

David, Waiting for the Kingdom

Waiting for the Lord

In the rest of 1 Samuel we see David, the anointed king, waiting for the promised kingdom. This was a time of preparation. It was a time of humiliation and danger as He faced opposition and threats on his life from the hand of Saul, the outgoing king. A favorite theme of David in the psalms was “wait for the Lord,” 5 times specifically, “wait” alone, of the Lord, 23 times.¹ Our own struggles need to be informed by this same dynamic as we wait for the Lord in our own lives and apply New Testament truth about growth, that God uses testing in our journey to become like Jesus Christ. Few things test our faith like waiting for God to act in His own timing and for His own purposes. It should be of some comfort and encouragement for us to persevere in faith as we see God’s faithfulness to David. We, also, must fight the “little battles” as we grow and serve and wait, trusting in His faithfulness, even as our own unfaithfulness is exposed. The New Testament reveals this kind of testing as part of the process of character growth we must all go through (James 1:2-4).

DEATH OF KING SAUL

We left Saul and the Philistines poised for battle in the northern Jezreel Valley near Shunem, in the vicinity of Jezreel (1 Sam 29:11), (Philistines) and Gilboa (Israelites), 1 Sam 28:4. They had initially gathered at Aphek and Jezreel, 1 Sam 29:1-2, respectively, but moved after David left Aphek to the current locations. This is probably when Saul went to seek the counsel of the medium at Endor (see the map for these movements). While these preparations for battle were taking place, David and his men were fighting the Amalekites to recover their families and possessions (1 Sam 30).

Now we see the account of the battle itself in ch 31 of 1 Samuel (Appendix). It’s not going good for the Israelites. “the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines and fell slain on Mount Gilboa” (v 1). The text goes from bad to worse to describe the death of Saul’s three sons, including Jonathan, David’s loyal friend. This would prove to be a heavy loss to David but he would keep his promises to Jonathan and his progeny. Saul himself was badly wounded by the arrows of Philistine archers. He knew he would not survive and told his armor bearer to kill him “otherwise these uncircumcised will come and pierce me through and make sport of



https://www.jesuswalk.com/david/06_david_strengthens.htm

¹ 5 times total in Psalms (English) 2 times in Psa 27:17; “wait” alone, of the Lord, 23 times. [New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update](#) (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995). All scripture quotes are from this version unless otherwise noted.

me” (v 4). His armor bearer would not do it out of fear. One wonders at his fear given the circumstances. How much more dire could it get at this point? However, Saul took his own life and the armor bearer followed by falling on his sword, also. ”Thus Saul died with his three sons, his armor bearer, and all his men on that day together” (v 6). David had spared Saul’s life twice. He left “room for the wrath of God” (Rom 12:19). The Lord has now done it. The End.

This was what David had been waiting for. The account goes on to describe the panic after the army’s defeat by an even greater flight of those “who were on the other side of the valley, with those who were beyond the Jordan.” And “they abandoned the cities and fled; then the Philistines came and lived in them” (v 7).



The day after the battle, the Philistines came to get the spoil of their victory and found their greatest trophy in the bodies of Saul and his sons. They removed Saul’s head and weapons and used the victory to dishonor Saul and glorify their gods. They even hung his body on the city wall of Beth-shan, an Israeli town near-by. Saul died in shame.

But in the worst of times there can still be honor. When news reached the town of Jabesh-gilead about how Saul had been treated by the Philistines, “all the valiant men rose and walked all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-shan” (v 12). They buried Saul and his sons “under the tamarisk tree² (Appendix) at Jabesh and fasted seven days” (v13).

David had learned to put his trust/faith in the Lord and “walk by faith not by sight,” not by his own efforts to bring

www.etsy.com Saul Kills Himself P Catholic about the will of God. He, again, had learned to “be at peace with all men,” and to “never take your own revenge . . . but leave room for the wrath of God” (Rom. 12:18-19), which we recognize from the New Testament. Paul would, also, have said, “the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me” (Galatians 2:20). We see, again, this new covenant king-to-be was living by the New Testament principle of a crucified/dead life that is lived by faith in the power of God, not one’s own power/strength or learned ability.

