

## 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 31

Verses 1 – 7

Now the Philistines were fighting against Israel, and the men of Israel fled from the Philistines but fell fatally wounded on Mount Gilboa. <sup>2</sup> And the Philistines also overtook Saul and his sons, and the Philistines killed Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchi-shua, the sons of Saul. <sup>3</sup> The battle went heavily against Saul, and the archers found him; and he was gravely wounded by the archers. <sup>4</sup> Then Saul said to his armor bearer, “Draw your sword and pierce me through with it, otherwise these uncircumcised *Philistines* will come and pierce me through, and abuse me.” But his armor bearer was unwilling, because he was very fearful. So Saul took his sword and fell on it. <sup>5</sup> When his armor bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his sword and died with him. <sup>6</sup> So Saul died with his three sons, his armor bearer, and all his men on that day together. <sup>7</sup> Now when the people of Israel who were on the other side of the valley, with those who were beyond the Jordan, saw that the men of Israel had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, they abandoned the cities and fled; then the Philistines came and settled in them.

Now the Philistines were fighting against Israel, and the men of Israel fled from the Philistines but fell fatally wounded on Mount Gilboa.

See pic3105 thru 3107



Here we can see the Jezreel Valley with Mount Gilboa in the background.

This picture was taken from the top of Mount Gilboa looking down on the Jezreel Valley.



The Jezreel Valley, the bread basket of Israel stretched from The Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River.



**<sup>2</sup> And the Philistines also overtook Saul and his sons, and the Philistines killed Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchi-shua, the sons of Saul.**

Saul had 6 children, 4 sons and 2 daughters.

Ish-Bosheth, his eldest son, probably stayed home.

Jonathan died along with his two other brothers.

It's really sad that Jonathan, such a good son, had to die with his less than deserving father but war is a cruel part of life and it takes the life of many good men.

The following are just two examples where Saul wanted /tried to kill Johnathan

1. See 1 Samuel 14:43- 46

**<sup>43</sup> So Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell me what you have done." And Jonathan told him, and said, "I did indeed taste a little honey with the end of the staff that was in my hand. Here I am, I must die!" <sup>44</sup> And Saul said, "May God do the same to me and more also, for you shall certainly die, Jonathan!" <sup>45</sup> But the people said to Saul, "Must Jonathan die, he who has brought about this great victory in Israel? Far from it! As the Lord lives, not *even* a hair of his head shall fall to the ground, because he has worked with God this day." So the people rescued Jonathan and he did not die. <sup>46</sup> Then Saul went up from pursuing the Philistines, and the Philistines went to their own place.**

The men of Saul's army stood up for Jonathan when his own father thought he should die.

2. See 1 Samuel 20:33

**<sup>30</sup> Then Saul's anger burned against Jonathan, and he said to him, "You son of a perverse, rebellious woman! Do I not know that you are choosing the son of Jesse to your own shame, and to the shame of your mother's nakedness?" <sup>31</sup> For, as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, neither you nor your kingdom will be established. Now then, send *men* and bring him to me, for he is doomed to die!" <sup>32</sup> But Jonathan replied to his father Saul and said to him, "Why must he be put to death? What has he done?" <sup>33</sup> Then Saul hurled his spear at him to strike and kill him; so Jonathan knew that his father had decided to put David to death.**

Saul tried to kill Jonathan for being a friend to David.

<sup>3</sup> The battle went heavily against Saul, and the archers found him; and he was gravely wounded by the archers. <sup>4</sup> Then Saul said to his armor bearer, “Draw your sword and pierce me through with it, otherwise these uncircumcised *Philistines* will come and pierce me through, and abuse me.” But his armor bearer was unwilling, because he was very fearful. So Saul took his sword and fell on it. <sup>6</sup> So Saul died with his three sons, his armor bearer, and all his men on that day together.

The armor-bearer would not kill the king even though he had been ordered to do it. The armor bearer probably refused to do it for the same reason that David refused to kill Saul on two different occasions. Saul was The Lord's Anointed.

