

## WHERE THOSE THAT WERE LEFT BEHIND STAYED

### 1 SAMUEL 29:1 – 30:31

^^^^^^

~ Friends, ask yourself - how are you doing in your life today? Are you discontent and unsatisfied? Or are all of your hopes and dreams coming true in your life just as you had always imagined? Be honest. I'm guessing most of us are wondering what God's plan and purpose is. Well, there is a very good reason for the trouble in our life; and that reason is because our problems are an integral part of God's perfect plan. See, God tests us and teaches us in and through our failures – and through seemingly impossible circumstances and difficult times – given in lessons that we would rather not endure – or even have to learn at all. Unfortunately for us, human nature simply does not learn any other way. There are myriad examples in Scripture of this type of testing of God's men; and each one contains a Godly example of how to react to adversity.

The Word of God is given to each of us by the Spirit of God in a definite and particular fashion as encouragement in correction, so we don't just give up on life as so many people do. This account from David's life in our Spiritual Safari is just such an example. We're going to see David make a huge mistake taking his eyes off of the Lord and stepping out of the will of God by running away to the land of the Philistines. If God hadn't made a drastic intervention, David would have made a possibly fatal mistake by going to war against Israel. We're witnessing the providence of God. This report will be deadly serious – but simple.

Now, before we move along, I want to add a quick note about this so-called "Spiritual Safari." Some say it's too simple, some say the reports are too long and too complicated. Some say it is too wordy – while others say I use too few words – and then some say I'm just wrong – whereas others develop a relationship with Christ as a result of reading the reports. The fact of the matter is: a theology professor of long ago told me quite candidly my style of teaching is "overly simplistic." Well, the unsaved do not understand me at all, and some of the ones who say they are saved say I have made the Bible unloving, crass, impatient; and that these reports are

1 SAMUEL 29:1 – 30:31

^^^^^^

irreverent. Well, as your Spiritual Safari co-guide – I mean, besides the Holy Spirit – let me say: I can't please everybody – but I try. Honestly, the only thing that even keeps this expedition moving right now are the messages I receive that tell me their lives have been changed because they can now understand the Bible. So, for that reason, I won't be changing my style, theology, doctrine, opinion, interpretation or ANYTHING about this program.

The section of Scripture we are in, more or less, tells its own story. Of course, we are following David as he runs for his life from King Saul. In our next report, the story of Saul will come to an abrupt end and Saul will be dead along with three of his sons. In our last report, we saw David very discouraged, despondent, distressed, discontented, disappointed, dismayed – and very other negative “d” word you can think of. I think David was ready to just throw in the towel as he decided to leave Israel. Well, God never told David to leave Israel and go to Philistia – just as God never told Abraham to go down to Egypt – so, we saw a lapse of faith in Abraham in Genesis; and here we see a lapse of faith in David – the man after God's own heart.

David had become a very good friend of the king of Philistia. The Philistines, of course, were formidable foes of Israel; and David had killed tens of thousands of them. When we know someone can easily defeat us, it's in our own best interest to be nice to them. Well, war breaks out between them – again – and David finds himself in a very precarious position. David finds himself obligated to go fight for the king, against Israel – and that was bad. As we said, God intervened, miraculously, and prevented David from making this fatal error. It was a very narrow escape, too, by the way. Without a strong intervention by the providence of God, David would have done something he would have either deeply regretted for the rest of his life or would not have survived to tell the story. Either way, there could have been no good outcome if that had happened.

I don't think us Christians realize how often the Lord intervenes on our behalf. Most of us regularly step over the boundary of and leave the place God wants us in. But, then again, maybe this problem does not apply to any of you dear readers – so let me just say it does to me – often. I have

become thoroughly convinced that most of our suffering is caused by God to prevent us from committing sins that we would, likewise, regret for the rest of our natural lives. And when I say “most” – I mean almost all! I can look back and see a record of these types of affairs and rough dealings by God with me in my life. Many times, I was utterly bitter at the process; maybe you can understand that dilemma, too? ~

## **XXIX**

***1 Now the Philistines gathered together all their armies to Aphek: and the Israelites pitched by a fountain which is in Jezreel.***

***2 And the lords of the Philistines passed on by hundreds, and by thousands: but David and his men passed on in the rereward with Achish.***

***3 Then said the princes of the Philistines, What do these Hebrews here? And Achish said unto the princes of the Philistines, Is not this David, the servant of Saul the king of Israel, which hath been with me these days, or these years, and I have found no fault in him since he fell unto me unto this day?***

