

**1Chronicles 10:1** ¶ Now the Philistines fought against Israel; and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa.

**1Chronicles 10:2** And the Philistines followed hard after Saul, and after his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Malchishua, the sons of Saul.

**1Chronicles 10:3** And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him, and he was wounded of the archers.

The historian starts with the death of Saul. It seems his purpose is to focus on the royal line of David, while the books of Kings include the kings of both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms. The following account is basically a repeat of 1Samuel 31.

The Philistines and Israel are at war. The men of Israel were overmatched and fled before the Philistines, many of them falling down dead on the slopes of mount Gilboa.

It seems that the Philistines were able to zero in on Saul and his sons—Jonathan, Abinadab and Malchishua. Fighting was fierce and Saul was severely and likely mortally wounded by enemy archers; his three sons had already been killed.

Guzik provides this information about the Philistines: “The Philistines were an immigrant people from the military aristocracy of the island of Crete. Small numbers of Philistines were in the land at the time of Abraham; but they only came in force soon after Israel came to Canaan from Egypt. They were organized into five city-states. Archaeologists tell us two other things about the Philistines: they were hard drinkers, and they were the first in the region to effectively use iron, and they made the most of it.”

**1Chronicles 10:4** Then said Saul to his armourbearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come and abuse me. But his armourbearer would not; for he was sore afraid. So Saul took a sword, and fell upon it.

**1Chronicles 10:5** And when his armourbearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise on the sword, and died.

**1Chronicles 10:6** So Saul died, and his three sons, and all his house died together.

**1Chronicles 10:7** And when all the men of Israel that *were* in the valley saw that they fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, then they forsook their cities, and fled: and the Philistines came and dwelt in them.

Saul knew that the enemy would want to torture him further, so he asked his armor bearer to kill him with a thrust from his sword. The armor bearer was too afraid and refused. Saul then took his own sword and committed suicide rather than risk further torture. When the armor bearer saw that his king was dead, he also committed suicide.

Some question whether this account of Saul’s death tells the whole story because of the tale recorded in the first chapter of 2Samuel told by the Amalekite that

reported the death of Saul and Jonathan to David. Personally, I believe the account in this chapter. I believe the young man who reported to David assumed that he would be rewarded if he declared that he had killed Saul since he had sought to kill David.

Saul and his three sons died on the same day.

When the Israelites on the other side of the Jezreel Valley saw that Saul's men were in retreat and that Saul and his sons were dead, they also fled. The Philistines then took possession of the vacated cities.

**1Chronicles 10:8 ¶ And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his sons fallen in mount Gilboa.**

**1Chronicles 10:9 And when they had stripped him, they took his head, and his armour, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to carry tidings unto their idols, and to the people.**

**1Chronicles 10:10 And they put his armour in the house of their gods, and fastened his head in the temple of Dagon.**

On the next day the Philistines came to take the spoil from the dead soldiers of Israel and discovered the bodies of Saul and his three sons on Mount Gilboa. They cut off the head of the king and stripped off his armor to send throughout the land of the Philistines to announce their victory. They put King Saul's armor in the house of their false god Ashteroth and fastened his head to the wall of Dagon's temple in Bethshan. According to Kings, they fastened the bodies of Saul and his sons to the wall of the city.

**1Chronicles 10:11 And when all Jabeshgilead heard all that the Philistines had done to Saul,**

**1Chronicles 10:12 They arose, all the valiant men, and took away the body of Saul, and the bodies of his sons, and brought them to Jabesh, and buried their bones under the oak in Jabesh, and fasted seven days.**

When the men of Jabeshgilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, some of their bravest men went at night to retrieve the bodies of Saul and his sons from the wall of Bethshan. The account in 1Samuel tells us that they burned the bodies before burying the bones under a tree at Jabesh. They then fasted for seven days to mourn the deaths of the king and his sons.

JFB provides some insight: "Considering that Beth-shan is an hour and a half's distance, and by a narrow upland passage, to the west of the Jordan (the whole being a journey from Jabesh-gilead of about ten miles), they must have made all haste to travel thither to carry off the headless bodies and return to their own side of the Jordan in the course of a single night."

**1Chronicles 10:13 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;**

**1Chronicles 10:14** And enquired not of the LORD: therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse.

What a sad end to the life of a man that had begun so well. He persisted in his rebellion against the LORD's authority, so He killed him and gave the kingdom to David, son of Jesse.

I would love to be able to say with Paul:

*2 Timothy 4:7-8 "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."*

Though I certainly don't expect to have earned anywhere near as many rewards as the Apostle Paul, I do hope to have some—and I think the crown that is given to those that "love His appearing" is one for which I will qualify.