

1 Samuel 30 - David's Return to Ziklag; Pursuit of the Amalekites; Amalekites Defeated; David Divides the Spoil

IV. Transition from the house of Saul to the house of David (1 Samuel 16:1—31:13)

(4) Epilogue (30:1—31:13)

(A) David defeats the Amalekites at Ziklag (30:1-31)

1 Samuel 30

(4) Epilogue (30:1—31:13)

(A) David defeats the Amalekites at Ziklag (30:1-31)

1 Then it happened, when David and his men came to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had carried out an attack on the Negev and on Ziklag, and had overthrown Ziklag and burned it with fire;

1 Then it happened when David and his men came to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had made a raid on the Negev and on Ziklag, and had overthrown Ziklag and burned it with fire;

1 When David and his men came to Ziklag on the third day, the Amalekites had raided the Negev and Ziklag. They had attacked Ziklag and set it on fire.

1 And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire;

- Spared from battle against Israel, David and his men arrived home after a three-day march

2 and they took captive the women *and all* who were in it, from the small to the great, without killing anyone, and drove *them* off and went their way.

2 and they took captive the women *and all* who were in it, both small and great, without killing anyone, and carried *them* off and went their way.

2 They took the women in it captive, from young to old. They did not kill anyone. Instead, they carried them off and went on their way.

2 And had taken the women captives, that were therein: they slew not any, either great or small, but carried them away, and went on their way.

- The Amalekites, whom David had previously raided (27:8), took advantage of David's absence to retaliate
- They plundered both Philistine and Judahite territory (Cf. v16)
- The captives were probably intended for sale as slaves in the markets of Egypt

3 When David and his men came to the city, behold, it was burned with fire, and their wives, their sons, and their daughters had been taken captive.

3 When David and his men came to the city, behold, it was burned with fire, and their wives and their sons and their daughters had been taken captive.

3 David and his men came to the town, and it had been burned down. Their wives, their sons, and their daughters had been taken captive.

3 So David and his men came to the city, and, behold, it was burned with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives.

4 Then David and the people who were with him raised their voices and wept until there was no strength in them to weep.

4 Then David and the people who were with him lifted their voices and wept until there was no strength in them to weep.

4 Then David and the people who were with him lifted their voices and cried until they had no more strength left to cry.

4 Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep.

5 Now David's two wives had been taken captive, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite.

5 Now David's two wives had been taken captive, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite.

5 David's two wives, Ahinoam from Jezreel and Abigail, Nabal's former wife, had been captured.

5 And David's two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite.

6 Also, David was in great distress because the people spoke of stoning him, for all the people were embittered, each one because of his sons and his daughters. But David felt strengthened in the LORD his God.

6 Moreover David was greatly distressed because the people spoke of stoning him, for all the people were embittered, each one because of his sons and his daughters. But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God.

6 David was in great danger because all the people were bitter because of their sons and daughters, and they were talking about stoning him. But David found strength in the LORD his God.

6 And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God.

- David's men rightly blamed their leader for this terrible loss; they even talked about stoning David

- In his distress, David, as usual, strengthened himself in the Lord by relying on and inquiring of Him

— From the Psalms we know that David often did this by looking back on God's past faithfulness, looking up in prayer, and looking forward to God's promises

David and Saul are both portrayed as people in deep crisis of leadership. The difference in each of their responses is interesting...Saul seeks guidance from a medium, whereas David inquired of the Lord.

At this point, the stories of David and Saul show parallel devastation and despair. Saul was certain of defeat and death. David bore responsibility for his and his men's sorrow and the captivity of their families; his life was again under threat. The difference, though, was in the two men's responses to their crises. Saul fell down in the medium's house, consumed by his own tragedy; his only comfort was the meal the medium prepared for him. David, on the other hand, "found strength in the Lord his God." In God's grace, David was able to see beyond his circumstances to the goodness of the Lord.

7 Then David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, "Please bring me the ephod." So Abiathar brought the ephod to David.

7 Then David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, "Please bring me the ephod." So Abiathar brought the ephod to David.

