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LESSON NOTES (EXPLORE THE BIBLE)

GOD HAS HEARD—
 (1 Samuel 30) Lord's Day, August 28, 2016

OVERVIEW

"Session 13" for this week in the *Explore the Bible Series*



The Lord Jesus the Christ has won the victory. He has won, not us. We may be the tired left at Bezor, or we may be the ones on the front lines, but Jesus the Christ won the battle. Not the tired at Bezor. Not the bloody from the battle. He won.

A QUESTION TO GET YOU THINKING:
WHY IS WARFARE SUCH AN EXCITING EVENT IN DRAMA, AND SUCH A DEBILITATING EVENT IN REAL WAR?

Perhaps the most important verb tense in our understanding of the Lord God is "past tense." When the Lord God says, "I will return," it's a done deal. When we freak about the world coming apart, and this is not the first time it's been happening, we know who wins. He wins.



David's victory over the Amalekites who stole his family, his men's families, and their goods shows us a new dimension of victory. The battle is the Lord's. The plunder is the Lord's. The justice is the Lord's. The mercy is the Lord's. We are either the folks in the front lines, or the protectors of the supplies behind the lines. But it is the Lord God who wins. Not us.



David instituted a sense of fairness which has until this day encouraged those on the home front. We can not all, nor should not, be peripheral missionaries. But we cannot, and must not, forget we are the home guard. There are plenty of battles right here at home. There are next door neighbors to love, children to rear in His admonition, and fellow employees to show we answer, and work accordingly, to and for a higher Authority. We are His body. We are the army. And He is the victor.

Thinking he'd better not trust Saul's promise to never harm him again, David plays a deadly game with the Philistines, he makes a "home" among them for 16 months, playing the role of mercenary. All six hundred men and their families went with him, all hoping Saul would stop looking for them once he knew they were "among the Philistines." That was indeed the case.

Feigning loyalty by pretending to attack Israel, but he was actually destroying Israel's enemies. He had these enemies totally wasted so none could be assessed by Philistine intelligence. The ugly truth—David was not killing Israelites. The king Achish even gave David the area called Ziklag, a territory which was to be retained by Israel for generations.

Achish was indeed fooled—after one of several lies about who and what had been conquered, actually laid waste, Achish commented: "[David] ... has become so odious to his people, the Israelites, that he will be my servant forever." But the ruse became more difficult.

Achish was gathering his forces against Israel along with the big dog Philistines and expected David & his boys to join in; he even asked David to be his bodyguard for life.

Saul freaked with the oncoming armies and inquired of the Lord God Yahweh. No answer. No vision. No prophet. So, he turned to witchcraft. Endor downstage.

The witch Endor was suspicious: she knew the capital consequence for practicing sorcery and correspondingly charged Saul to protect her. Oddly, he asked for her to bring Samuel, long since dead, to the forefront for a king to prophet tete a tete.

This "Samuel" from the dead was not happy—why are you bothering me? You do realize, do you not, that the Lord God Yahweh has become your enemy? Because you've disobeyed the Lord God Jehovah, you and your sons will die in the battle against the Amalekites! The Lord God Almighty will also hand over the army of Israel to the Philistines!

Saul was less than happy—he fell to the ground, filled with fear and empty of body and soul (he hadn't eaten for quite awhile). A servant woman convinced him to eat, and he was refreshed.



Meanwhile the thousands gathered to attack; David and his boys were at the rear with the Amalekites. The Philistines were irritated when they noted David; their intelligence analysts were very wary of this dude who'd killed "tens of thousands" of Philistines.

Achish defended David to no avail. So, to keep peace with their erstwhile allies, Achish told David to leave, no harm no foul. David's mercenary days were, apparently, over for a while. David went back to his area among the Philistines behind the lines, and the Philistine army marched on Jezreel.

1 Samuel 30:1-8. *Mercenaries learn personally about the ravages of war.* After about three days, David and his men reached Ziklag. But it was far from “home” — their wives, their children, their tents, their food, their animals, their gold—it was all gone. Even their homes were burned. While David and his boys were gone, the Amalekites had raided the Negev and Ziklag!

When David arrived, they found it destroyed by fire, their wives and sons and daughters taken as slaves. They wept, and wept loudly; they wept until they had no strength to weep more. Ahinoam and Abigail, David’s two remaining wives had been captured.

David was in a deep pile of skabal’a (σκυβαλα). He was not only distressed because of his family being taken captive, but the men were talking about stoning him. They were to a man bitter because of their loss of their children, their legacy, their dynasty.