*7 Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him;
Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way,
Because of the man who carries out wicked schemes.*

² This tree must have been significant in some way to be referred to in the singular with the article. Probably either the only Tamarisk tree there or the largest or perhaps one uniquely used as a marker, etc.

. . .
*9 For evildoers will be cut off,
But those who wait for the Lord, they will inherit the land.*

Psa 37:7, 9 David son of Jesse

DAVID MOURNS ISRAEL'S LOSSES

As the drama with Saul and the army of Israel played out, David had been retrieving his family and belongings from the Amalekite raiders. After the trek back to Ziklag, on the third day, a man came with news about Saul and the army. David learned from him about the defeat at the hands of the Philistines and the deaths of Saul and Jonathan. When asked how he knew Saul and Jonathan were dead, he told a false story of being asked by Saul to kill him and doing so. He gave David Saul's crown and the bracelet from his arm.

At this point in the story David and his men broke into mourning and wept until evening for Saul and Jonathan and the news about Israel's defeat. Then David had the Amalekite messenger killed by one of his "young men" saying to him, "Your blood is on your head, for your mouth has testified against you, saying, 'I have killed the LORD's anointed' (2 Samuel 1:16). We know how important it has been for David to have refrained from killing Saul by his own hand (chs 24 and 26 of 1 Samuel). Now we see how seriously David takes it when God chooses leaders to rule over His people (Psa 75:7; Exodus 22:28). Paul says, "there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God" (Rom 13:1). David agrees.

The rest of 2 Sam 1, verses 17-27, are a lament psalm, presumably composed by David, that was sung in honor of Saul and Jonathan by David. It is not included in the biblical book of Psalms but rather in the Book of Jashar, an extra-biblical writing, also mentioned in Joshua 10:13, that has not been preserved for us. This song, a typical dirge, laments their death, lauds the exploits of the two men and calls others to mourn them. The last 3 verses are especially poignant about Jonathan, David's best friend, whom he loved.

How Have the Mighty Fallen

²⁵ *"How have the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!
Jonathan is slain on your high places.*

²⁶ *"I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan;
You have been very pleasant to me.
Your love to me was more wonderful
Than the love of women.*

²⁷ *"How have the mighty fallen,
And the weapons of war perished!" 2 Sam 1:25-27*

DAVID MADE KING OVER JUDAH

As one of his first acts after Saul's death David sought guidance from the Lord. After all the time he had spent waiting for the Lord's timing and now with Saul's death, it would have been easy to presume now was the time for him to assume the throne of Israel. But David had learned that the

Lord had His own plan and timing and he should not assume anything but “wait for the Lord” (Psalm 130:5). Paul might have admonished him that “in due time we will reap” (Galatians 6:9).

So David waited and “inquired of the Lord, saying, “Shall I go up to one of the cities of Judah?” And the LORD said to him, “Go up.” So David said, “Where shall I go up?” And He said, “To Hebron” (2 Sam 2:1). So it was moving day, again. Living in the wilderness for so long David and his men and their families had learned to travel light and move quickly. So now it was time to leave Ziklag after 16 months or so (1 Sam 27:7).

“Then the men of Judah came and there anointed David king over the house of Judah” (2 Sam 2:4). One sentence after all the time David had spent running from Saul since he was anointed in Bethlehem. Kind of anticlimactic. So this was the anointing by David’s own tribe, by his family, so to speak. It still took a while for the rest of Israel to come around.