***4 And the princes of the Philistines were wroth with him; and the princes of the Philistines said unto him, Make this fellow return, that he may go again to his place which thou hast appointed him, and let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he be an adversary to us: for wherewith should he reconcile himself unto his master? should it not be with the heads of these men?***

~ If you had a small but very capable army of men who had previously been your enemy coming up behind you, then you would get a little nervous, too. These lord’s of the Philistines didn’t want David around when they were going to fight his people. They thought this might be a trick to get back in the good graces of Saul. There was a certain amount of logic in their thinking – even though they were wrong. David could have easily taken the king himself prisoner without effort; the king has, obviously, placed full trust in David. So, it’s only natural the lord’s didn’t trust the king. See, the unsaved consensus is always in disagreement with government –

but I digress. The point is, David fully intended to fight Israel – and he would have fought to win – make no mistake.

This happens every day in Christian circles as someone who has been previously unfriendly suddenly has a change of heart and wants to be involved in anything you do. We have to wonder whether it's genuine friendship, or if there was some ulterior motive. One of the greatest tragedies in Christian service are men who attempt to undermine other Christians. The best sabotage is done from within. There's a whole lot of that going on today. We can all learn some valuable lessons in this account from the early life of David.

As we read on, we see the king is outvoted by his own men. David must go. That, my friends, is nothing but the providence of Almighty God. The Lord delivered David from having to fight God's own people. We know that David has refused to kill Saul before in chapter twenty-six; but now, I'm not so sure David didn't intend to take Saul out if he had a third opportunity; and then unite Israel with the Philistines under one rule – or something crazy like that. The proper perspective is that David stepped out of the will of God at this time; but God still acted in David's best interest for David's own good.

See, many people erroneously believe that if a child of God steps out of His will, then that man is once again lost. Well, we don't lose our salvation, but we will gain a problem with God that we will wish we never had. That translates into a problem in our lives that we cannot resolve. You will ALWAYS get in trouble when you are out of the will of God. For some people, it can be fatal, as it almost was for David. Another example would be, my saved Christian brothers and sisters, is if you marry an unsaved person; your life will become a living hell – possibly until the end. The saved man won't be able to Scripturally support divorcing a lost woman – They'll have to pray she divorces him if they want to handle it correctly. Of course, it works the other way around, too. Well, David is definitely out of the will of God and, as a result, his life is nothing but one great big problem right now....

***5 Is not this David, of whom they sang one to another in dances, saying, Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten thousands?***

***6 Then Achish called David, and said unto him, Surely, as the LORD liveth, thou hast been upright, and thy going out and thy coming in with me in the host is good in my sight: for I have not found evil in thee since the day of thy coming unto me unto this day: nevertheless the lords favour thee not.***

***7 Wherefore now return, and go in peace, that thou displease not the lords of the Philistines.***

***8 And David said unto Achish, But what have I done? and what hast thou found in thy servant so long as I have been with thee unto this day, that I may not go fight against the enemies of my lord the king?***

***9 And Achish answered and said to David, I know that thou art good in my sight, as an angel of God: notwithstanding the princes of the Philistines have said, He shall not go up with us to the battle.***

***10 Wherefore now rise up early in the morning with thy master's servants that are come with thee: and as soon as ye be up early in the morning, and have light, depart.***

***11 So David and his men rose up early to depart in the morning, to return into the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel.***

~ If you have a good Bible with a map set, you'll notice Jezreel is way up in the north. Jezreel is, actually, a part of the valley of Esdraelon where the Battle of Armageddon will take place. The word "Jezreel" means: God sows. Taking a look at the geography at this point in our study will certainly help you understand these accounts. Ziklag is way down in the south Philistine country; and that's where David had made his own home at this time. Well, the Amalekites invade Ziklag - and that brings us into chapter thirty....

**XXX**

**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.**

~ We were told previously David had over six hundred men; and it is reasonable to assume many of them had wives, and probably an average of at least one child. A despondent David returns from being thrown out of a battle, to a home that has been destroyed. David must have had some serious questions for God. I know I would have. I think it's safe to say this staggering blow from the Lord didn't make trusting Him any easier for David. The whole place was burned with fire, and all the families were gone. I'm sure the initial reaction was to believe everyone had been killed....

