the corrupt and worthless fellows among the men who had gone with David said, 'Because they did not go with us, we will not give them any of the spoil that we have recovered, except that each man may take his wife and children, and leave.' <sup>23</sup> But David said, 'You shall not do so, my brothers, with what the Lord has given us; he has preserved us and handed over to us the raiding party that attacked us.**

Notice here that the ones who did not want to share... Notice how they're described. They're described as corrupt here, right? They didn't want to share the spoils of war because they think it's the spoil that they have recovered. That's the exact words: "the spoil that we have recovered." But see, David sees it much differently. He says, "No, you can't do that because what the Lord has given us,



he has preserved us, and he has handed over to us the raiding party that attacked us."

Okay, so here's David's point: God preserved them. The army did not accomplish this on their own—not by a long shot. It was God who helped them. And that's why David takes exception with their demands. The victory was not a result of their own works or their own doing or their own energy. No, they were the results of God's gracious protection. I think this is an important point to make. It's probably one that we might not notice. But I want us to look at this very carefully because here I think we see David's heart. And I also think we see his hermeneutic.

Let me unpack this a bit. David interprets this event as a result of divine agency—of divine work. In David's eyes, God was the one who brought justice. It was God who remedied the evil and avenged the evil of the Amalekites. And as a result, David's army does not own the spoils of war for themselves. God does. And one might say that David's hermeneutic (that is, his interpretive approach to the situation) was theological. He interpreted the whole event theologically, or from a theo-centric or God-centered perspective. Now okay, I myself, Matthew Halsted, am a Christian. And as a Christian, I hold to a Christological conception of God. In other words, I follow the guidance of St. John, who in his Gospel (John chapter 1), he understands Jesus as divine. That's very clear in John chapter 1. And in Hebrews 2, we also see that Jesus is the revelation of God. To see Jesus is to see God. You see this in the letters of Paul, particularly in Philippians chapter 2. You see the same idea in Revelation 4 and 5, where God is depicted as being united with the Lamb, and so the two are one, essentially.

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At any rate, all to say... Allow me just a brief moment to follow David's guidance in interpreting this event theologically. In addition to that, I want to follow the New Testament's guidance in understanding my theology in light of my Christology. In other words, I want to understand God in light of the revelation of Jesus Christ. So let's think about this. Christ has brought us victory over the powers of darkness. And as a result of that, he has secured for us numerous spoils. You might say that. You might describe it in that way. For example, "The meek will inherit the earth." As Christians, we're going to inherit everything—all things. We are going to rule and reign with Christ. And you can't help but hear here Dr. Heiser and the Divine Council Worldview, right? Yeah, bring that to bear upon this because it's very important. Remember all the things that Dr. Heiser has taught us about the divine council and the sons and daughters of God stuff, okay. It's super-important here.

Okay, so we're going to rule, we're going to reign with Christ (that's our inheritance). We have been saved from the powers and the principalities so that we might receive all that is becoming those who are sons and daughters of God. All of that—all of the inheritance—was purchased by grace through Christ. And

yet as Christians, sometimes we murmur and sometimes we complain against one another. We have a tendency at times to look at our brothers and sisters who have, say, different giftings and different roles and different callings than we do. And we're sometimes tempted to compare our work with theirs and theirs with ours. And sometimes in the process we get prideful. We sometimes think that our work is more important and, hence, deserving of more reward. Maybe it's the opposite! Sometimes we look at other people's work and we think, "Man, I don't compare to that. I haven't done anything for the Kingdom. I don't do what they do. I see my brothers and sisters doing some great things, but what am I doing? Well, all such comparison is wrong. See, I think David here gives us a glimpse into a better way of thinking. As Christians, we're called to share. We're called to not judge, nor to look down upon or sneer at or be envious of those who are called to different tasks, as if they are less than us or we are less than them.

See, David wanted his army to share. He wanted his community to share with one another and to consider each other more important than themselves. That's a very Pauline thing, but it's a very David thing here, too. And I think this principle is consistent with the New Testament vision of community. For example, think of the book of Acts. It's in Acts that we're told that Christians shared and had all things in common with one another. And this is the Greek idea of *koinonia*, which can be translated multiple different ways. You can translate it as "partnership" or "communion." I like to say "give-and-take relationship. So *koinonia* is what we're called to. It's what David is calling his army to do. It's what Christians are called to be.

I just want to toss this out here for a moment: How are you doing in that area? Are you jealous of other Christians who get more attention? Do you look down upon those who don't? Do you deem them to be insignificant in the Kingdom? Do you deem yourself to be insignificant in the Kingdom? Do you have too low a view of your calling? Here's the thing: David reminds us, I think, that we all have a role—a very significant role—to play and a very significant part to fulfill in the Kingdom. See, we are in a community together. We're all saved by grace. We have different giftings. We have different callings. But they are all important. Praise be to God that he looks upon us with the fatherly love that he does, because he gives us all a role in the Kingdom. The only question is, "How are you fulfilling your role in the Kingdom?" Make sure you find your calling and go after it because it's very important, whatever God has called you to do.