It is interesting and edifying to note that David did not harbor any resentment for the years of unfair treatment. In fact the text says he rewarded those men of Jabesh-Gilead who showed honor and compassion to the house of Saul by retrieving his body and those of his sons to bury them properly in Jabesh (1 Sam 31:11-13).



scpeanutgallery.com David Anointed King of Judah

So we see New Testament principles, again, showing Christ-like character to his enemies and those who persecuted him. These are the teachings of Jesus, not without precedent in the Old Testament, but not emphasized like in the New. David also learned and grew through his trials as we find in Romans 5, James 1 and Hebrews 12. He developed the “divine nature” of 2 Pet 1:4 through much the same process as we do of post-Christ history. Granted there was not an absence but a less clear view of truths we are privileged to know through Jesus Christ and His revelation. “Grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained *Him*” (John 1:17-18).

Nevertheless, God is the same today in this age as He was during the days of the Old Covenant and works in the lives of His people as best He can, in both ages. David with the indwelling Spirit, as a prophet and king, had access to all the power of God within, as do we. His statements of identifying with His Lord as his strength, his fortress, deliverer, rock, stronghold, etc speak to a relationship with the Sovereign without barrier, as though Christ had died for him. Which He did. “Christ also died for sins once.” “Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the

foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin “by the sacrifice of Himself” (1 Pet 3:18, Heb 9:26).

David identifying with His Lord, as above, reminds us of Paul, “Christ, who is our life;” and “by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption” (Colossians 3:4, 1 Corinthians 1:30). Different words/concepts but the same relationship with God.

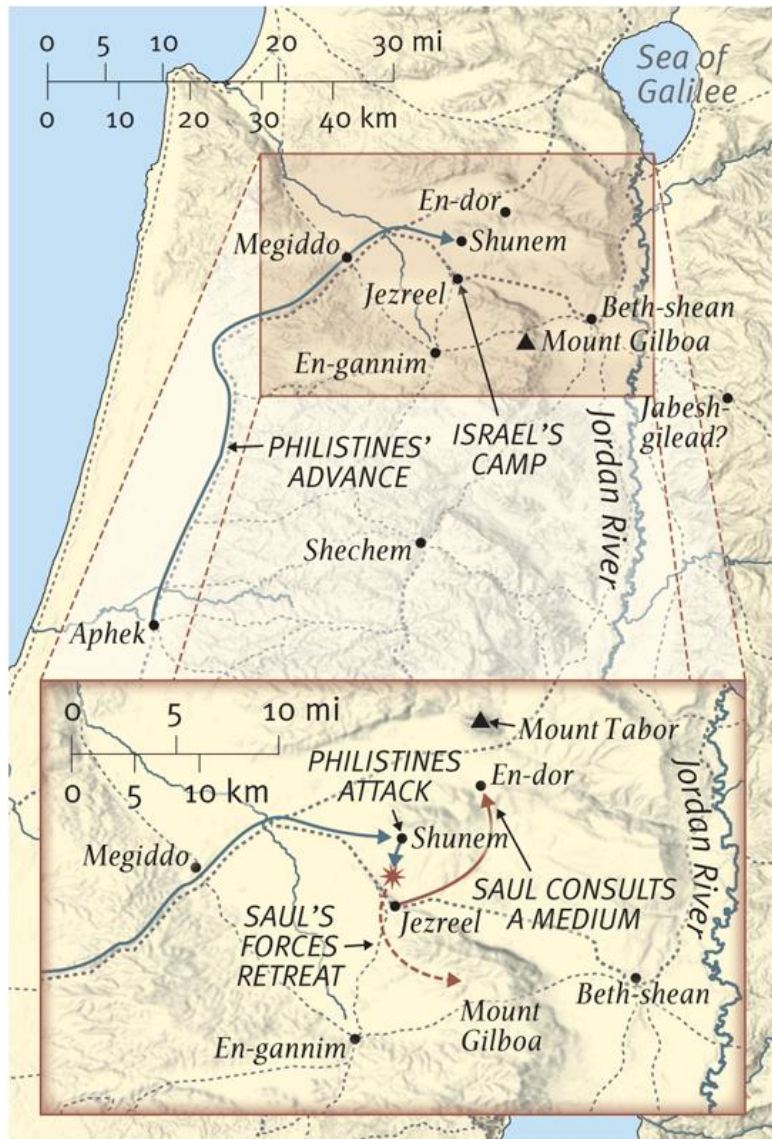
Another way to explain this is as predicate nominatives or equative phrases identifying one with the other. In this case it would be equating ourselves with God’s righteousness, wisdom, etc. In David’s case it would be identifying or equating with God as fortress, deliverer, even as his righteousness³, which would be, essentially, very New Covenant. Theologians refer to this in a similar way even more powerfully as perichoresis, a mutual indwelling, total identification of one with another, e.g. “You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us.” This mutual indwelling, a strong element of David’s relationship with God, in his time, is more clearly revealed to us by Jesus Christ both the son and lord of our brother David.