**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.**

~ We have already seen Abigail was married to Nabal, and Nabal means "fool." I think Abigail likely called him "stupid" before he had the heart attack and died; but I don't know for sure. What I do know is that Abigail was the only good woman we ever see in David's life. Now, as we read on, with all these problems David has, the people now also want to stone him. David was their leader, and they blamed him for leaving the city vulnerable as he did! I think we can say confidently that David made a complete and total blunder at this point of his life....

***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.***

~ Some people think of David as the little shepherd boy that killed a giant enemy, and all of that; most focus solely on his black sin involving Bathsheba. I feel most Christians will not accept the principle of David being out of the will of God at this time in which we are studying, simply because he was very much a human being – just like the rest of us. Human nature would rather not examine itself – and won't – unless forced to. We all make irrational choices and regrettable mistakes; and we all, naturally, attempt to minimize said blunders and cover up the consequences.

Interestingly, as a side note, David's men are grieving for their sons and daughters, but they aren't grieving very much for their wives. So, if ever David has been between the rock and the hard place – this is it. David has lost his own loved one and is certainly under tremendous – almost unbearable – emotional strain. Even so, David *encouraged himself in the Lord his God*; and that is one of the most remarkable statements we have in Scripture about David – or at all. I, personally, hang onto that verse very tightly.

Friends, there will be times in our Christian lives when the circumstances and events will not produce joy or happiness. There are going to be days when you and I fall into very dark places. Jesus saith unto the disciples, "*in this world you will have trouble*" - we are ALL promised trouble in this world. What are you going to do that day? Are you going to shrivel up in defeat and discouragement? Are you going to give up and say you're through? Or will you turn to the Lord and encourage yourself in Him? Those are our two choices. I'll tell you from personal experience: it's never easy during those times. God permits us to get into these predicaments so that He can determine if we will turn to Him or continue to do things our own way. Let's all turn that over in our minds a few times and see what we come up with. Those are the times when God will make Himself REAL to us – IF we will avail ourselves of Him. I am sure this is the time David wrote some of the best Psalms, by the way. Most of his Psalms are about encouraging himself in the Lord – the Lord is good – the Lord is right in



EVERYTHING He does – and how His mercy endureth forever! Let the redeemed of the Lord say He is good....

***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.***

~ The ephod is the portion of the high priests garments that speaks of prayer. This is the garment superior to the ordinary priestly garments, and it is the distinguishing article of the high priest as such. This is the garment worn by the high priest when he placed incense on the golden altar of prayer. Remember, there were two stones – one on each shoulder – upon which were engraved the names of the twelve tribes of Israel; six on one shoulder, and six on the other. So, the high priest carried the tribes into the Holy Place on his shoulders! That is a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ performing His duties as our Great and Holy High Priest Who carries us into the Holy Place on His shoulders. Remember, when the one little sheep got lost, Christ put it on *His shoulders* to bring it back into the fold.

Friends, I have no idea who you are – why you are – and I don't even know HOW you are; but I do know Christ is prepared and able to lift you up and carry you. When Jesus comes to save us to the uttermost, He'll be carrying us. If you come unto the Father through Him – guess what? – You're going to come into the Throne Room on the shoulders of the Living Christ. So, David takes that garment in order to properly go to God in prayer. Can you honestly say the Lord is my Shepherd? If you say yes – then this is what you mean. If He isn't carrying you, He isn't your Shepherd. As we read on, we see that, because David encouraged himself in the Lord, the Lord, in turn, encourages 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.***

***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.***

***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 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.***

***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.***

***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 any thing that they had taken to them: David recovered all.**

**20 And David took all the flocks and the herds, which they drave 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.**

**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.**

~ The Egyptian in verse eleven was left behind by the Amelekites after their plunder. They likely double-crossed the Egyptian army and refused to give them any provisions. Verse sixteen is where David came across the Amalekites victory party. Well, some had transportation, so they were able to jump up and ride off. They just abandoned everything; and that led to an argument amongst David's men. The fairness and justice of this passage reveals the total Godly character of David – in the worst of times. This is why David was a man after God's own heart. And this is another reason why David was a man God could – and would – use. So, justice and fairness prevails at the end of this dark leg of our Spiritual Safari. In our next report, we'll have a murder mystery – who killed Saul? Should we rejoice in the death of our enemies? Maybe you think we should love them? We're also going to examine exactly how David responded to that death of his enemy, King Saul ~