

Life Lesson 71  
*David Becomes King*  
Text: II Samuel 1-5

Introduction

God promised that David would be king, but so far we have seen him running, hiding, and trying not to be killed by King Saul. But God always does what He says He will do, in His own timing.

The Story

A tired man with torn and dirty clothes stumbled into Ziklag and knelt before David in humility.

“Who are you and where did you come from?” David asked him.

“I came from the camp of King Saul,” the man answered.

“How did the battle go?” David asked.

“The Israelites were defeated and Saul and Jonathan were both killed,” the man replied.

“How do you know that Saul and his son are dead?” David asked.

“I was taking a trip and happened to pass by the battle site,” the man answered. “I found Saul lying on the ground, badly hurt. An arrow had hit him. He was afraid the Philistines would torture him if they found him severely wounded, so he tried to kill himself by falling on his spear. He still didn’t die right away, so he was in terrible anguish. He begged me to kill him – so I did. Here is his crown and the jewelry he always wore.”

David recognized the crown and bracelet and began to mourn for Saul. He tore his clothes to show his sorrow. (That was the custom in Bible times.) David’s men wept and mourned with David.

“Who are you?” David asked the young man.

“I am an Amalekite,” the man said.

An Amalekite – one of the wicked tribe of people that God had commanded Saul to destroy. Saul had disobeyed God and kept alive some of the Amalekites. Now it was an Amalekite who had killed Saul.

“Why weren’t you afraid to kill the Lord’s anointed?” David demanded angrily. “Put this man to death!”

David knew that life and death are in the hands of God. He knew that Saul was left alive because God allowed him to survive. If God had wanted Saul to die right away, God could have done it without help from the Amalekite man. The Amalekite had murdered Saul, and had to pay the death penalty for his crime.

Even though Saul had been cruel to David, David mourned for him. He asked God what he should do next. God directed David to go to the land of Judah with his men. He came to the city of Hebron. The men there who were of the tribe of Judah, anointed David as their king and he began at last to rule over his people.

Not all the Israelites wanted to follow David, though. Saul’s general, Abner, wanted Saul’s son, Ishbosheth to be the king. He anointed him in front of the people and Ishbosheth began to reign over the other 11 tribes. Although Ishbosheth was the king, Abner really ruled the land.

For a long time David’s men fought with Ishbosheth’s troops. Gradually David’s side became stronger and Ishbosheth’s side became weaker. Then Abner and Ishbosheth had an argument. Abner decided to go over to David’s side. That was the end of Ishbosheth’s rule!

“I’ll make a league with you and will bring the rest of Israel to your side,” Abner told him.

“All right, on one condition,” David replied. “I want Michal, my wife, back.”

Saul had given Michal to another husband, a man named Phaltiel. Now she had to leave him and go back to David who already had two other wives. Phaltiel followed her, crying, until Abner made him leave.

It's a mess when people don't stay with the one person they married! Always someone is hurt, and no one is really happy. I hope you make sure that you marry the one God has for you, and that you will always be faithful to that one person.

Abner made a treaty with David and began to tell the other tribes they should follow David instead of Ishbosheth. More and more the people's hearts turned toward David.

Ishbosheth's two captains turned against him and crept into his room one night while he was sleeping. They killed him in his bed.

They came to David triumphantly, thinking he would reward them.

"Do you think I'm going to give you a reward for killing a man in his sleep?" David demanded. "You will get the same reward the Amalekite man got – the death penalty."

Now Israel had no king – and they decided they wanted David to rule over them. The elders came to Hebron where David reigned over his own tribe of Judah, and anointed him as their new king.

Years before God had called David to be the king. For all those years He was preparing David to rule over his people. Now, at last, David was king.

#### The Life Lesson

The Amalekite thought he was doing Saul a favor by killing him. At least, that's what he said! People today often think like the Amalekite. They say, "That little baby has birth defects. He will never be normal. It would just be better to let him die. That way he won't suffer."

But, God has a purpose for every person he creates. If it is truly best for a child not to live, God will take the child's life. It's not up to us to decide.

Sometimes people are hurt in accidents or are very sick with a serious disease. Some people think it would be best just to let that person die -- or help him die, like the Amalekite did -- instead of helping him to recover. That's not our business! That's God's business.

God has perfect timing. He knows just when it is time for someone to die. And He knows when it is time for His promises to come to pass. We can trust Him enough to wait for God and for His perfect timing.

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## Review Questions

Who brought news about the Israelite battle with the Philistines to David?

*An Amalekite.*

What news did the Amalekite bring?

*The Israelites lost the battle and Saul and Jonathan were killed.*

How did King Saul die?

*He was wounded and tried to kill himself by falling on his spear so the Philistines wouldn't torture him. He was still alive, so the Amalekite did what he asked and killed Saul.*

Was David happy that the Amalekite killed Saul?

*No. He said, "How did you dare kill God's chosen king?"*

What was the Amalekite's reward for killing Saul?

*He was put to death.*

Does God want us to kill people who are sick and suffering?

*No. That is God's decision.*

Was David happy that Saul died?

*No, he mourned for Saul.*

Where was David first anointed as king?

*In Hebron*

Did all the Israelites want David to be the king?

*No, some wanted Saul's son Ishbosheth to be king, instead.*

Who was the leader of Ishbosheth's army?

*Abner*

Abner argued with Ishbosheth and went to make a treaty with David. What did David ask as his part of the treaty?

*He wanted his wife Michal back.*

How did Ishbosheth die?

*His captains killed him while he slept.*

