

The Swiftness of God's Judgment

1 Samuel 31:1-13

Read the Bible passage and pray that God would show himself to you in His Word.

1. How should Christians think about the death of people who were far from the Lord in their lives?
2. What is the significance of the death of Saul for the history of Israel? It might be worth reflecting on what ideals Saul represented (1 Samuel 8:19-20).
3. Why is it important that David was not involved with the death of Saul? How has the author exonerate David from Saul's death in chapter 24-30?
4. Write down the verbs in vv.1-6 that relate to Israel's defeat. What does this tell you about their battle with the Philistines?
5. Take a look at v.2. Why would the death of Jonathan be such a loss for both David and the people of Israel (1 Samuel 14:1-23; 18:1; 20:1-42)? What does Jonathan's death alongside his father tell us about Jonathan's character? What does it tell us about the sufferings that the wicked and the righteous face in this life?
6. Compare Saul's death in vv.3-5 to the death of Abimelech in Judges 9:50-57. What do the striking similarities tell you about Saul's kingship?
7. In v.4 we see Saul taking his own life. Consider the following cases of suicide in the Bible: 2 Samuel 17:23, 1 Kings 16:18, Matthew 27:3-5. Consider next the Biblical view of murder (Exodus 20:13) and judgment (Hebrews 9:27). Putting all these things together, how would you describe the Bible's view of suicide? How might we help those who have temptations? Consider Jesus' fulfilment of the servant song in Matthew 12:19-20.
8. How were the events in this chapter already foretold? Take a look at 1 Samuel 15:28 and 28:17-19.
9. How did the Philistines interpret the death of Saul according to vv.9-10 and 1 Chronicles 10:10? Why do they not have a leg to stand on with their religious interpretation according to 1 Samuel 6:3-4?
10. What is the significance of the people of Jabesh-gilead fleeing in vv.11-12 in light of the life and work of Saul (1 Samuel 11). What does this tell us about the story of Saul?
11. After Saul died, the Israelites fasted in v.13. What does fasting symbolise here? Why did Jesus' disciples not fast while he was with them (Matthew 9:14-17)?

Pray that God will enable you to learn how to apply his Word unto your sanctification toward Him.