

Life Lessons from 1400 B.C.E. By Carl McMurray

In my reading this week I was considering the first chapter of Second Samuel and David's reaction to the news of Saul's death. I couldn't help but notice a couple of things that fairly jumped off the page at me. Consider if you will...

David's respect for Saul. Although humble in the beginning, I think I can safely say that King Saul had degenerated in his spirituality and allowed carnal motivations to rule him and his life. He was no longer a good man, especially where David was concerned. For almost twenty years previous to this account he had been trying to kill David. He hadn't been trying to ruin his reputation, take his job, or make him look bad in front of others. He had been trying to destroy the man. Yet at his death, David continued to refer to him as "the Lord's anointed." He was "God's man." As such, David punished the man who had claimed to kill his enemy.

I believe the above to be an indication of David's respect for God, not Saul. Saul was not David's choice for King—he was the Lord's anointed. Surely in politically charged climates where people choose their leaders by majority votes and large segments of the population are going to be fooled, defeated, or disenfranchised there is a lesson here for us. Do we believe Romans 13? That the authorities are put in place by God and that we should submit to them? They may not be OUR choice for leadership, but if we truly believe that Jesus Christ rules in the kingdoms of men, we should offer up our respect for the office and the authority and guard our tongues against slander lest we be found arguing against God's plan or God's man.

The other thing I note about this occasion is the fate of the Amalekite messenger. The previous chapter tells the story of Saul's death and indicates that he lied about killing the king. That was just a story that this body-robbing scoundrel told to ingratiate himself with David. His plan backfired because he did not understand the respect that David had for the workings of God. The Amalekite lost his life as punishment for his self-confessed wrong.

What do we learn? Only that we need to be very careful about telling tales that we think will curry favor with those we speak to. Better to speak truth, and as the saying goes, let the chips fall where they may. If the Amalekite had done this he might have gained a warm meal instead of losing his life.

God's book truly is a timeless book of life lessons for every culture and every person.