“that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.”²²The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one;²³I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.” John 17:21-23

³ Compare Psa 4:1 with Psa 7:8 in Hebrew, “God of my righteousness” and “my righteousness”, respectively.

Appendix

The Battle at Mount Gilboa, c. 1010 B.C. (1 Samuel 31:1–13; 1 Chronicles 10:1–14) Philistine forces advanced to Shunem from Aphek and prepared to attack the Israelites near their camp in Jezreel. Saul, fearing the great army that faced him, slipped away during the night to consult a medium at En-dor in order to seek the counsel of the deceased Samuel. When the Philistines attacked the next morning, the Israelites retreated up the slopes of Mount Gilboa. Saul and three of his sons were killed, and the Philistines mocked Israel by hanging their bodies on the wall of Beth-shean. Later, men from Jabesh-gilead traveled through the night and recovered the bodies.



⁴ John D. Currid and David P. Barrett, [Crossway ESV Bible Atlas](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 124.

Tamarisk (*Tamarix* sp.). The references in Genesis 21:33; 1 Samuel 22:6 and 31:13 seem to be to the tamarisk. These trees or shrubs are small and fast-growing with a durable wood. They are abundant in deserts, dunes, and salt marshes. *Tamarix aphylla* is leafless and has small white flowers. These trees or shrubs often provide a soothing touch of green foliage and a promise of cooling shade to the traveler. Beersheba, where Abraham planted the tamarisk, is a region troubled with droughts which would make the cultivation of most other kinds of trees very impractical. In the very desolate portions of the desert of Shur, the stunted bushes of the desert species of tamarisk still grow in abundance, and it was probably under one of these that the despairing Hagar cast Ishmael, the child of her blighted hopes. Tamarisks are able to survive because they either have small scale-like leaves which lose little moisture by transpiration, or no leaves at all. The larger of the tamarisks are valued for their wood in a region where wood is scarce. The wood was used for building purposes and also as a source of an excellent type of charcoal.⁵



6

⁵ Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, “[Plants](#),” *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 1724–1725.

⁶ [godasagardener.com](https://images.search.yahoo.com/search/images?p=tamarisk+tree+in+israel&fr=mcafee&type=E210US565G0&imgurl=https%3A%2F%2Fc8.alamy.com%2Fcomp%2FAP6B7T%2Fisrael-the-negev-desert-tamarisk-trees-tamarix-aphylla-in-wadi-besor-AP6B7T.jpg#id=43&iurl=https%3A%2F%2Fpinimg.com%2Foriginals%2F8e%2Fdd%2F3e%2F8edd3eec762edb457c2685e57720e734.jpg&action=click) [www.pinterest.com](https://images.search.yahoo.com/search/images?p=tamarisk+tree+in+israel&fr=mcafee&type=E210US565G0&imgurl=https%3A%2F%2Fc8.alamy.com%2Fcomp%2FAP6B7T%2Fisrael-the-negev-desert-tamarisk-trees-tamarix-aphylla-in-wadi-besor-AP6B7T.jpg#id=43&iurl=https%3A%2F%2Fpinimg.com%2Foriginals%2F8e%2Fdd%2F3e%2F8edd3eec762edb457c2685e57720e734.jpg&action=click)
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