So that's the second thing that we're looking at. I want to jump to the third heading—the third section of our text today. The third heading (if you remember) is Fulfillment. What I'm going to do is I'm going to read 1 Samuel 30, starting at verse 26. And we're going to read through chapter 31, verse 7. Verse 26:

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**<sup>26</sup> When David came to Ziklag, he sent part of the spoil to his friends, the elders of Judah, saying, 'Here is a present for you from the spoil of the enemies of the Lord'; <sup>27</sup> it was for those in Bethel, in Ramoth of the Negeb, in Jattir, <sup>28</sup> in Aroer, in Siphmoth, in Eshtemoa, <sup>29</sup> in Racal, in the towns of the Jerahmeelites, in the towns of the Kenites, <sup>30</sup> in Hormah, in Bor-ashan, in Athach, <sup>31</sup> in Hebron, all the places where David and his men had roamed.**

**<sup>31</sup> Now the Philistines fought against Israel; and the men of Israel fled before the Philistines, and many fell on Mount Gilboa. <sup>2</sup> The Philistines overtook Saul and his sons; and the Philistines killed Jonathan and Abinadab and Malchishua, the sons of Saul. <sup>3</sup> The battle pressed hard upon Saul; the archers found him, and he was badly wounded by them. <sup>4</sup> Then Saul said to his armour-bearer, 'Draw your sword and thrust me through with it, so that these uncircumcised may not come and thrust me through, and make sport of me.' But his armour-bearer was unwilling; for he was terrified. So Saul took his own sword and fell upon it. <sup>5</sup> When his armour-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell upon his sword and died with him. <sup>6</sup> So Saul and his three sons and his armour-bearer and all his men died together on the same day. <sup>7</sup> When the men of Israel who were on the other side of the valley and those beyond the Jordan saw that the men of Israel had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook their towns and fled; and the Philistines came and occupied them.**

Okay, so the point I think we need to pay attention to here is that of prophetic fulfillment. So that's our key word: Fulfillment. Samuel had prophesied in 1 Samuel 28 that Saul and his sons would die at the hands of the Philistines. And here we see that fulfilled. And I think the takeaway for us is... well, it's two things. First, it once again validates the ministry of Samuel. Samuel, again, is a very important prophet when he was alive. And when he was in Sheol, he was still very important. His word that was spoken to Saul has been fulfilled. He's a true prophet. So this validates his ministry.

The second thing is that it brings Saul's lamentable reign to a rather climactic end. Here's the thing: the irony of the entire situation, I think, would be comical if it weren't so tragic. For example, if you go back to chapter 28, you recall it was there that Saul ran to the witch of Endor. And through her, he communicated with Samuel because he was afraid of and needed rescuing from the Philistines. And yet it was through that very act of consulting the witch of Endor that would ultimately bring about a prophecy that would result in his own demise. I think here the point is pretty clear: running from God leads to nowhere good. And just as I said earlier, Saul's heart was not humble. Had it been humble, he would have run to God in true repentance and he would have surrendered to God and

he would have come to terms with the fact that he was no longer going to rule Israel. If he had done that, perhaps God would have shown him much grace. I'm convinced that God Would have shown him much grace. God is a God of grace. He would have graced Saul if Saul had had a humble, repentant heart. I mean, God is in the grace business, right? Think of King Manasseh—that wicked and despicable king, who nonetheless humbly repented and found grace and mercy in God. What does it say about Saul, who could not even rise to the level of righteousness exhibited by someone like Manasseh? I'm not sure, to be honest.

I have many more things to say about all of this, but I think the takeaway for us is that we should always run to God in honesty. And when we don't hear what we want to hear from God, we should never run away. We should never run to the witch of Endor [laughs]. We should never run away from God. We should just embrace God's word for us—his will for us—no matter if it's comfortable, no matter how it makes us feel. We should accept it humbly and submit to it, because it's in *that* where we can find life and peace. If you run from that, you end up in a dead road. It's a dead-end. It's a bad ending. But by submitting to God like King Manasseh did, you'll find life and you'll find peace.

So I'm just going to leave that with us here because I think it's super-important for us to think about as we think of David and Saul and really just applying the text to our lives today.

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Let's move on. What I want to do is wrap up this episode with a conversation about the gospel. You might be thinking, "Wait, there's a gospel here?" There *is*, but we need to unpack it just a little bit. Because I do think that this whole chapter (chapter 31) could shed some light on how we ought to think about the gospel of Jesus Christ.

So that's our fourth heading that I mentioned, our fourth and final one: Gospel. I just think it's an appropriate place to end, not only the episode but our whole series on 1 Samuel. I want to end our 1 Samuel series with Jesus, okay? Now on the surface, I know this seems rather odd. Jesus, the Messiah, is nowhere mentioned in 1 Samuel. He's nowhere explicitly appearing anywhere. And that's true. But as Dr. Heiser would say, the profile of the messiah is everywhere.