There are only 5 suicides recorded in the entire Bible.

The other three are the following:

1. Ahithophel See 2 Samuel 17:23

<sup>23</sup> Now when Ahithophel saw that his advice had not been followed, he saddled *his donkey* and set out and went to his home, to his city, and set his house in order, and hanged himself; so he died and was buried in his father's grave.

2. Zimri See 1 Kings 16:18

<sup>18</sup> When Zimri saw that the city was taken, he went into the citadel of the king's house and burned the king's house over himself with fire, and died, <sup>19</sup> because of his sins which he committed, doing evil in the sight of the Lord, walking in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin which he committed, misleading Israel into sin.

3. Judas Iscariot Matthew 27:5

<sup>5</sup> And he threw the pieces of silver into the temple sanctuary and left; and he went away and hanged himself.

<sup>7</sup> Now when the people of Israel who were on the other side of the valley, with those who were beyond the Jordan, saw that the men of Israel had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, they abandoned the cities and fled; then the Philistines came and settled in them.

The land possessed by Philistia and Israel had fluctuated thru the last 100 years. There were many conflicts between these two nations and both nations had times when they were the victor and possessed the land.

Verses 8 – 13

<sup>8</sup> It came about on the next day, when the Philistines came to strip those killed, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. <sup>9</sup> They cut off his head and stripped off his weapons, and sent *them* throughout the land of the Philistines, to bring the good news to the house of their idols and to the people. <sup>10</sup> They put his weapons in the temple of Ashtaroth, and they nailed his body to the wall of Beth-shan. <sup>11</sup> Now when the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, <sup>12</sup> all the valiant men got up and walked all night, and they took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-shan, and they came to Jabesh and burned them there. <sup>13</sup> And they took their bones and buried them under the tamarisk tree in Jabesh, and fasted for seven days.

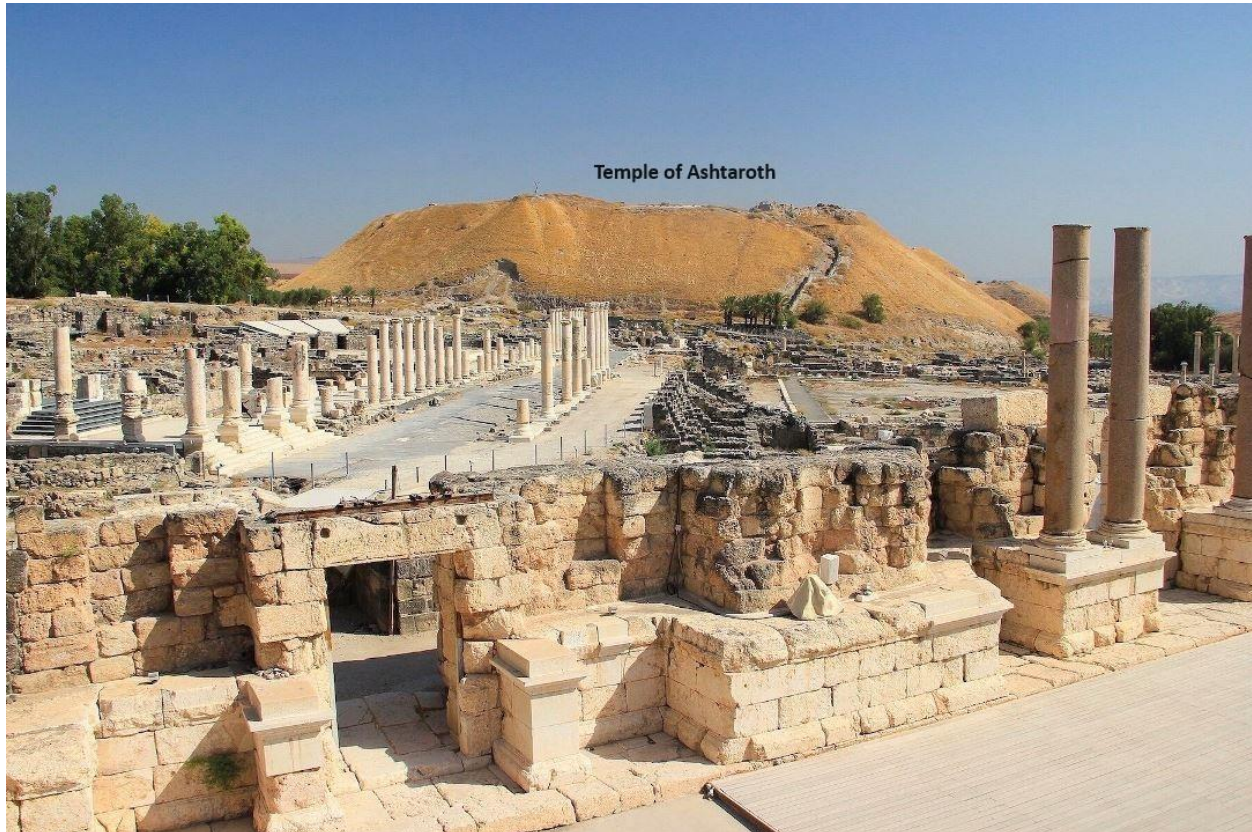
<sup>10</sup> They put his weapons in the temple of Ashtaroth, and they nailed his body to the wall of Beth-shan.