7 David told Ahimelech's son Abiathar the priest, "Bring me the ephod." So Abiathar brought the ephod to David.

7 And David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod. And Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David.

- David proves his humility by his actions

8 And David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I pursue this band of raiders? Will I overtake them?" And He said to him, "Pursue, for you will certainly overtake them, and you will certainly rescue *everyone*."

8 David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I pursue this band? Shall I overtake them?" And He said to him, "Pursue, for you will surely overtake them, and you will surely rescue

all."

8 David inquired of the LORD: "Shall I pursue this raiding party? Will I overtake them?" The LORD told David, "Pursue them! You will definitely overtake them and rescue the captives."

8 And David enquired at the LORD, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them? And he answered him, Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all.

- The contrast between 1 Sam 28 and 30 is striking: Saul had departed from the Lord and therefore had no divine guidance (28:6,15), while David looked to the Lord for courage and direction (v6-9)

— "Seek the Lord while He may be found" (Is 55:6, NIV) was a warning Saul did not heed

— God enabled David not only to recover all his possessions and people, but also to gather the loot collected by the enemy (Cf. v18-20)

David sought guidance on how to proceed. Humanly, pursuing the Amalekites would seem the only logical course to take, but David, in enemy territory and without his men's confidence, looked for God's direction rather than relying on his feelings, others' expectations, or his own thinking. As believers in our redeemed, but not yet perfected, state, we become humble by recognizing the futility of our own thinking and our lifelong need to seek God's thinking (27:1; Prov 3:5-6; Rom 12:2; 2 Cor 10:3-5).

9 So David left, he and the six hundred men who were with him, and they came to the **brook Besor**, *where some who were left behind stayed.*

9 So David went, he and the six hundred men who were with him, and came to the brook Besor, *where those left behind remained.*

9 So David and 600 men who were with him set out. They came to the Wadi Besor where those who were left behind stayed.

9 So David went, he and the six hundred men that were with him, and came to the brook Besor, where those that were left behind stayed.

- "...brook Besor" - probably the Wadi Ghazzeah, which flows into the Mediterranean Sea south of Ziklag

10 But David pursued, he and four hundred men, for two hundred who were too exhausted to cross the brook Besor stayed *behind.*

10 But David pursued, he and four hundred men, for two hundred who were too exhausted to cross the brook Besor remained *behind.*

10 David and 400 men continued the pursuit, while the 200 men who were too exhausted to cross over the Wadi Besor remained there.

10 But David pursued, he and four hundred men: for two hundred abode behind, which were so faint that they could not go over the brook Besor.

- David divided his troops into two groups as he did against Nabal (25:13): 400 continued the pursuit with David, while 200 who were exhausted after a three-day trek from Aphek to Ziklag, stayed behind

11 Now they found an Egyptian in the field and brought him to David, and gave him bread and he ate, and they provided him water to drink.

11 Now they found an Egyptian in the field and brought him to David, and gave him bread and he ate, and they provided him water to drink.

11 They found an Egyptian man in the field, and they took him to David. They gave him food to eat and provided water for him.

11 And they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David, and gave him bread, and he did eat; and they made him drink water;

12 They also gave him a slice of fig cake and two cakes of raisins, and he ate; then his spirit revived. For he had not eaten bread or drunk water for three days and three nights.

12 They gave him a piece of fig cake and two clusters of raisins, and he ate; then his spirit revived. For he had not eaten bread or drunk water for three days and three nights.

12 They gave him part of a fig cake and two bunches of raisins. After he had eaten, he revived, since he had neither eaten food nor had he drunk water for three days and three nights.

12 And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs, and two clusters of raisins: and when he had eaten, his spirit came again to him: for he had eaten no bread, nor drunk any water, three days and three nights.

- God graciously gave David another opportunity to influence a non-believer for God's glory

13 Then David said to him, "To whom do you belong? And where are you from?" And he said, "I am a young man of Egypt, a servant of an Amalekite; and my master abandoned me when I became sick three days ago.

13 David said to him, "To whom do you belong? And where are you from?" And he said, "I am a young man of Egypt, a servant of an Amalekite; and my master left me behind when I fell sick three days ago.

