

I Samuel 26-31: The Death of King Saul

INTRODUCTION.

- A. In our previous study of I Samuel, we examined the following:
 - 1. We took a look at Saul's pursuit of David.
 - 2. We saw Saul have priests killed because they had helped David.
 - 3. We saw David defeat the Philistines at Keilah.
 - 4. We saw David refuse to take Saul's life when he had the opportunity.
 - 5. We learned of the death of Samuel.
 - 6. We witnessed the events leading up to the marriage of David and Abigail.
- B. With this study, we will begin in I Samuel 26 where we find the Ziphites reporting to King Saul the location of David and his men.

I. KING SAUL RETURNS HOME AND DAVID GOES TO GATH. (26:1 - 31:13)

- A. Chapter 26
 - 1. The Zephites told Saul that David was hiding in the hill of Hachilah. Saul took three thousand men to the Wilderness of Ziph to catch David. When David learned of Saul's presence, he and Abishai went to where Saul and his men were camped. Although Abishai offered to kill Saul, David declined to kill the Lord's anointed. Instead, David took Saul's spear and jug of water and left. (26:1-12)
 - 2. David went to a hill and called out to Saul and his men. David questioned Abner, the commander of Saul's army, as to why he had not guarded Saul. David showed Saul and his men Saul's spear and water jug. (26:13-16)
 - 3. Saul recognized David's voice. David asked Saul why he had sought to kill David. David pleaded with Saul for Saul to stop seeking to kill him. (26:17-20)
 - 4. Saul admitted his guilt in having sinned against David. David returned Saul's spear and water jug. David went on his way and Saul returned to his place. (26:21-25)
- B. Chapter 27
 - 1. David, still fearing Saul, escapes to Gath in the land of the Philistines. He took six hundred men with him. David and his men dwelt with Achish at Gath. When Saul learned that David was in Gath, he sought David no more.

(27:1-4)

2. Upon David's request, Achish gave David and his men the city of Ziklag. David and his men stayed in the land of the Philistines for one year and four months. (From this time forward until the Babylonian captivity, Ziklag belonged to the kings of Judah.) (27:5-7)
3. While David lived in the land of the Philistines, he won the trust of Achish. David and his men raided the Geshurites, the Girzites, and the Amalekites. Any time David and his men raided a city, they would kill the men and women and would bring the spoils back to Achish. (27:8-12)

C. Chapter 28

1. The Philistines gathered their armies together to go to war with Israel. Achish told David that David would go and fight with the Philistines against the Israelites. (28:1-2)
2. When Saul saw the armies of the Philistines, he was afraid. Saul attempted to inquire of the Lord, but the Lord did not answer him. Saul, in a disguise, visited a medium (witch or one familiar with spirits) in the city of En Dor. Saul wanted to talk to Samuel. Samuel, being allowed by the Lord, appeared to Saul. Samuel told Saul that because of Saul's disobedience, the Lord had become Saul's enemy. Samuel told Saul that, on the next day, Saul and his sons would die in battle and the army of Israel would be delivered into the hands of the Philistines. (28:3-20)
3. Saul being weakened from hunger, fell to the ground. The woman offered to make some food for Saul. Finally, Saul agreed to eat. Afterward, Saul and his men left. (28:21-25)

D. Chapter 29

1. When the Philistines gathered together at Aphek, the lords of the Philistines saw David and his men. The lords of the Philistines objected to David and his men going into battle with them, fearing they would turn against the Philistines. (29:1-5)
2. Achish asked David and his men to return to Ziklag, so as not to displease the lords of the Philistines. David and his men returned to Ziklag. The Philistines went to Jezreel. (29:6-11)

E. Chapter 30

1. When David and his men returned to Ziklag, they found their city burned to the ground. The Amalekites had invaded Ziklag and taken their all the inhabitants captive, including David's two wives. David and his men wept

greatly. David inquired of the Lord if he should pursue the Amalekites. The Lord told David to pursue and overtake the Amalekites. (30:1-8)

2. David and his men came to the Brook Besor. While two hundred men stayed behind, David and four hundred men crossed over. Having found a servant of an Amalekite, an Egyptian, David learned where the Amalekites had camped. David and his men went and attacked. They killed all but four hundred men (these fled on camels), and retrieved every last bit of their possessions taken by the Amalekites. (30:9-25)
3. After returning to Ziklag, David sent some of the spoil to the elders of Judah, his friends. (30:26-31)