See Pic 3110



The city of Beth-shan has been excavated by a number of archeologists during the last century.

See pic 3115



The temple of Ashtaroth is located on the top of the mount close to the city.

They fastened the bodies of Saul and his sons to the wall of Beth-shan to shame the Israelites.

**<sup>11</sup> Now when the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, <sup>12</sup> all the valiant men got up and walked all night, and they took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-shan, and they came to Jabesh and burned them there. <sup>13</sup> And they took their bones and buried them under the tamarisk tree in Jabesh, and fasted for seven days.**

At the beginning of Saul's reign he delivered the Jabesh-Gileadites from the Ammonites who had threatened to make them slaves and put their right eyes out.

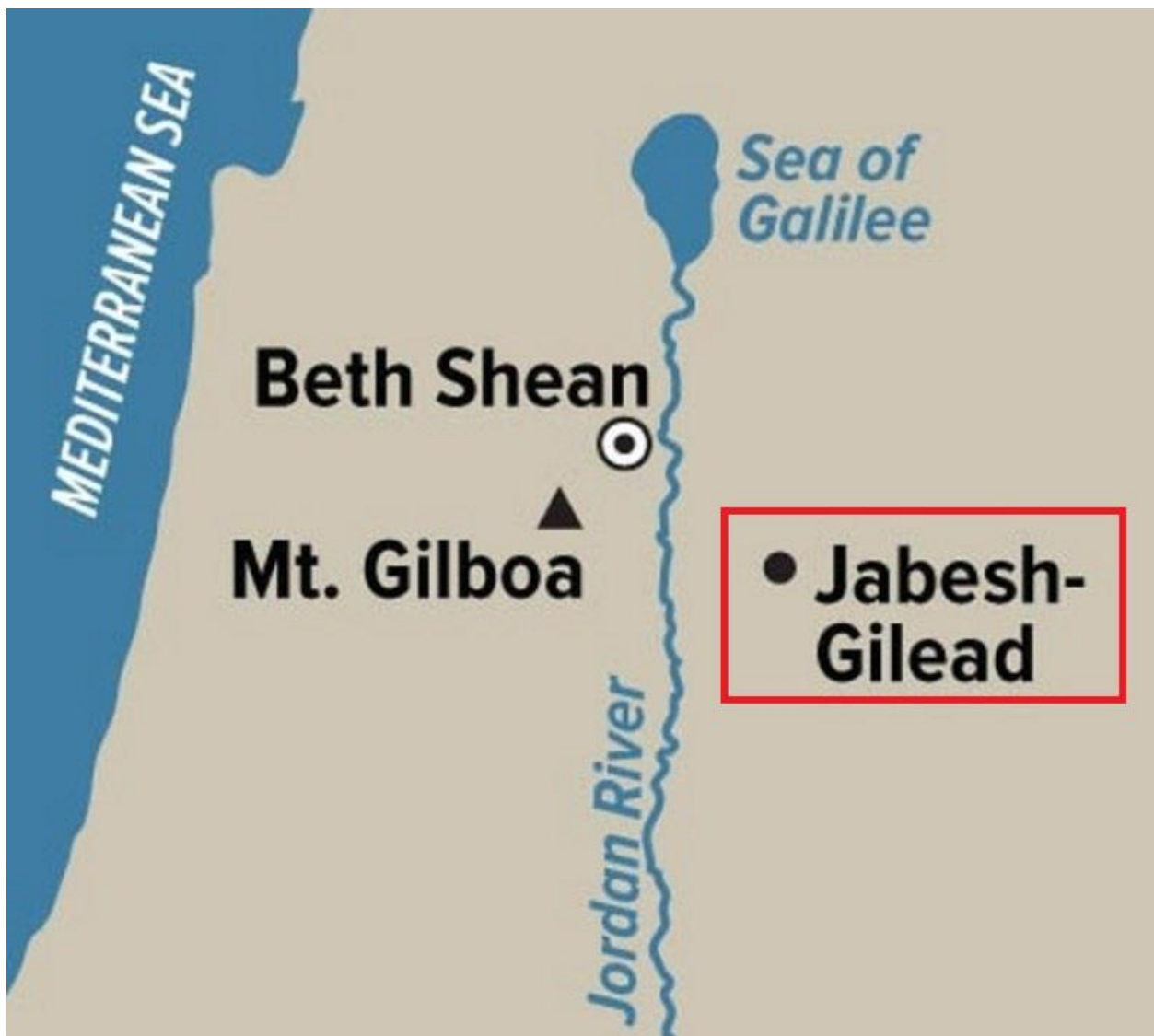
See 1 Samuel 11:1- 2

Now Nahash the Ammonite went up and besieged Jabesh-gilead; and all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, “Make a covenant with us and we will serve you.”<sup>2</sup> But Nahash the Ammonite said to them, “I will make *it* with you on this condition, that I will gouge out the right eye of every one of you, and *thereby* I will inflict a disgrace on all Israel.”

So these valiant men from Jabesh-Gilead walked all night to Beth-Shean and recovered the bodies of Saul and his sons. When they got back home to Jabesh-Gilead they burned the bodies of the men.

Their bodies were consumed by the fire but not their bones. So they took the bones and buried them under the tamarisk tree in Jabesh.

See map 3120