13 David told him, "To whom do you belong and where are you from?"

The Egyptian replied, "I'm a young Egyptian man, the slave of an Amalekite man. My master abandoned me, because I got sick three days ago.

13 And David said unto him, To whom belongest thou? and whence art thou? And he said, I am a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite; and my master left me, because three days ago I fell sick.

- The life of a sick slave was of little more importance than that of a crippled horse, but David and his men had mercy on him

— They were obviously very angry and ready to kill anyone who had anything to do with the kidnapping of their family members

— To his credit, David did not kill this Egyptian, as he planned to kill Nabal earlier; instead, he treated him kindly, in contrast to the man's Amalekite master

14 We carried out an attack on the **Negev of the Cherethites**, and on **that which belongs to Judah**, and on the Negev of Caleb, and we burned Ziklag with fire."

14 We made a raid on the Negev of the Cherethites, and on that which belongs to Judah, and on the Negev of Caleb, and we burned Ziklag with fire."

14 We raided the Negev of the Cherethites, the territory that belongs to Judah, and the Negev of Caleb, and we set Ziklag on fire."

14 We made an invasion upon the south of the Cherethites, and upon the coast which belongeth to Judah, and upon the south of Caleb; and we burned Ziklag with fire.

- "...Negev of the Cherethites" - this probably refers to the section of the Negev that the Philistines controlled (Cf. Zeph 2:5)

- "...that which belongs to Judah" - the eastern portion of the Negev belonged to Judah

— One part of it belonged to the family of Caleb, and was called Caleb's Negev, to the south of Hebron (25:3; Cf. Joshua 15:13)

15 Then David said to him, "Will you bring me down to this band of raiders?" And he said, "Swear to me by God that you will not kill me or hand me over to my master, and I will bring you down to this band."

15 Then David said to him, "Will you bring me down to this band?" And he said, "Swear to me by God that you will not kill me or deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will bring you down to this band."

15 David asked him, "Will you take me to this raiding party?"

He said, "Swear to me by God that you won't kill me or turn me over to my master, and I'll take you to the raiding party."

15 And David said to him, Canst thou bring me down to this company? And he said, Swear unto me by God, that thou wilt neither kill me, nor deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will bring thee down to this company.

16 Now when he had brought him down, behold, they were dispersed over all the land, eating and drinking and celebrating because of all the great plunder that they had taken

from the land of the Philistines and from the land of Judah.

16 When he had brought him down, behold, they were spread over all the land, eating and drinking and dancing because of all the great spoil that they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from the land of Judah.

16 The Egyptian led him to the camp, and there the Amalekites were spread out over the whole area, eating, drinking, and celebrating with the great amount of spoil they had taken from the territory belonging to the Philistines and to Judah.

16 And when he had brought him down, behold, they were spread abroad upon all the earth, eating and drinking, and dancing, because of all the great spoil that they had taken out of the land of the Philistines, and out of the land of Judah.

17 And David slaughtered them from the twilight until the evening of the next day; and not a man of them escaped, except four hundred young men who rode on camels and fled.

17 David slaughtered them from the twilight until the evening of the next day; and not a man of them escaped, except four hundred young men who rode on camels and fled.

17 David struck them down from twilight until the evening of the next day, and not one of them escaped except for 400 young men who mounted camels and fled.

17 And David smote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day: and there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men, which rode upon camels, and fled.

- Since 400 Amalekites escaped, the same size as David's army in this battle, the Amalekites must have had a much larger army

- A camel was the fastest means of transportation at that time

18 So David recovered all that the Amalekites had taken, and rescued his two wives.

18 So David recovered all that the Amalekites had taken, and rescued his two wives.

18 David rescued everyone whom the Amalekites had captured, including his two wives.

18 And David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away: and David rescued his two wives.

19 And nothing of theirs was missing, whether small or great, sons or daughters, plunder, or anything that they had taken for themselves; David brought *it* all back.

19 But nothing of theirs was missing, whether small or great, sons or daughters, spoil or anything that they had taken for themselves; David brought *it* all back.

19 Nothing of theirs was missing, whether small or large, sons or daughters, spoil, or anything that they had taken for themselves—David brought back everything.

