

Teaching Plan  
EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Date: June 3, 2018  
Lesson Title: "Respected"  
Lesson Passage: 2 Samuel 1:22-27;2:1-7

ABOUT THIS LESSON

The lesson passage begins with a portion of David's lament over Saul and Jonathan, who have been killed in battle (2 Sam. 1:22-27). David's respect for Saul (the king who had tried to kill him countless times) is echoed once again when he commends the people of Jabesh-Gilead for rescuing Saul's body from the Philistines and giving him a proper burial (2 Sam. 2:5-6).

TEACHING/LEARNING GOALS

- (1) Explain the circumstances in which David began his reign as king.
- (2) Explain why David was so grateful to the men of Jabesh-Gilead.

BEGINNING THE LESSON

To introduce the lesson, read the first verse of the Lesson Passage, 2 Samuel 1:22. (The RSV reads, "From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and the sword of Saul returned not empty.") Then share these observations: (1) To interpret the Bible correctly, we must *know the context* in which a passage is written. For instance, this verse is part of a passage in which David is lamenting the deaths of King Saul and his son Jonathan. (Refer to the beginning of the passage in 2 Sam. 1:17.) (2) A second important principle is to *recognize the role of figurative language* in Bible interpretation. (For example, verse 1:22 means "Jonathan and Saul killed many enemies with their weapons.")

TEACHING PROCEDURES

1. *Review the historical setting for the lesson passage by describing three scenes, using a map to indicate the locations:*

**(1) SCENE 1, ON MOUNT GILBOA (I Sam. 31:1-6):** After a fierce battle with the Philistines, Saul and his army of Israelites retreated to Mt. Gilboa. Three of Saul's sons, including Jonathan, were slain and Saul was badly wounded (1 Sam. 31:2-3). Since he feared falling into the hands of the enemy more than he feared death, Saul committed suicide (31:4-6).

**(2) SCENE 2, IN BETHSHAN:** The Philistines desecrated the bodies of Saul and his sons, displaying them on the city wall (I Sam. 31:8). But brave men from Jabesh-gilead carried out a daring mission by night, rescuing the bodies of Saul and his sons, and gave them a proper burial. After becoming king, David praises the men of Jabesh-gilead, commending them for their loyalty to Saul and seeking their loyalty to him, their new king (2 Sam. 2:4b-7).

**(3) SCENE 3, IN ZIKLAG**--Ziklag, David's headquarters at the time of Saul's death, was three days journey from Mt. Gilboa, where Saul and his sons died. Here a young soldier reports the deaths of Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam. 1:2,4) and gets himself killed for claiming responsibility for Saul's death (vv. 6,14-15).

#### TEACHING PROCEDURES

1. *Observe that, although Saul has been a bitter enemy who has tried to kill David on several occasions, David grieved over the deaths of Saul and Jonathan because the King was God's anointed and Jonathan was a beloved friend. Note that David's lamentation (a funeral song) begins at 2 Samuel 1:17 and continues through 2 Samuel 1:27.*

2. Explain 2 Sam. 1:22: This verse praises the prowess of Saul and Jonathan as warriors: (1) The "blood of the slain" and the "fat of the mighty" refers to the bodies of the enemy soldiers who had been slain by them. NOTE: Since the fat and blood from animals was to be offered as a sacrifice to God, according to Levitical law, the killing of these enemies probably was understood as a sacrificial offering. (2) "The bow of Jonathan did not turn back" means that Jonathan did not return from battle without having killed his enemies, and "the sword of Saul returned not empty" means that Saul's sword was not returned to its scabbard unstained by the blood of enemies.

3. *Note that 2 Sam. 1:23 refers to the faithful relationship between Saul and his son Jonathan: "In life and in death they were not divided" means "They spent their lives together, and they were still together when they died."*

4. *With reference to 2 Sam. 1:24, observe that in Old Testament culture it was primarily the job of women to mourn for the dead; and, in this verse, they are called upon to make a public display of their grief for Saul in remembrance of his goodness to them in the past.*

5. Point out that Jonathan is the subject of vv. 25-26: (1) He is one of the brave soldiers who were killed in the midst of battle (v. 25). (2) Verse 26 recalls the close relationship between David and Jonathan (*let someone read 1 Sam. 23:16-18*). NOTE: Cynical readers have suggested that the wording of v. 26 implies a homosexual relationship between David and Jonathan, but this ignores the fact that many non-biblical texts from the ancient Near East show that kings who were political allies were said to "love" one another. And the wording, "the love of women" does not mean "love for women." Rather, it refers to the depth of love a wife has for her husband and a mother for her children.

#### CLOSING THE LESSON

Observe that 2 Samuel 2:4a marks a pivotal event in biblical history: The "house of Judah" refers to all the descendants of Judah, the fourth son of Jacob. Later in Jewish history they combined with the tribe of Benjamin to make up the kingdom of Judah, after its separation from the northern kingdom (Israel). Now that King Saul was dead, they anointed David as their new king.