



1 Samuel 30-31

Tape #7090
I Samuel 30-31
By Chuck Smith

Shall we turn now in our bibles to I Samuel, chapter thirty. David has fled into the land of the Philistines, to escape from Saul. It is one of those things that David has done without inquiring of the Lord. It is a indication of a lapse of faith on David's part. Rather than continue to trust in God to deliver him from the hand of Saul, and to trust in God to fulfill His promise that he would sit upon the throne. David, fearing that one day Saul would catch him, and kill him, fled to the Philistine country, to Achish, the king of Gath, with his six hundred men, and their families. So, a pretty good size group.

David requested that Achish would give to him one of the smaller country villages, rather than him dwelling in the city of Gath. He really didn't want Achish looking over his shoulder. So he gave to him, Ziklag. Now when the Philistines gathered together to go to war against Saul and the Israelites, David with his men, joined with king Achish, to become a part of the Philistine forces, to fight against the people of God, which gives to us an indication of just how far David had backslid, where he now was joining the enemies of God in fighting against the people of God. You can't get much further than that.

However, when the other Philistine lords saw David and his men, they said, "Hey wait a minute Achish! What are you doing? Don't you know who that guy is? That's David! He's the one the ladies of Israel were singing about, when they sang, 'Saul killed his thousands, and David his tens of thousands'. We won't go to battle with him, because in the heat of the battle, what better way could he have of making up with Saul, then to turn against us? Send him back."

So Achish said to David, "David I'm sorry the other kings won't allow you to go with us, I know that you're a good faithful man, and you've been blameless". He didn't know the truth, he just thought he did. David had been really deceiving all the way along. But David protested, "Oh you know, I'm so faithful, and I would love to go with you what a shame. But David and his men went back, and so as they came back to Ziklag, we enter chapter thirty.

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 had smitten Ziklag and burned it with fire (30:1);

Now, here we are faced with these Amalekites again. As we have told you the Amalekites were a type of the flesh. These were the people that attacked the children of Israel, shortly after they came out of Egypt. The life of the flesh. They came through the Red sea, and were journeying through the area of Rephidim towards Sinai, when Amalek, and the forces attacked them from the rear, the stragglers, the old feeble people who couldn't keep up with the camp, the rest of the people on their march.

So Moses sent the armies of Israel, or the men of Israel, there were no armies really, there were just a bunch of slaves with sticks, and ox goats, and they went out against the Amalekites under Joshua's leadership. Moses standing above the battlefield on a mountain, watching the battle. As long as he would hold his hand up, Israel would prevail. When his hands would fall, the Amalekites would prevail. Finally he got so tired, that they sat him on a rock, and Aaron on one side, and her on the other side holding up his arms, till the evening. Joshua and his men, discomfited the host of the Amalekites but, towards the end of the wilderness journey, God said to Moses, "Look Moses, you've got a score to settle with Amalek, and when you come into the land, and you've subdued the nation, and you're strong, then I want you to go down and utterly wipe them out, because there's gonna be war with Amalek with every generation". Amalek a type of the flesh. God's remedy for the flesh is utter destruction, crucify it, mortify it, by the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the flesh. "Make no provision for your flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof."

Now when Saul had conquered the nations around them, and Israel was secure, the Lord spoke to Samuel and said, "Go and tell Saul that the time has come to settle this ancient score with Amalek, go down and utterly wipe them out. You are my instrument of judgment against these vile people, utterly destroy them. All of their cattle, their animals, everything!"

Saul went down, and God delivered Amalek into the hands of Saul, but you remember, he kept the finest of the cattle and the sheep, and brought them back with him. When Samuel came out to meet him, he said, "As the Lord liveth, I've done everything God told me to do!", and Samuel said, "No you haven't, because I hear the sheep, and I hear the cattle". He said, "Oh well, we brought those back to sacrifice them to God". The Amaleks are still alive, here the Amalekites have attacked David. Saul did not destroy them all. They wouldn't be there to continue to fight. It is interesting that it was an Amalekite that ultimately killed Saul.

Tonight in our lesson, we're gonna see where Saul was hit by one of the Philistine archers. He turned to his armour bearer, and he said, "Kill me, I don't want those uncircumcised Philistines to catch me in this wounded condition and to kill me. You kill me". His armour bearer was reluctant to do so, and so Saul set out his spear, and he fell on his own spear. But he still didn't die. This Amalekite came, and Saul said, "Hey guy, come over here and kill me!", and the guy went over and killed him. An Amalekite.

You see, if you don't reckon your old flesh to be dead, if you don't bring it to the cross, your flesh will rise up to kill you. It'll destroy you. "Make no provision for the flesh." So here the Amalekites still existing, they strike through the southern portion there, and they invade the area of Ziklag, burning the little village with fire.

