

1 Samuel Chapter 30 Commentary

1Sa 30:1 ¶ "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; 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. 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 that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep. 5 And David's two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite."

After a three-day journey from the Philistine's encampment, David and his men come back to Ziklag. They find that Ziklag has been invaded and their city burned, and their wives and children taken captive.

We see that David made a military mistake in following Achish to war. David did not leave any men behind to protect their possession. Now, we talk about the providence of God upon David's life: we shall see it manifested in the recovery of all that is lost. We also see the providence of God manifested through the Amalekites. How? God did not allow them to kill any person in Ziklag. All of David's, and his men's, wives, and children were kept alive. This gives us a picture of the surety of our eternal salvation in Christ.

This is a judicial judgment of God against David, for even setting out to go to war with the Philistines. Remember we are told in scripture to refrain from even the appearance of evil, seen in: **1Th 5:22 "Abstain from all appearance of evil."** Also, if they were fulfilling the commandments of God and loving their brother as their own self, they should never have given the appearance of going to war against their brethren.

This was also against God's commandment to Israel, seen in: **1Ki 12:24 "Thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel: return every man to his house; for this thing is from me. They hearkened therefore to the word of the LORD, and returned to depart, according to the word of the LORD."** Praise God, their only loss is the burned homes and property, not the lives of any of the people.

We also see the result of Saul not obeying God when the Lord told him to go and utterly destroy the Amalekites for their sins against Israel. Had Saul done his duty, there would be no Amalekites to have done this mischief. This is a reminder that our sins have impacts on the lives of others. Just as our sins should be distressful to our own selves, so they are distressful to others.

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. 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. 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."

David has the loss of his wives, as well as the extra distress of the people wanting to stone him in their grief over their present loss. This tells us, and I have experienced it personally, there is no rest out of church fellowship and living in the world. Thankfully, God did not put me through such great distress as David and his men are suffering at the present time. Wherefore, be forewarned of the need to maintain church fellowship.

We have answered here a question I have had since David and his men went to the Philistines: Did Abiathar the priest go with them, or did he remain in Israel? The answer is yes, he stayed with David and his men.

Finally, we see David getting back on the right track. **"but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God."** He now turns himself to the Lord and does some praying. David tells Abiathar to bring the ephod and enquires of God what to do. God tells him to pursue, and that they will recover all they have lost.

There is a lesson for us in this scene. David's men are threatening to kill him, but David turns to the Lord for encouragement. Thus, we should turn to the Lord when even our brethren and families turn against us in their distresses in life. A reminder that we have, always available, the weapon called "**all prayer**," listed in the Christian armor we are to put on, seen in: **Eph 6:18 "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;"**

"Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all." A prophetic picture we see in this reply to David from God: as God tells David you shall be completely victorious and have no loss of anything:

So, we have the promise in eternal salvation that it will be accomplished in our lives without loss of anything. Wherefore, we can face the daily struggles of the Christian life, knowing that whatever we may suffer, we will overcome in the end. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for the surety of our eternal salvation.

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. 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 and his men pursue, and when they get to the brook Besor, they leave two hundred men, who are too weary to go forward. They leave with them, anything they did not need to carry to battle, and the rest carry on the pursuit.

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 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. 13 And David said unto him, To whom belongeth 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 agone I fell sick. 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. 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."

Again, we see the providence of God when they find an Egyptian, who is almost famished, who can bring them to the enemy. They give him food and water and his spirit revives. David asks him to whom he belongs. He replies that he is an Egyptian who belonged to an Amalekite, whose master left him because he was sick. He tells them that they had made an invasion on the Cherethites, the coast of Judah, and they burned Ziklag with fire.

David asks him if he can bring them to this group of raiders? He says he can, providing David will swear by God not to kill him, or give him over to his master. It seems that the Egyptians have not yet forgotten the God who delivered Israel from Egypt. Apparently, this man believes in God.

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 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. 18 And David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away: and David rescued his two wives. 19 And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither spoil, nor anything that they had taken to them: David recovered all."

Having secured his promise, he brings them to the group, who they found spread out feasting in drunkenness, celebrating the success of their raid.

1Sa 30:17 And David smote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day: "Twilight can mean early morning or the coming of night. However, for the Jews, twilight was the period of about an hour between sunset and complete darkness. They considered a day as the time of darkness today to the time of darkness tomorrow. This tells us that David and his men began to smite the Amalekites in the twilight today, they continued to fight through the night and through the morning into the evening of the next day.