F. Chapter 31

1. The army of the Philistines fought against Israel. The men of Israel fled and were killed. The Philistines also killed Saul's sons, Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua. During the battle, King Saul was wounded. Not wanting to be killed by the Philistines, Saul took his own life. (31:1-7)
2. When the Philistines went to strip the dead, they found the bodies of Saul and his sons. They cut off Saul's head and stripped his armor. The Philistines put Saul's armor in the temple of the Ashtoreths. They fastened Saul's body to the wall of Beth Shan. (31:8-10)
3. The valiant men of Jabesh Gilead, having heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, went and took back the bodies of Saul and his sons. They burned the bodies and buried their bones in Jabesh. (31:11-13)

II. LESSONS LEARNED:

A. We must have respect for the decisions of the Lord.

1. Although Saul pursued David to kill him, David still had respect for the fact that the Lord had anointed Saul as king. (I Samuel 26:7-12)
2. As followers of God, we must also respect the Lord's decisions. For instance, there are certain areas of our lives where the Lord has already made decisions for us. We must choose, as David did, to respect the Lord's decisions. For instance:
 - a. The path to salvation has already been decided by the Lord. (I.e., Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Romans 10:9-10)
 - b. Concerning what is right and what is wrong, the Lord has already made those decisions for us. (I.e., Galatians 5:19-23; Colossians 3:5-17)

- c. Concerning the work of the local church, the Lord has decided upon the purpose of the church and the work of the church. (I.e., Evangelism, Edification, Benevolence)
 - d. Concerning the ending of a marriage, the Lord has already made the decision that the marriage shall not be severed, with one exception. (Matthew 5:32; 19:9)
 - e. Many, many more examples could be given which illustrate decisions made by the Lord.
- B. You cannot argue against the decisions of the Lord.
- 1. Saul had a hard time accepting the fact that the Lord had rejected him. Saul still wanted to consult with the Lord regarding the Philistines. The Lord's rejection of Saul was made clear one last time. (I Samuel 28:5-6, 15-19)
 - 2. If we go against the decisions of the Lord, we will find ourselves facing eternal death.
 - a. We will be judged by the words of Jesus. (John 12:47-48)
 - b. We will be judged according to our works. (Revelation 20:12-15)
 - c. Paul said that we all shall give account. (Romans 14:8-12)
- C. When we admit to a wrong doing, let us fully turn away from it.
- 1. Saul acknowledged his sin against David. However, it would seem that Saul may have changed his mind and was willing to pursue David until he learned that David had gone to Gath. (I Samuel 26:21 - 27:4)
 - 2. When we repent of a wrong, we must turn away.
 - a. John taught the necessity of bearing "fruits worthy of repentance." (Luke 3:7-14)
 - b. Paul taught the Gentiles "that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance." (Acts 26:19-20)
 - c. The city of Nineveh is an example of the guilty turning away from their sins. (Jonah 3:10)
 - d. The man who would love life and see good days must "turn away from evil and do good." (I Peter 3:10-12)
- D. Let us not fight for the wrong side.
- 1. David was going to fight on the side of the Philistines against his own people. However, due to the Philistines doubting his loyalty, David found himself in

a position to save the inhabitants of Ziklag. (I Samuel 29:1 - 30:31)

2. While this may be somewhat of a stretch, there is a relative lesson that we can learn from this example.
 - a. Satan has people who are on his side.
 - (1) There are those who pass themselves off as “ministers of light,” but who are actually working for the devil. (II Corinthians 11:12-15)
 - (2) These helpers of Satan will try to lead you away. (II Peter 2:18-22)
 - b. We must take care as to whose side we are on. Do our actions reflect a heart that is working for the Lord, or a heart that is working against the Lord?

CONCLUSION.

- A. As we close this lesson, let us ask ourselves the following questions:
 1. Like David, do we have respect for the Lord’s decisions?
 2. Do we argue against the decisions of the Lord?
 3. When we admit to a wrong, do we fully turn away?
 4. On whose side are we fighting: The Lord’s side or the devil’s side?
- B. Learn from the lessons of David and King Saul, and set your life right with God today.

I Samuel 26-31: The Death of King Saul -- January 12, 2003 -- File # 672 - I Samuel
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