

Sin has consequences that extend beyond the person committing them. We need not think that our sins hurt only ourselves because the repercussions of those sins can affect those around us and God's ability to bless them. Saul disobedience to the LORD led to the death of a large number of men in Israel, including his sons and himself.

1 Samuel 31:1-6

1 Now the Philistines fought against Israel: and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa.

“Now the Philistines fought against Israel” – This was the battle that Saul was anticipating when he went to the “witch of Endor” in order to speak with Samuel from beyond the grave (1 Sam. 28:4-25).

“and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa” – Israel was being defeated by the Philistines, just as predicted by “Samuel” (1 Sam. 28:19). The battle was turning into a blood-bath for Israel because of Saul's sins.

2 And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Malchi-shua, Saul's sons. 3 And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him; and he was sore wounded of the archers.

“And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons” – The Philistines were pursuing Saul and his three sons with the intent of killing them. The expression “followed hard upon” indicates that Saul and his sons were barely staying ahead of their pursuers.

“and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Malchi-shua, Saul's sons” – The Philistines are able to capture and kill Saul's sons. These sons suffered the consequences of their father's sins.

“And the battle went sore [heavy] against Saul” – Saul had been able to stay beyond the reach of the enemy, but the battle had turned against him so that he could see no hope of victory or escape.

“and the archers hit him; and he was sore [exceeding; greatly] wounded of the archers” – Saul had managed to evade the Philistine foot soldiers but he was not able to stay out of the reach of the Philistine archers. He is mortally wounded by the archers and realizes that his wounds are so severe that he will not survive.

4 Then said Saul unto his armourbearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me. But his armourbearer would not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it.

Even though his wounds will take his life, Saul knows that they will not kill him immediately and that if the Philistines capture him before he succumbs to his wounds, they will torture and make a mockery of him before they kill him. He orders his armor bearer to draw his sword and kill him, but the man was too afraid to do so. Either he was overwhelmed by the circumstances or he was afraid to be the one responsible for killing the king. When his armor bearer refused to kill him, Saul commits suicide on his own sword.

5 And when his armourbearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him. 6 So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armourbearer, and all his men, that same day together.

“And when his armourbearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him” – The armor bearer's fear of the Philistines and possibly his loyalty to his king caused him to join Saul in suicide.

“So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armourbearer, and all his men, that same day together” – This statement summarizes the events of the day by indicating the end results. King Saul was dead, along with his sons, his armor bearer, and most, if not all, of the army of Israel.

2 Samuel 1:23-27

23 Saul and Jonathan *were* lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided: they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions.

When news of the death of Saul and his sons reached David, he and his men weep and mourn the rest of the day over those that died in the battle, including Saul and the men of Israel. David wrote a “lamentation” (dirge) in mourning over the deaths of Saul, Jonathan and the numerous mighty men of Israel that lost their lives (v. 17-27). David's lamentation does not show disrespect to Saul despite the fact that Saul had wanted to kill him.

“Saul and Jonathan were lovely [beloved] and pleasant [delightful; agreeable] in their lives” – As is often the case at funerals, people will say good things out of respect for the dead. David speaks well of Saul and Jonathan, saying that both were beloved and pleasant men. David's experience with Saul contradicted this lamentation, so it's possible that he was thinking more of Jonathan in this statement. It's clear that David did not find pleasure in the fact that Saul was dead (v. 12, 2 Sam. 4:10).

“and in their death they were not divided” – Saul and Jonathan were together in being beloved and they were together in death because they died the same day on the same battlefield. This speaks to Jonathan's loyalty because death was the only thing that separated him from his father's side. It's possible that Jonathan and his brothers gave their lives fighting to protect their father.

“they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions” – We often express the tragedy of someone's death by making the statement “they were so full of life!” David is essentially saying the same thing here, stating that Saul and Jonathan had the strength and swiftness of lions and eagles.

24 Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with *other* delights, who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel.

David's lamentation now calls on the women of Israel to weep for Saul, reminding them of the prosperity that Saul had brought to the nation of Israel so that they could enjoy the beautiful clothes and jewelry that they wore. Some of this prosperity may have come from the spoils of war with the Philistines and the economic freedom obtained when Israel defeated the Philistines and pushed back their oppression.

25 How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, *thou wast* slain in thine high places. 26 I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.

"How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!" – Normally it is the weak who fall in battle and the mighty who are the conquerors, so David laments the tragedy of when the mighty fall in the midst of a battle.

"O Jonathan, *thou wast* slain in thine high places" – David now turns his attention to his friend, lamenting that Jonathan was killed in his "high places." One commentator pointed out that some of Jonathan's greatest feats of battle were in mountains and ironically he died on a mountain (Mt. Gilboa). The irony of the lament is similar to that of the "how are the mighty fallen" lament.

"I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan" – David expresses his grief at losing his friend, whom he considers to be like a brother.

"very pleasant [beautiful; delightful] hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful [extraordinary], passing the love of women" – As a friend and brother-in-law, Jonathan had been very good to David. David felt a strong bond of friendship with Jonathan, one that he had never had with a woman. Some have tried to claim that there was a homosexual component to the love between David and Jonathan, but there is no evidence of any sexual desire between the two. David and Jonathan shared a love for the LORD that created a bond of friendship between them that David had not experienced with his wives.

27 How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!

David again laments the irony that the mighty have fallen and their weapons, which were intended to bring victory, were unable to prevent it.

1 Chronicles 10:13-14

13 So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, *even* against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking *counsel* of *one that had* a familiar spirit, to enquire of it; 14 And enquired not of the LORD: therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse.

"So Saul died" – This chapter contains a parallel account of the death of Saul (compare to 1 Sam. 31), and it ends with a summary explaining the reason for the manner of Saul's death (vs. 13-14).

"for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, *even* against the word of the LORD, which he kept not" – One reason for Saul's death was because of his transgression against the LORD. It is unclear if this refers to not waiting for Samuel to make the sacrifices to the LORD at Gilgal (1 Sam. 13:8-9) or to not totally destroying Amalek and all that pertained to them as the LORD commanded (1 Sam. 15). Perhaps it refers to Saul's pattern of not obeying the LORD, which would include both examples of his disobedience as well as others not specifically documented in scripture.

"and also for asking *counsel* of *one that had* a familiar spirit, to enquire of it; And enquired not of the LORD" – This statement clarifies Saul's sin in seeking guidance from supernatural sources other than the LORD. Saul had gone to the witch of Endor to seek guidance from Samuel, who was dead, instead of seeking the LORD for guidance. This reason for Saul's death should teach us that the LORD does not approve of seeking guidance from astrologers, mediums, horoscopes, psychics, ouija boards, and the like.

"therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse" – The LORD killed Saul for these reasons and gave the kingdom to David. Samuel had declared to Saul that the LORD would replace him with a man that was more in tune with the heart of the LORD.

1 Sam. 13:14 *"But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee."*

1 Sam. 15:28 *"And Samuel said unto him, The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou."*

We cannot expect to escape the consequences of disobeying the LORD. Not only will it prevent Him from blessing us, but it will bring His judgment and/or His chastisement.