19 And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither spoil, nor any thing that they had taken to them: David recovered all.

- He also took booty from the enemy for his troubles (Cf. v26)

20 So David had captured all the sheep and the cattle *which the people* drove ahead of the *other* livestock, and they said, "This is David's plunder."

20 So David had captured all the sheep and the cattle *which the people* drove ahead of the *other* livestock, and they said, "This is David's spoil."

20 David took all the rest of the sheep and cattle, driving them ahead of their rescued livestock. People said about all this, "This is David's spoil."

20 And David took all the flocks and the herds, which they drove before those other cattle, and said, This is David's spoil.

- David's motive in choosing the sheep and oxen for himself is evident from v26-31

— They were the most acceptable presents he could give to his friends in Judah in exchange for security from the men of Saul and to promote his cause in their midst

21 When David came to the two hundred men who were too exhausted to follow David and had been left behind at the brook Besor, and they went out to meet David and to meet the people who were with him, then David approached the people and greeted them.

21 When David came to the two hundred men who were too exhausted to follow David, who had also been left at the brook Besor, and they went out to meet David and to meet the people who were with him, then David approached the people and greeted them.

21 David came to the 200 men who were too exhausted to follow him and who had been left at the Wadi Besor. They came out to meet David and the people who were with him. As David approached the people, he asked them how they were doing.

21 And David came to the two hundred men, which were so faint that they could not follow David, whom they had made also to abide at the brook Besor: and they went forth to meet David, and to meet the people that were with him: and when David came near to the people, he saluted them.

22 Then all the wicked and worthless men among those who went with David said, "Since they did not go with us, we will not give them any of the spoils that we have recovered, except to every man his wife and his children, so that they may lead *them* away and leave."

22 Then all the wicked and worthless men among those who went with David said, "Because they did not go with us, we will not give them any of the spoil that we have recovered, except to every man his wife and his children, that they may lead *them* away and depart."

22 At this point, all the wicked and worthless men of the group who had gone with David answered, "Because they didn't go with us, we won't give them any of the spoil that we recovered, except that each person may take his wife and his children and go."

22 Then answered all the wicked men and men of Belial, of those that went with David, and said, Because they went not with us, we will not give them ought of the spoil that we have recovered, save to every man his wife and his children, that they may lead them away, and depart.

- The 400 men who had continued on with David, fought the battle with the Amalekites, and retrieved the captives and spoil, grumbled that the 200 who stayed behind should not get any plunder, but take only their wives and children and return to Ziklag

23 But David said, "You must not do so, my brothers, with what the LORD has given us, for He has protected us and handed over to us the band of raiders that came against us.

23 Then David said, "You must not do so, my brothers, with what the LORD has given us, who has kept us and delivered into our hand the band that came against us.

23 David said, "No, you won't do this, my brothers, with what the LORD has given us. He guarded us and gave the raiding party that came against us into our hand.

23 Then said David, Ye shall not do so, my brethren, with that which the LORD hath given us, who hath preserved us, and delivered the company that came against us into our hand.
- David led well by lifting the men's eyes to the source of all things: he proclaimed that God had protected them and delivered the raiding party into their hands

24 And who will listen to you in this matter? For as *is* the share of the one who goes down into the battle, so *shall be* the share of the one who stays by the baggage; they shall share alike."

24 And who will listen to you in this matter? For as his share is who goes down to the battle, so shall his share be who stays by the baggage; they shall share alike."

24 Who will listen to you in this matter? Indeed, the share of those who went down into battle and the share of those who stayed with the supplies will be the same. They'll share alike."

24 For who will hearken unto you in this matter? but as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike.

- David displayed the godly principles of unity, dignity and respect among the body of believers. He also offered the ultimate lesson in stewardship—everything belongs to the Lord.

25 So it has been from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel to this day.

25 So it has been from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel to this day.

25 From that day forward he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel, and it remains to this present day.

25 And it was so from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day.

David had a different viewpoint on the situation than the “wicked and worthless men of the group” (v22), who sought to keep the spoils for themselves rather than share with the 200 who stayed behind: he understood that God had given them this victory; the spoil was not essentially what the combat soldiers had won, but what the Lord had given His people, along with protection (Cf. 1 Cor 3:8; Matt 20:12-15). *Yahweh* was the real deliverer of Israel (Cf. 17:46-47).

