

MANY SERVANTS NOW A DAYS THAT BREAK AWAY

1 SAMUEL 24:1 – 25:24

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~ Our Spiritual Safari continues through a period of intense testing in the life of David as he flees for his life from King Saul. This is the interval in David's life that changed him from an innocent shepherd boy to a rugged man of war. The men who followed David were also extremely rough men, you may be sure. These next several chapters are the record of events that brought David to be a man after God's own heart; and caused David to rule over His people.

In this report, we'll see David spare Saul's life, and his reason for doing so is made perfectly clear. David is God's anointed man, and David is going to let God deal with his problems. David isn't going to take matters into his own hands when it means murdering the king God had placed on the throne of Israel. If we could all just get to the place where we allow the Lord to handle our enemies, we would be so much better people for doing so. Most of us handle our own problems and expect God to bless our decisions; but God can do much better than we can. Remember, God said, *"vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord!"* See, when you and I take these types of things in our own hands, it means we are not walking by faith. In fact, when we take matters upon ourselves, we are telling God we don't trust Him to handle our lives at all. Well, God is going to do a fearful and wonderful job handling King Saul before this is all over.

David chose one of the most treacherous places he could reach to hide out from Saul. Saul's posse was about three thousand men, and David had roughly six hundred – so David is overwhelmingly outnumbered. The fact that David was a much better strategist and knew this geographical area better than Saul gave him the advantage. Well, Saul happened into the very cave David was hiding in to take a nap. David's men wanted to end the Saul problem right there and then. It would have been very quick and painless – for David. Saul's men may have been on guard, but they were outside the cave. Naturally, Saul would have wanted some privacy and a safe place to rest. That gives David occasion to cut off a part of Saul's clothing; but he

could have cut off any part of Saul! Even so, David regretted he had even done this much. Saul must have been extremely embarrassed appearing in front of his men in a mini skirt.

David is honoring and respecting the office of the king of Israel – *NOT* the man in office – by sparing Saul’s life. Killing Saul could have triggered civil war and chaos at this time, too. I think David wanted to demonstrate a great temperance he had already been given by God. David was certainly misunderstood, but he was much maligned, also, likely by friend and foe alike. It was possible for David to assume the kingdom and rule with an iron fist at this moment, but I believe David knew the time was not right for him to assume the throne. I think David would have been perfectly satisfied with Saul going home and ceasing hunting him. Unfortunately, this demon possessed man, Saul, simply grows more antagonized by all of this. The evil spirit of the Lord was still upon Saul.

Today, may I say our leaders – politicians and the president – irrespective of how corrupt or incompetent they might be – deserve our respect for their office. I don’t believe they should be made the subject of cartoon or satire and ridicule. We’re supposed to actually believe in this system, but I digress, sort of. Criticism, in a democracy, is perfectly acceptable in a manner that respects free speech. Unfortunately, “free speech” is just a cover slogan for hate and profanity – but I digress again. Well, the images I see of our modern leaders around this forum on which I teach is perfectly shameful to those who create them. I believe there should be more respect for the office which, in turn, is really only respect for the nation as a whole – but that’s just my rare personal opinion! This country – and every leader in it – has their faults, but there is still no place anyone would rather live. We know that because of the way everyone wants to come here. Well, David’s conscious bothered him for making Saul a subject of ridicule; and don’t think Saul’s men didn’t laugh at him when he emerged from the cave in his latest fall fashion. They also knew Saul should be as dead as a pterodactyl! ~

XXIV

1 And it came to pass, when Saul was returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, Behold, David is in the wilderness of Engedi.

2 Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats.

3 And he came to the sheepecotes by the way, where was a cave; and Saul went in to cover his feet: and David and his men remained in the sides of the cave.

4 And the men of David said unto him, Behold the day of which the LORD said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee. Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily.

5 And it came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt.

6 And he said unto his men, The LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the LORD'S anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the LORD.

7 So David stayed his servants with these words, and suffered them not to rise against Saul. But Saul rose up out of the cave, and went on his way.