But they took the women captives, that there: they did not kill any of them, either great or small, but they carried them away, and went on their way. So David's wives, all of their troops, their wives, their children were all taken captive (30:2).

Often times in those days they would kill the men, and take the women captives, and then sell them as slaves. They, they were valuable for sale. No doubt, their intention was to sell them to the Egyptians as slaves.

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. Then David and the people that were with them lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep (30:3-4).

I mean they were really distraught! To come back and find your family's gone, your city burned, and they were just devastated by it.

And David's two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because [all of the] the souls of all the people were so grieved, every man for his sons and daughters (30:5-6):

David had a pretty rough group of guys that had gathered together with him. You remember in our study, all of those that were in debt, all of those that were having problems gathered unto David. They were a rough crew. Now, when things seemed to be turning, they, they're talking about stoning David. Blaming David for joining forces to go fight against Israel, "Now look what's happened to our families!", and they were ready to stone David. I like this latter portion of this verse. This is the beginning really, of David's turning back to God. David had gone through a period of backsliding. This experience in the Philistine country was not good spiritually for David. David was guilty of horrible atrocities, he was guilty of lying, and deception, he was guilty of turning against the people of God. Now it says...

David encouraged himself in Jehovah his God (30:6).

Turning back to God, he's come to the bottom. You know, it's interesting how that so many times God has to take a person to the bottom, before they'll turn back to God. Now God doesn't like to do that. In the thirty second Psalm, God says, "Hey, don't be like a mule or a horse, that you have to put a bit in its mouth to guide it!". A bit is sort of a painful thing. You shove that thing in a horses mouth, but it's good for guiding the horse, stopping the horse, pull back on that thing, you know, it's painful though. It's a bad way to go! God says, "Don't be like a mule, where I have to use painful means to direct you, to lead you. I don't want that". God doesn't delight in that. He would rather that we be very sensitive to His voice, that He could lead us, and deal with us without painful processes.

But, it is so important that God does lead us, and He loves us so much that He will use painful processes if necessary. With David, God used painful processes. He came back and found out his wife had been stolen, his goods had been ripped off, and his men are ready to stone him. I mean for a guy who's

already had so much trouble, this just is it. David encouraged himself in the Lord, he began to turn to God once again. This is, of course the beginning of David's coming out of this backslidden state.

David said to Abiathar who was the priest, I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod. And Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David (30:7).

Now he's gonna begin to seek counsel from the Lord again. Had he sought counsel of the Lord in the beginning, he probably would've never gone down to the Philistine country! Isn't it interesting how that we go our own stubborn ways, and we, we do our own thing until we get in a jam, and then we turn to the Lord and say, "Oh Lord! Guide me! Help me! Get me out of this jam!" Whereas if we'd been paying attention to the Lord in the beginning, we'd have never gotten into the jam. But that's I guess human nature.

And David inquired at the Lord, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? will I overtake them? And he answered him, Pursue: for you will surely overtake them, and without fail you will recover everything. So David went, he and the six hundred men that were with him, and they came to the brook Besor, where those that were left behind stayed. But David continued to pursue, he and four hundred men: for two hundred of them stayed behind, because they were so faint that they could not go over the brook Besor (30:8-10).

So a third of David's army was too weak to continue to pursue the Amalekites when they got to this river Besor. Two hundred of them just said, "Hey we just can't go any further". So, four hundred continued the pursuit of the Amalekites with David.

And they found an Egyptian in the field, and they brought him to David, and they gave him bread, and he ate it; and they made him drink water; 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 not eaten any bread, nor drunk any water for three days, and three nights (30:11-12).

So as they were going along, they saw this little Egyptian kid in the field, he was very faint. They revived him, gave him bread and water, and then gave him some dry figs and raisins, quick energy, the sugar in the dried fruit. The guy began to be revived.

And David said to him, Who do you belong to? [Obviously he was retired as a servant, had on a servants garb, "Who's your master?"] where are you from? And he said, I am a young man of Egypt, I am a servant to an Amalekite; and my master left me, because three days ago I fell sick (30:13).

So without leaving him any food or anything else, he just figured, "He'll get sick". They left him there to die actually, in that wilderness. He said...

We made an invasion upon the south of the Cherethites, the coast which belongs to Judah, on the south of Caleb; and we burned Ziklag with fire. And David said to him, Can you bring me down to this company? And the young man said, Swear to me by God, that you will not kill me, nor deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will bring thee down to this company (30:14-15).

"Can you tell me where they are?", David said. "Can you lead me there?", he said, "Well, you make a, you sware to me by God that you won't kill me after I do, and that you won't turn me over to my master. You let me just be free to escape".