It is interesting that Saul sat under a Tamarisk tree in Gibeah (possibly at his place for conducting official business). Saul did not have a palace like David & Solomon.

He may have ordered the death of the priests from Nob while under that tree. Is so, it is ironic that his bones were buried under such a tree.

See 1 Samuel 22:6, 16-19

**<sup>6</sup> Then Saul heard that David and the men who were with him had been discovered. Now Saul was in Gibeah, sitting under the tamarisk tree on the height with his spear in his hand, and all his servants were standing in front of him.**

**<sup>16</sup> But the king said, “You shall certainly die, Ahimelech, you and all your father’s household!” <sup>17</sup> And the king said to the guards who were attending him, “Turn around and put the priests of the Lord to death, because their hand also is with David and because they knew that he was fleeing and did not inform me.” But the servants of the king were unwilling to reach out with their hands to attack the priests of the Lord. <sup>18</sup> Then the king said to Doeg, “You, turn around and attack the priests!” And Doeg the Edomite turned around and attacked the priests, and he killed on that day eighty-five men who wore the linen ephod. <sup>19</sup> He also struck Nob the city of the priests with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and infants; *he also struck oxen, donkeys, and sheep with the edge of the sword.***

Some time passed between verse 6 and verses 16 thru 19, while the priests were summoned and came to Saul, but it is quite possible that he met with the priests and gave the order to have them killed while he was under the tamarisk tree.