BUT, David found strength in Yahweh, his Lord and God. And so he turned to God’s priest, Abiathar son of Ahimelech. With the ephod in tow, Abiathar helped David call upon the Lord God for guidance. *Shall I pursue this raiding party? Will I win if I overtake them?* Abiathar responded: *Go get them. You will certainly overtake them and have a successful rescue.*

- Q Why weren’t the women and children killed? How has the slave trade affected you, in today’s world?
- Q What and how would you wreak vengeance on those who had destroyed/stolen your family?
- Q Why were the men distressed and ready to kill David? How did he decide to overcome his fear of them and the situation? Just what is “strength in Yahweh, the Lord God?”
- Q Why did David seek Abiathar and the ephod? What did this have to do with things? Why didn’t he just pray to the Lord God and ask his questions regarding how to proceed?
- Q Do we still need an ephod, a priest to “inquire of the Lord God Jehovah?” [Hint: the correct answer is “Yes.” But what is our ephod; our Abiathar? His name is Joshua/Yeshua/Jesus.]

1 SAMUEL 30:1-8

David and his men reached Ziklag on the third day. Now the Amalekites had raided the Negev and Ziklag. They had attacked Ziklag and burned it, ²and had taken captive the women and all who were in it, both young and old. They killed none of them, but carried them off as they went on their way.

³When David and his men came to Ziklag, they found it destroyed by fire and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive. ⁴So David and his men wept aloud until they had no strength left to weep. ⁵David's two wives had been captured--Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal of Carmel. ⁶David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the LORD his God.

⁷Then David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, "Bring me the ephod." Abiathar brought it to him, ⁸and David inquired of the LORD, "Shall I pursue this raiding party? Will I overtake them?"

"Pursue them," he answered. "You will certainly overtake them and succeed in the rescue."

1 Samuel 30:9-20. *The Lord God wins, as usual*. With the blessing of the Lord God through Abiathar, their resident priest, David took his 600, pursuing the Amalekites until reaching a ravine called Besor. Two hundred stayed behind for they were exhausted; the remaining 400 continued.

In their transit they found an Egyptian slave, worn out from running and worn thin from no food or water for about three days. He was brought to David and fed some figs and raisin cakes. So who do you belong? From where do you come? David asked.

I'm owned by an Amalekite; he abandoned me about three days ago. I was ill. We'd raided the Negev area controlled by the Kerethites, and the territory belonging to Judah, and the Negev area owned by Caleb. And, on top of all that, we burned Ziklag.

David was looking for some more intelligence. He asked, can you lead me to this raiding party? Yes, but you must swear to me before God that you'll not kill me, or give me back to my master. My name is not Onesimus. But, I will take you to them.

That was indeed what happened—the raiding party was scattered all over the countryside, boozing, snoozing, reveling, eating—celebrating the great booty and plunder they'd acquired from Ziklag and elsewhere. From dusk of that day until evening of the next, the fight ensued. All were destroyed except 400 young men who took off on their camel mounts.

- Q Was the Egyptian an ally of Israel because he helped David?
- Q Should the two hundred who did not go on ahead be rewarded with a share of the plunder earned from their victory over the Amalekites?
- Q Should David have returned the plunder the Amalekites got from the people in the Negev to the people in the Negev? What about *their* wives and children—should they not be returned?

1 SAMUEL 30:9-20

David and the six hundred men with him came to the Besor Ravine, where some stayed behind, ¹⁰for two hundred men were too exhausted to cross the ravine. But David and four hundred men continued the pursuit.

¹¹They found an Egyptian in a field and brought him to David. They gave him water to drink and food to eat--¹²part of a cake of pressed figs and two cakes of raisins. He ate and was revived, for he had not eaten any food or drunk any water for three days and three nights.

¹³David asked him, "To whom do you belong, and where do you come from?"

He said, "I am an Egyptian, the slave of an Amalekite. My master abandoned me when I became ill three days ago. ¹⁴We raided the Negev of the Kerethites and the territory belonging to Judah and the Negev of Caleb. And we burned Ziklag."

¹⁵David asked him, "Can you lead me down to this raiding party?"

He answered, "Swear to me before God that you will not kill me or hand me over to my master, and I will take you down to them."

¹⁶He led David down, and there they were, scattered over the countryside, eating, drinking and reveling because of the great amount of plunder they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from Judah. ¹⁷David fought them from dusk until the evening of the next day, and none of them got away, except four hundred young men who rode off on camels and fled. ¹⁸David recovered everything the Amalekites had taken, including his two wives. ¹⁹Nothing was missing: young or old, boy or girl, plunder or anything else they had taken. David brought everything back. ²⁰He took all the flocks and herds, and his men drove them ahead of the other livestock, saying, "This is David's plunder."

1 Samuel 30:21-31. *Victory can stimulate coveting, unless the victors remember who actually won the victory.* Once David returned to the encampment, the two hundred who had been left behind greeted David and the entire rescued entourage. But there were belial-like men among David's boys. They kvetched:

Since they didn't go to battle with us, we will not share the plunder & people we recovered. Yeah, they can take their own wives and children, but they got to leave.