8 David also arose afterward, and went out of the cave, and cried after Saul, saying, My lord the king. And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed himself.

9 And David said to Saul, Wherefore hearest thou men's words, saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt?

10 Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that the LORD had delivered thee to day into mine hand in the cave: and some bade me kill thee: but mine eye spared thee; and I said, I will not put forth mine hand against my lord; for he is the LORD'S anointed.

11 Moreover, my father, see, yea, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand: for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou and see that there is neither evil nor transgression in mine hand, and I have not sinned against thee; yet thou huntest my soul to take it.

12 The LORD judge between me and thee, and the LORD avenge me of thee: but mine hand shall not be upon thee.

13 As saith the proverb of the ancients, Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked: but mine hand shall not be upon thee.

14 After whom is the king of Israel come out? after whom dost thou pursue ? after a dead dog, after a flea.

15 The LORD therefore be judge, and judge between me and thee, and see, and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thine hand.

16 And it came to pass, when David had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul, that Saul said, Is this thy voice, my son David? And Saul lifted up his voice, and wept.

17 And he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.

18 And thou hast shewed this day how that thou hast dealt well with me: forasmuch as when the LORD had delivered me into thine hand, thou killedst me not.

19 For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away? wherefore the LORD reward thee good for that thou hast done unto me this day.

20 And now, behold, I know well that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand.

21 Swear now therefore unto me by the LORD, that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, and that thou wilt not destroy my name out of my father's house.

22 And David sware unto Saul. And Saul went home; but David and his men gat them up unto the hold.

~ Saul waxed somewhat emotional, but David wisely doesn't trust him at all. I think this was just a ploy to get David to come on back to the palace and play the harp some more. I'm sure that appealed to David's pride. I'm sure all the women loved hearing David play the harp. Of course, Saul really only wanted another opportunity to pin David to a wall with a spear. Saul is a lying, conniving con artist, and David knows there would be a day when Saul would slip back into his schizophrenic diabolism! Remember, David has already made an oath with Jonathan, Saul's son, not to cut Saul's sons off from kingship. If Saul were sincere, this would have been the end of his entire problem. So, nothing has really changed as we slip on into the next chapter of David's life....

XXV

1 And Samuel died; and all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah. And David arose, and went down to the wilderness of Paran.

~ Scripture doesn't even eulogize Samuel; and to say the description of his death is brief and passing is an understatement. I suppose it says it all when it says all Israel gathered and wept. Either way, with that, the bridge between the judges and the kings is burned to the ground. Samuel represents an office of prophet that will follow through the entire Old Testament into the New with John the Baptist. Here, we also see David moving very far away from Saul. David runs further away from Saul now than Elijah ever ran from Ahab and Jezebel, too, by the way! Of course, David knew Samuel was a force for good in Israel. When Samuel passed away, there were no more buffers of any kind between Saul and David.

As we read on, we come to the account of David, Nabal and Abigail. Nabal was a direct descendant of Caleb; and his name meant “fool.” I’ve always wondered how he received that name. Apparently, not all of the descendants of Caleb turned out well. Anyways, Emerson said, “*to be great is to be misunderstood.*” That definitely applies to David at this time. The world does not know the real story of David, so it consistently misjudges him. Every mention of David today seems to only call to mind his heinous sin. Invariably, people question how David could have committed that act with Bathsheba and against Uriah the Hittite – and they ask how David could possibly have been a man after God’s own heart - and all that. Well, our safari will answer those questions in magnificent detail as we move along – and we’ll discover that only small-minded people criticize David’s character. At this time, however, David is on the cusp of committing a very rash act. It takes a wonderful woman to stymie the tense situation. I consider this one of the high points in the life of David....

2 And there was a man in Maon, whose possessions were in Carmel; and the man was very great, and he had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats: and he was shearing his sheep in Carmel.

3 Now the name of the man was Nabal; and the name of his wife Abigail: and she was a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance: but the man was churlish and evil in his doings; and he was of the house of Caleb.

