



(Like David) A Woman After God's Own Heart #5 Living with the end in mind (1 Sam. 31)

I. Introduction: "Death: the secret anxiety of modern men and women" (Paul Tillich)

How we encounter our own mortality says a lot about how we "engage life" itself. Such discussions "represent the growing edge of our lives."

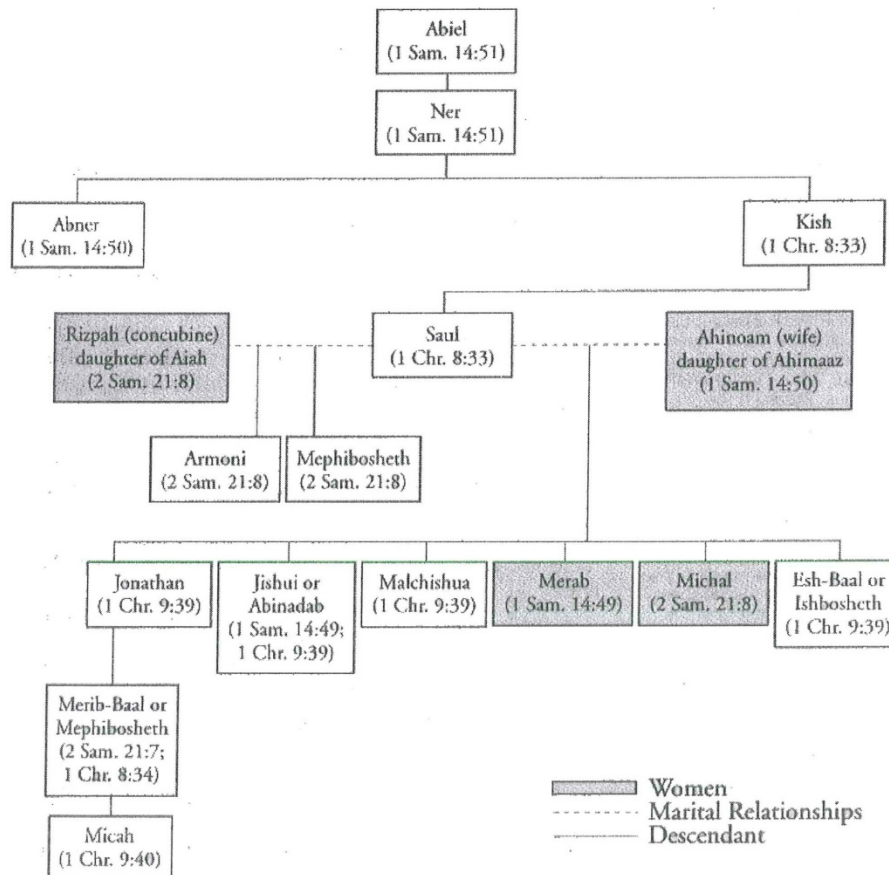
Bottom line: Are you living your life with the end in mind?

II. The death of Saul and Jonathan (1 Sam. 31:1-13)

- A. The Philistines have "turned the tables" on Saul and his army. Compare 1 Sam. 14:22 with 1 Sam. 31:1. Three of Saul's four sons are killed (Ish-bosheth may not have been on the battlefield. His first appearance is in 2 Sam. 2:8)

THE FAMILY TREE OF SAUL

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- B. Saul is wounded by the Philistines archers and asks his armor bearer to "finish him off." He will not do so, so Saul commits suicide (vs.4).
1. After 40 years as King, he dies just a few miles away from where started. He failed to substantively expand the kingdom.
 2. He essentially wrote his own epitaph (1 Sam. 26:21) "I have played the fool."
 - a. Neglected his godly friends (ignored Samuel)
 - b. Disobeys in small matters (bringing back spoil)
 - c. Covers his disobedience (blames the people)
 - d. Allowed jealousy to master him (he hates David)
 - e. Turns from God to "spiritists" (witch of Endor) see 1 Chron. 10:13.
 3. To the end, he is concerned about his image (compare his death wish to that of Abimelech's in Judges 9:54)
- C. There is an interesting analogy between Saul's death and the death of Christ.
1. Saul's death appeared to be the end of all national hope.
 2. With Saul's death it seemed that the adversary had won.
 3. His death paved the way for an entirely new plan of operation (David's kingly line).
 4. His death ended an era of failure.

(adapted from "*David: A Man of Passion and Destiny*")

- D. There are no details regarding Jonathan's death

III. David's reaction to their death (2 Sam. 1:1-27)

- A. The "tale bearer" is killed (vs. 13-16)
- B. David mourns (vs. 11-12)
- C. David writes a lament for Saul and Jonathan (a powerful and passionate piece of poetry)
 Note: other Old Testament laments (Jer. 22:18, 34:15, Ezek. 28:12-19, 32:2-15 and 2 Sam 3:33-34 (for Abner))
- D. The lament might be outlined as follows:
 - 1:19 Jonathan (unnamed)
 - 1:20 Both men (unnamed)
 - 1:21 Saul (named)
 - 1:22-23 Jonathan and Saul (both named)

1:24 Saul (named)

1:25-26 Jonathan (named)

1:27 Both men (unnamed)

E. These deaths profoundly impacted David's life. See 2 Sam. 4:5-12

IV. So what? Learning to die is part of living

"The man who loves life lives a fuller and better life because he has put death in its proper place." Felix Marti-Ibanez.

Living with the end in mind...

A. Provides direction for life (Matt. 6:33)

"A person walks a shorter distance when he measures backwards from his desired goal to the point where he is." (*Home Before Dark*, p.17)

B. Recognizing that others will follow, it motivates a desire to serve others. (Luke 10:36-37)

C. Underscores the importance of detachment

"Not my will..." (Luke 22:42)

D. Allows me to embrace death as a door not an end. The resurrection of Christ makes it possible to look forward to eternity (2 Tim. 4:8)

Discussion Questions:

1. How did David react to Saul's death? Did his reaction surprise you? Is there anything in that situation that we could apply in our own lives?
2. What are your thoughts about dying? Are you working on your legacy?