And when he had brought him down, behold, here were the Amalekites spread abroad upon the earth, they were eating and drinking, and dancing, because of the great spoil that they had taken out of the land of the Philistines, and out of the land of Judah. And David smote them from the twilight even to the evening of the next day: and there escaped not a man of them, except for four hundred young men, who had some camels, who fled on their camels. And David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away: and David rescued his two wives. And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, nor any of the spoil, nor anything that they had taken to them: David recovered all (30:16-19).

None of the children were killed or injured. All of the wives, the families were there, plus all of the goods, plus all of the extra goods that they had ripped off from all of these other people where they had invaded. So David came out ahead!

And so David took all of the flocks and the herds, which they drove before those other cattle, and he said, These are David's spoil. And David came to the two hundred men, which were so faint that they could not follow David, who they had made also to abide by 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 them, they greeted them. And then answered all of the wicked men the men of Belial, those who were with David, and they said, Because they didn't go with us, we're not gonna give them anything from the spoil that we have recovered, except we'll give every man his wife and kids back. And David said, You shall not do so, my brethren, with that which the Lord has given us, who has preserved us, and delivered the company that came against us into our hand. 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: and they shall part alike (30:20-24).

In other words, those men who stayed back and guarded the stuff, stayed by the stuff, are to share equally in the spoil of those that go to battle. This became a rule that David established in Israel. It's just as important that you have men staying back and guarding the stuff, as it is to have men out on the front line fighting. Those that are out on the front line fighting need really, the logistic support from those that are back keeping the stuff. "So those that stay by the stuff share equally in the spoils of those that go to battle."

I think that this does apply in missions today. I believe that they who stay by the stuff, that is stay home, and support those that go to the mission field, share equally in the rewards of the fruit of the ministry of the missionaries, as those who go to the foreign field. I believe that in God's economy, when we get to heaven, we will discover that we will be rewarded for our support of those missionaries that are out in the front lines, and we will be rewarded for the fruit of their ministries, because we stayed by the stuff to support them. You'll have a lot of people coming up to you saying, "Hey I checked the records up here, you were the one that supported that missionary, that came out and shared the gospel with me. I'm your kid!" "I'm here because you stayed by the stuff, and supported!" I really believe that, that's a part of God's whole economy!

And so it was from that day forward, he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day. When David came to Ziklag, he sent of the spoil unto the elders of Judah, even to his friends (30:25-26),

I remember David took all of the cattle that were driven in front of them, not those that had belonged to them, but all the extra spoil, David took them. So that this is David's spoil, so now he is distributing. Must have been huge amount of spoil, because David distributes it among his friends, back in Israel.

he sends them presents of spoil of the enemies of the Lord; He sent to Bethel, [And this probably isn't the Bethel up in the middle of the country, but another area towards the south.] and to them which were in Ramoth, and Jattir (30:26-27),

And all of these other names which, why should I stumble through them? You wouldn't know if I pronounced them right or not! And I wouldn't either, so. But I can get Hebron!

And to them which were in Hebron, [verse thirty one] and to all of the places where David himself and his men were wont to haunt (30:31).

I like that phrase, it's, "wont to haunt". That is, where they were hanging out. These various cities where David and his men would hide and hang out, they sort of sent rewards back to those, the chiefs of those villages and all.

Chapter 31

Now the Philistines fought against Israel: [This is the battle that David was going to join, but was refrained from doing so, by the other lords of the Philistines, they fought against Israel.] and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and they fell down slain in mount Gilboa (31:1).

So the Philistines had gone pretty far in the country, because when you get to mount Gilboa, you're up beyond Ephraim. You're in the area of Eschar, you're actually in the area of Megiddo, valley of Jezreel, and Ezreel. You're getting pretty far north, almost to the sea of Galilee. So, the Philistines have moved pretty far north, as the men of Israel were falling in battle there near mount Gilboa.

And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons; and the Philistines killed Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Melchishua, Saul's sons. And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him; and he was sore wounded from the archers (31:2-3).

You remember the night before he had gone out to the witch of Endor, that she might conjure up Samuel, because he could not get any word from God. Samuel said, "Why have you disturbed me?"

Tomorrow you and your sons will fall in battle". So the prophecy of Samuel is being fulfilled. Tragic, tragic.

Jonathan, who really, it says, "David's heart was knit to Jonathan", my heart was knit to Jonathan. I, I love this fellow. There's just a lot of, lot of commendable traits in Jonathan's life. He knew that David was gonna be the next king. He knew that it was gonna bypass him, and yet he loved David so much, he was willing to just say, "Hey, I'll reign with you David". This guy who ventured out in faith, who was so valiant in battle, looking forward to that day when David would reign, and he could be there in the glory of David's kingdom. But such was not to be the case, he fell in battle there at Gilboa.