David then showed another reason why the Lord God had Samuel anoint him:

*No, my brothers. You must not do that with what Yahweh the Lord God Almighty has given us. He protected us. He handed to us all the forces who were against us. Are you really listening to what you're saying? The share of those who stayed behind with the supplies will be the same as those who went to battle. **All will share alike!***

Note: David made this principle a statutory ordinance permanently.

When David got back home to Ziklag, he sent some of the plunder to the leaders of Judah who were also his friends. He told them—*Here's a present for you from the plunder of the Lord God Jehovah's enemies.*

He not only sent the Lord's plunder to the usual spots in Judah—Bethel, Ramoth Negve, and especially Hebron and other places. He also sent plunder to all the other places where David and his men had roamed.

- Q Why was the kvetching of those who fought so evil (*belial*, the Hebrew name for Satan was used, cf., 2 Corinthians 6:15)?
- Q What did David learn about the loyalty of his men after the disaster at Ziklag?
- Q So who's plunder was it—the 600, the 400, David's, or the Lord God?
- Q What was so unusual about this victory, compared to most such battles, either then or now? So what?

1 SAMUEL 30:21-31

Then David came to the two hundred men who had been too exhausted to follow him and who were left behind at the Besor Ravine. They came out to meet David and the people with him. As David and his men approached, he greeted them. ²²But all the evil men and troublemakers among David's followers said, "Because they did not go out with us, we will not share with them the plunder we recovered. However, each man may take his wife and children and go."

²³David replied, "No, my brothers, you must not do that with what the LORD has given us. He has protected us and handed over to us the forces that came against us. ²⁴Who will listen to what you say? The share of the man who stayed with the supplies is to be the same as that of him who went down to the battle. All will share alike." ²⁵David made this a statute and ordinance for Israel from that day to this.

²⁶When David arrived in Ziklag, he sent some of the plunder to the elders of Judah, who were his friends, saying, "Here is a present for you from the plunder of the LORD's enemies."

²⁷He sent it to those who were in Bethel, Ramoth Negev and Jattir; ²⁸to those in Aroer, Siphmoth, Eshtemoa ²⁹and Racal; to those in the towns of the Jerahmeelites and the Kenites; ³⁰to those in Hormah, Bor Ashan, Athach ³¹and Hebron; and to those in all the other places where David and his men had roamed.

EPILOGUE

The Philistines continued the fight against Israel, without David and his 600 men. All three of Saul's sons were killed. As the fighting grew fierce around Saul, he took fire from archers, and was critically wounded. Calling on his armor bearer to kill him, Saul made it clear he didn't want to be killed or worse yet, abused, by these unbelievers, these uncircumcised pagans. He wouldn't do it, so Saul literally fell on his sword. The armor bearer followed suit. The Saul dynasty ended that day.

The people lost heart and abandoned their towns and the Philistines took over. When they came to strip plunder from the defeated Israelite army, they found Saul and sons. Cutting off his head, they took his armor and sent messengers back home to proclaim the news, in the temple of their idols and among the villages. Saul's armor was put in the temple of the Ashtoreths, and his body and the boys' bodies were fastened to the wall at Beth Shan.

When the believers at Gilead heard about this abomination, they sent a black ops group and retrieved the bodies. They took the bodies home, burned them and mourned for seven days by fasting.



ADVANCED BIBLE COMMENTARY FOR 1 SAMUEL 30¹

30:1-31:13 While Saul goes to his death at the hands of the Philistines, David is drawn into and pursues the Lord's continuing war with the Amalekites (see 15:2-3).

30:1 *Amalekites*. See 27:8 and note on 15:2. The absence of David and his warriors gave the Amalekites opportunity for revenge. *Negev*. See note on 27:10.

30:14 *Negev*. See 27:10. *Kerethites*. Along with the Pelethites, they later contributed contingents of professional warriors to David's private army (see 2Sa 15:18; 20:7; 1Ki 1:38). The name may indicate that they originally came from the island of Crete (see Amos 9:7 and NIV text note there). *Negev of Caleb*. The area south of Hebron (see Jos 14:13).

30:22 *troublemakers*. See 1Sa 1:16; 2:12; 25:17. The same Hebrew word is also used, e.g., in 1Sa 10:27; 30:22 ("troublemakers"); 1Ki 21:10,13 ("scoundrels"); Pr 6:12 ("scoundrel"). Later, this word (*Belial* in Hebrew) was used as a name for Satan (2Co 6:15), who is the personification of wickedness and lawlessness.

30:26 *elders of Judah, who were his friends*. David sent the plunder as an expression of gratitude to those who had assisted him during his flight from Saul (see v. 31), thus preparing the way for his later elevation to kingship in Judah (see 2Sa 2:1-4).

30:31 *Hebron*. The most important city in the southern part of Judah. The other locations mentioned are to the southwest and southeast of Hebron.

¹Adapted, corrected, and revised by D. Thomas Porter from Compton's Interactive NIV © 1996.