Again, this illustrates David’s perception of God’s relation to Israel and to himself, which was so different from Saul’s view. His generous policy of dividing the spoils of war so the non-combatants would receive a portion (v24-31) was in harmony with the Mosaic Law (Num 31:27). This policy further prepared the way for the Judahites’ acceptance of David as Saul’s successor (v26-31).

26 Now when David came to Ziklag, he sent *some* of the spoils to the elders of Judah, to his friends, saying, “Behold, a gift for you from the spoils of the enemies of the LORD:

26 Now when David came to Ziklag, he sent *some* of the spoil to the elders of Judah, to his friends, saying, “Behold, a gift for you from the spoil of the enemies of the LORD:

26 David came to Ziklag, and he sent some of the spoil to the elders of Judah, and to his friends, telling them, “Look, this is a gift for you from the spoil of the enemies of the LORD

26 And when David came to Ziklag, he sent of the spoil unto the elders of Judah, even to his friends, saying, Behold a present for you of the spoil of the enemies of the LORD;

- David also shared the spoils with Judah’s elders in places that had also suffered from past Amalekite raids

— David was no longer using plunder to prop up a lie, but to make reparations and promote justice for those who had previously been wronged

— What we do with what God puts into our hands matters. Our deeds can show others what is true about pleasing God.

27 to those who were in Bethel, to those who were in Ramoth of the Negev, to those who were in Jattir,

27 to those who were in Bethel, and to those who were in Ramoth of the Negev, and to those who were in Jattir,

27 in Bethel, Ramoth-negev, Jattir,

27 To them which were in Bethel, and to them which were in south Ramoth, and to them which were in Jattir,

28 to those who were in Aroer, to those who were in Siphmoth, to those who were in Eshtemoa,

28 and to those who were in Aroer, and to those who were in Siphmoth, and to those who were in Eshtemoa,

28 Aroer, Siphmoth, Eshtemoa,

28 And to them which were in Aroer, and to them which were in Siphmoth, and to them which were in Eshtemoa,

- Siphmoth is not elsewhere mentioned, but Zabdi, the Shiphmite (1 Chr 27:27), who was over David's wine cellars, was evidently a native of the place

29 to those who were in Racal, to those who were in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, to those who were in the cities of the Kenites,

29 and to those who were in Racal, and to those who were in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, and to those who were in the cities of the Kenites,

29 Rachal, in the Jerahmeelite towns, in the Kenite towns,

29 And to them which were in Rachal, and to them which were in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, and to them which were in the cities of the Kenites,

30 to those who were in Hormah, to those who were in Bor-ashan, to those who were in Athach,

30 and to those who were in Hormah, and to those who were in Bor-ashan, and to those who were in Athach,

30 in Hormah, Bor-ashan, Athach,

30 And to them which were in Hormah, and to them which were in Chorashan, and to them which were in Athach,

31 to those who were in Hebron, and to all the places where David himself and his men walked."

31 and to those who were in Hebron, and to all the places where David himself and his men were accustomed to go."

31 Hebron, and for all those places where David and his men had frequented."

31 And to them which were in Hebron, and to all the places where David himself and his men were wont to haunt.

- Hebron was known in the days of Abraham as Kirjath-arba. Today it is called El-Khalil, "The Friend," an abbreviation for "the city of the Friend of God" (Cf. 2 Chr 20:7; Is 41:8;

James 2:23).

This chapter presents many qualities that mark strong, effective leadership. These include empathy (v4), faith (v6,8,23,26), decisiveness (v10), kindness (v12), persistence (v17), integrity (v23), fairness (v24), and generosity (v21-31), to name a few. We can also see development in David's restraint as compared to his dealings with Nabal (Cf. 1 Sam 25). David's effectiveness also contrasts with Saul's ineffectiveness as a leader. 1 Sam 19-30 reveal that David's behavior improved as a result of the adversity that he had to endure (Cf. James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 1:6-7).