Let me start by reading chapter 31:8-13.

**<sup>8</sup> The next day, when the Philistines came to strip the dead, they found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. <sup>9</sup> They cut off his head, stripped off his armour, and sent messengers throughout the land of the Philistines to carry the good news to the houses of their idols and to the people. <sup>10</sup> They put his armour in the temple of Astarte; and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan. <sup>11</sup> But when the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead heard what the**

**Philistines had done to Saul, <sup>12</sup> all the valiant men set out, travelled all night long, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-shan. They came to Jabesh and burned them there. <sup>13</sup> Then they took their bones and buried them under the tamarisk tree in Jabesh, and fasted for seven days.**

So here's the scene. After Saul was killed, the Philistines took this news of victory back home to their people. They considered the death of Saul and the defeat of the Israelites to be news... Not just news, but good news. And that's how it's depicted here. Again, verse 9:

**...[the Philistines went] to carry the good news to the houses of their idols and to the people.**

Now if you read the Greek Old Testament of this passage, the word that is used here is the verb *euaggelizo*, and it means "to bring good news." It's a word that's used often in the New Testament, along with its corresponding noun, *euangelion*. And our English word "evangelism" comes from this Greek word *euangelion*. And this is often translated simply as "good news" or "the gospel" or "good tidings" or something like that. Needless to say, these are very important words in the Bible, for obvious reasons.

What's fascinating is how the word is used here. In fact, I really do think (as I said a moment ago) that it sheds some light on how we ought to understand the word when it's used in the New Testament. Notice, the word "gospel" is used in this 1 Samuel text in a military and political sort of way. It's used in the context of describing military conquest. In other words, the Philistines have been victorious on the battlefield and they can't help but take this news back home to tell the others. It's interesting because in this case, think about it... Here you have a king of Israel who has been killed and his death is being proclaimed as good news. Sound familiar? I repeat: I'm not intending to draw any comparison between Saul and Jesus. I'm not suggesting that Saul is a type of Jesus or anything like that. I think to say those sorts of things would be going a bit too far. But what I am saying is that this situation gives us a conceptual category for how to think freshly about the gospel of Jesus. So let's let this 1 Samuel text be our guide.

The gospel of Jesus is, at the very heart, good news that victory has been won. It is news of conquest. It is news of how the war has been settled and how the enemies of God have been dealt a decisive mortal blow. And as people of the gospel of Jesus, we cannot help but share the good news to the people at home. And that's why, after beholding the cross of Christ and peering into the empty tomb, one can never be the same again. For those who have truly seen the victory accomplished by Jesus through his death, through his burial, through his

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resurrection, and his ascension, something changes in them. When you behold that—when you see that—you experience an ontological change. You experience, I think, a hermeneutical change as a result. See, after meeting Jesus on our Damascus Road, the world looks incredibly different. Our perspectives, our worldview, our theology, our ethics, our mindsets... Everything changes. We interpret things differently in light of Jesus' death and resurrection.

See, the Philistines thought that the death of Saul was good news. But in all actuality, his death was just a small footnote in the annals of human history. Saul is still dead. The real good news, though, would come by another king of Israel—someone whose death would give way to new life. And what's incredibly fascinating to me is that the Philistines thought they had killed off the hope of Israel. But what they did instead is prepare the way for another king—someone named David. And as a result, the Philistines unknowingly (think about this—just think about this for a moment!)... As a result, the Philistines unknowingly helped prepare the way of the messiah—the true descendant of David. See, what the forces of evil conspire against God... When they conspire against God and against God's people, they end up signing their own death warrant. The powers and the principalities that inspired the world of the Philistines by killing Saul and thereby ushering in the Davidic dynasty, what they did is actually draft their own death certificate. The powers that enabled the Philistines to do evil things, the principalities that inspired the Philistines to do evil things... By killing off Israel's king, they brought about the Davidic dynasty. And the Davidic dynasty gave us the messiah, and the messiah handed over the death certificate to the powers and the principalities.

And this is exactly how the New Testament understands the gospel of the Son of David. The powers and the authorities did not understand the wisdom of God. Had they known that by killing Jesus they were sealing their own fate, they would not have done that. But I'm thinking of 1 Corinthians 2:8 or Colossians 2:15. See, through Jesus, victory has been accomplished. It is finished. And for those of us who need rescuing, that is good news, indeed.

**TS:** Amen. All righty. Matt, we appreciate that. That was a fantastic way to wrap up 1 Samuel, a message well-received. I want to thank every scholar who has helped us finish what Dr. Heiser started in 1 Samuel. We appreciate them more than they will know. It goes without saying that we continue to miss Dr. Heiser, but I challenge everyone out there—layman and scholar—to carry on his legacy and continue what he started, as far as reading your Bible in a different, unfiltered lens. And "if it's weird it's important." We thank him for all that he has left us with—all of his scholarship. We appreciate that. And again, Matt, I want to thank you again for helping us wrap up 1 Samuel. And with that, I want to thank everybody else for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God bless.