David and his men kill all the Amalekites except four hundred men that escaped upon camels. They recovered all that the Amalekites had taken away from them, including the spoils the Amalekites had taken in other places, just as God had told them in: **1Sa 30:8 "Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all."**

We would like to address a prophetic picture we see in this reply to David from God in **1Sa 30:8**, that we failed to see earlier. As God tells David you shall be completely victorious and have no loss of anything: So, we have the promise in our eternal salvation from God. The promise that it will be accomplished in our lives without loss of anything. Therefore, we can face the daily struggles of the Christian life, knowing that whatever we may suffer, we will be victorious in the end. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for the surety of our eternal salvation.

It is worth noting that we are not told the size of the Amalekite army, but we are told that the number that escape is equal to the number of men that David has with him.

Matthew Henry's commentary gives us a couple of scriptural references for these verses: *The writer in Proverbs recognized this present mercy of God upon David and his men, seen in: Pr 11:8 ¶ "The righteous is delivered out of trouble," and in: Pr 24:16 "For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief."* This picture is the sure mercies of God to David.

20 "And David took all the flocks and the herds, which they drove before those other cattle, and said, This is David's spoil. 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 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. 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. 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. 25 And it was so from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day."

David and his men have recovered all that the Amalekites had taken from Ziklag. Each has his own stuff and people returned to him. David claimed the flocks and herds, of the other spoils, as his own, which he shall use as a gift to leaders of Israel to bring him back to Israel. His men getting the remainder of the spoils of the battle.

When they get back to the brook Besor, where they left the two hundred men, the wicked and sons of Belial of the four hundred that fought say, that the two hundred left behind did not deserve any spoils of war. **1Sa 30:23 "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."** Notice, David attributes the victory to God. **"who hath preserved us,"** Apparently, they were blessed to not have the loss of any persons in this battle, which reminds us of the surety of our salvation in Jesus Christ.

David quickly points out that it was just as important to guard their stuff as to go to war, therefore, every man shall have an equal share. This was not a new practice in Israel, but one that was commanded by God, seen in: **Nu 31:25-31; 25 ¶ "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 26 Take the sum of the prey that was taken, both of man and of beast, thou, and Eleazar the priest, and the chief fathers of the congregation: 27 And divide the prey into two parts; between them that took the war upon them, who went out to battle, and between all the congregation: 28 And levy a tribute unto the LORD of the men of war which went out to battle: one soul of five hundred, both of the persons, and of the beeves, and of the asses, and of the sheep: 29 Take it of their half, and give it unto Eleazar the priest, for an heave offering of the LORD. 30 And of the children of Israel's half, thou shalt take one portion of fifty, of the persons, of the beeves, of the asses, and of the flocks, of all manner of beasts, and give them unto the Levites, which keep the charge of the tabernacle of the LORD. 31 And Moses and Eleazar the priest did as the LORD commanded Moses."** Herein, God provided for distribution of the spoils of war to the whole of Israel, including a portion to be given to the priest of God.

1Sa 30:25 "And it was so from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day." Herein, we see David's first action, acting as king over Israel, by making a law that Israel is to live by, which was actually just reinstating that which God had already established.

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; 27 To them which were in Bethel, and to them which were in south Ramoth, and to them which were in Jattir, 28 And to them which were in Aroer, and to them which were in Siphmoth, and to them which were in Eshtemoa, 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 And to them which were in Hormah, and to them which were in Chorashan, and to them which were in Athach, 31 And to them which were in Hebron, and to all the places where David himself and his men were wont to haunt."

When they get back to Ziklag, David sends of the spoils to different elders of Judah, who are his brethren. This is a consolation prize for letting David and his men travel and live in their areas in peace. David is now preparing to return to Israel and take his God given position as king. This will also serve as a prompt for Judah to ask David to be their king.

We see a prophetic picture here, of those who leave the church fellowship, and then began to seek to return to the church fellowship. How? If people leave the church fellowship and desire to return, they must return bringing some gifts of reconciliation. These gifts of reconciliation are apologies, for their withdrawal from the church fellowship, and to send forth the good news of their desire to return to church fellowship. If true repentance, and a sincere desire to reunite in church fellowship are found, the church should take action to reunite them in love to church fellowship.

Thank you, Lord, for the gift of repentant hearts, which fill us with the desire to return to fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Thank you for never leaving us nor forsaking us, even when we are disobedient and out of your will and purpose for our lives to bring glory to your name. Thank you, for returning the joy of your salvation in our lives. Hallelujah! Amen!