4 And David heard in the wilderness that Nabal did shear his sheep.

5 And David sent out ten young men, and David said unto the young men, Get you up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name:

6 And thus shall ye say to him that liveth in prosperity, Peace be both to thee, and peace be to thine house, and peace be unto all that thou hast.

7 And now I have heard that thou hast shearers: now thy shepherds which were with us, we hurt them not, neither was there ought missing unto them, all the while they were in Carmel.

8 Ask thy young men, and they will shew thee. Wherefore let the young men find favour in thine eyes: for we come in a good day: give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand unto thy servants, and to thy son David.

9 And when David's young men came, they spake to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David, and ceased.

10 And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? there be many servants now a days that break away every man from his master.

11 Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men, whom I know not whence they be?

12 So David's young men turned their way, and went again, and came and told him all those sayings.

13 And David said unto his men, Gird ye on every man his sword. And they girded on every man his sword; and David also girded on his sword: and there went up after David about four hundred men; and two hundred abode by the stuff.

14 But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master; and he railed on them.

15 But the men were very good unto us, and we were not hurt, neither missed we any thing, as long as we were conversant with them, when we were in the fields:

16 They were a wall unto us both by night and day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep.

17 Now therefore know and consider what thou wilt do; for evil is determined against our master, and against all his household: for he is such a son of Belial, that a man cannot speak to him.

18 Then Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on asses.

19 And she said unto her servants, Go on before me; behold, I come after you. But she told not her husband Nabal.

20 And it was so, as she rode on the ass, that she came down by the covert of the hill, and, behold, David and his men came down against her; and she met them.

21 Now David had said, Surely in vain have I kept all that this fellow hath in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that pertained unto him: and he hath requited me evil for good.

22 So and more also do God unto the enemies of David, if I leave of all that pertain to him by the morning light any that pisseth against the wall.

23 And when Abigail saw David, she hastened, and lighted off the ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground,

24 And fell at his feet, and said, Upon me, my lord, upon me let this iniquity be: and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience, and hear the words of thine handmaid.

~ We need to look beyond David and Goliath, and through David's friendship with Jonathan, and consider this chapter concerning David a story in and of life itself. This reveals the innermost recesses of David's soul, my beloved. The name "Nabal" means "fool!" How his parents arrived at that name I have no idea, but he sure lived up to it. I suppose we are all born as fools, though, aren't we? Scripture says man is born like the wild asses colt – and that can't be good. Foolishness is bound in a young heart. Why don't we all examine our own life for a moment – did you ever do anything foolish? Of course, we all have, and we would probably all rather not recall those things.

Nabal was a rich fool who had no honor and no honesty. David could easily have robbed this man of all he owned. David and his men had protected Nabal, and they needed food; that's all they asked for. When Nabal said, "... *many break away from their masters*" - he was directly insulting David for not being loyal to Saul. Nabal was a drunken beast and a selfish stupid dog who couldn't discern what was happening. What he did have was a beautiful and intelligent woman for a wife – and that's a rare combination, to be sure. Of course, she knew what David was likely to do. Any other man would have wiped Nabal out completely; and David had a mind to do just that. My question is: how did this man get such a wonderful woman for a wife? One very prominent expositor of the Word of God calls this account beauty and the beast. Frankly, I think her parents likely arranged it. Naturally, wealth impresses people, and most people can't see past it. I think Abigail's beauty was likely sold for gold in the first recorded case of human trafficking. I know that's terrible – unfortunately, it happens all the time in our contemporary culture.

Well, our story isn't quite complete, but the space allotted for this report is used up; so, we'll have to finish this account as we move forward from here in our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God. I suggest you read the rest of this chapter carefully after praying for wisdom, judgment and discernment - if you haven't already done so; if you have – it will do you well to read it again. Reading the Bible is the way it becomes meaningful to us and it's the *ONLY* way we can remember what it teaches, too, by the way ~