Then Saul said to his armour-bearer, Dray your sword, and thrust me through with it; lest these uncircumcised Philistines come and thrust me through, and abuse me. [He was afraid of being tortured and mutilated by the Philistines.] But his armour-bearer would not; because he was afraid. Therefore Saul took his sword, and fell upon it. [Committed suicide, or attempted to.] And when his armour-bearer saw that Saul was dead (31:4-5),

At least he thought that Saul was dead, according to the Amalekite who brought word to David, he was still alive, and the Amalekite finished the job. "When the armour-bearer saw that Saul was dead"...

he fell likewise upon his sword, and he died with him. So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armour-bearer, and all of his men, that same day together. [Tragic day in the history of Israel, as far as their military history goes.] When the men of Israel that were on the other side of the valley, they that were on the other side of Jordan, [Over in the area of Jabesh-Gilead.] when they saw that the men of Israel had fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities, and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them. And it came to pass on the next day, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen in mount Gilboa. And they cut off his head, and stripped off his armour, and sent it into the land of the Philistines round about, to publish it in the house of their idols, and among their people. And they put his armour in the house of Ashtaroth: [One of their gods.] and they fastened his body to the wall of Bethshean (31:5-10).

Bethshean is just at the north end of mount Gilboa. It's just above the Jordan river, and across from Jabesh-Gilead. There they pinned to the wall, the body of Saul. Of course, they had beheaded him, the head they sent back to the areas of Gath, and Ashdod, and Ashkelon, Ekron.

And when the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul; All of the valiant men arose, and went all night, and they took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Bethshean, and they came to Jabesh, and they burnt them there (31:11-12).

Or they cremated their bodies. Now, I am often asked by people what my opinion is of cremation. My usual response is, "As far as I'm concerned, cremation will do in thirty seven minutes, what nature will do in thirty seven years". It's only speeding up the process of nature. It reduces your body back to dust. The bible says concerning the body, "Dust thou art, to dust you will return". I see no problem with hastening the process. I have no problem with cremation. If a person wants to be cremated, that's a good way to go, if that's the way they want to go. I have no problem with it from a scriptural, or spiritual background. As far as I know in the scriptures, there is nothing that would speak against cremation.

The body is not the real you. The body is only the tent where you dwell for awhile. Once I move out of this tent, I don't care what they do with it, or what happens to it. It's probably too decrepit for science to get any value out of it. Ha, ha! But, whatever they want to do, I don't care, once I've moved out! It's served me well, and served its purposes, and when my spirit moves out, then you know, it doesn't matter to me. Because the real me is spirit. Jesus said, "Don't fear them who can kill your body, and after that have no power".

In a sense you might say that many of the early Christians were cremated, in that they were burned at the stake. But again, once my spirit leaves the body, in what manner they want to dispose of this thing, it really doesn't matter to me. Except, I would be upset if they spent a lot of money for an expensive casket. I think that's a total waste! Pine box is fine! You don't have to put it in a concrete vault. Feed the worms, I don't care. I really am looking forward to what Paul said, to tell you the truth, "Beloved, I'll show you a mystery, we're not gonna all sleep. But we're all gonna be changed, in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye". I'm still holding out for that! If I can just hold out a little longer, I think I'm gonna see it!

But the Bible really doesn't say anything against cremation. Saul was cremated, but notice there's nothing spoken of in a negative sense here. Doesn't say, "Oh terrible, shame, shame!" It just accepts it as a matter of fact, and that's it, without any discussion or commentary on it, it's just that they took and burned his body. Probably the best thing that they could've done under the circumstances.

They took their bones, and they buried them under a tree at Jabesh, and they fasted for seven days (31:13).

So we come to the end of the career of Saul, and as we move now into II Samuel, we will come into the kingdom as it will be established under David's authority. We will see in II Samuel, David's career, the glories, and also the failures of this shepherd king. Shall we pray?

Father, we thank You again that You do deal with us faithfully, and when we turn, You don't let us go, but You stop us. And, by force, when necessary. Lord we appreciate that, it gives us a sense of security. We thank You Lord. But we ask that you would help us Lord, that we would live in such a way, and would be so sensitive to your voice, that it would not take force to lead us. May we be obedient, faithful, obedient servants. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Long, glorious day. Mine started about three o'clock this morning. Had the grandkids over this afternoon, so I missed my Sunday afternoon nap, but it was worth it.

Looking forward to a glorious week, as we wait to see what God has in store, as we seek His will, and as we open our hearts to Him. May God bless you and lead you, and guide you according to His perfect plan, as you walk with Him, in Jesus' name.