

DAVID DEFEATS THE AMALEKITES

BIBLE TEXT: I Samuel 27:1, 2; 29:1-11; 30:1-25

LESSON 217 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper" (Isaiah 54:17).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

1 Samuel 27:1-2

¹ And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul: *there is* nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coast of Israel: so shall I escape out of his hand.

² And David arose, and he passed over with the six hundred men that *were* with him unto Achish, the son of Maoch, king of Gath.

1 Samuel 29:1-11

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?

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,

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

Fear

With the promise of Saul to do no more harm to David, the two men had parted. David went on his way and Saul returned to his place. God had been with David to deliver him many times from Saul. David had been anointed to be king, and that should have been his assurance that God would protect him. Because he had no confidence in Saul and his promise, David had fear in his heart. That fear weakened his faith in God for his safety. When David said, "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul," it seems that he was no longer depending upon God for his help. No doubt, David felt that in his own strength he could not continue to flee from Saul.

Was this the same David who said, "The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" (Psalm 27:1) ? Did not David say, "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God" (Psalm 20:7) ? At another time, did not David say, "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee" (Psalm 56:3)? Now, for a time, David was discouraged. He decided to go into the land of the Philistines, away from Saul and his men.

The Land of the Philistines

To go into the land of the Philistines was no easy thing for David to do. David had reason to fear also their king, Achish of Gath (**1 Samuel 21:12** ¹² And David laid up these words in his heart, and was sore afraid of Achish the king of Gath. **Psalm 56:1-13** ¹ Be merciful unto me, O God: for man would swallow me up; he fighting daily oppresseth me. ² Mine enemies would daily swallow me up: for *they be* many that fight against me, O thou most High. ³ What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. ⁴ In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me. ⁵ Every day they wrest my words: all their thoughts *are* against me for evil. ⁶ They gather themselves together, they hide themselves, they mark my steps, when they wait for my soul. ⁷ Shall they escape by iniquity? in *thine* anger cast down the people, O God. ⁸ Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle: *are they* not in thy book? ⁹ When I cry *unto thee*, then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God *is* for me. ¹⁰ In God will I praise *his* word: in the LORD will I praise *his* word. ¹¹ In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me. ¹² Thy vows *are* upon me, O God: I will render praises unto thee. ¹³ For thou hast delivered my soul from death: *wilt not thou deliver* my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?).

David's discouragement caused him to leave the land of his inheritance and the fellowship of the rest of the Children of Israel. For one year and four months, David and his 600 men and their families lived in the land of the Philistines. Achish, king of Gath, gave David the city of Ziklag in which he dwelt.

A Servant

Often the people of the world like to have one of God's followers with them. They know that God will be with His own people. They hope to gain God's favor because of that one believer among them. Achish appeared to be kind to David and

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.

1 Samuel 30:1-25

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.

his men by permitting them to live in his land and by giving them the city of Ziklag. Achish did so because he expected to gain by having David in his land. Achish did not have David's interest at heart. David was a valiant man of war and a good soldier. Achish knew that David could do a lot of good for the Philistines by warring against their enemies. David had gone to the land of the Philistines to escape from Saul, but David was obliged to risk his life in battle for the Philistines. David did not gain any good thing by being so discouraged as to live among the Philistines. Achish said of David: "He hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him; therefore he shall be my servant for ever" (1 Samuel 27:12).

In Trouble

The time came when the Philistines were at war with the Children of Israel. Achish assigned David as his bodyguard — keeper of the king's head (**1 Samuel 28:2** ² And David said to Achish, Surely thou shalt know what thy servant can do. And Achish said to David, Therefore will I make thee keeper of mine head for ever.). By his association with ungodly people, David found himself in a strait. How many times it has happened that those who leave the people of God soon find themselves in trouble! Children sometimes get into trouble because they have chosen evil companions. The words of Solomon tell us: "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men" (Proverbs 4:14); and "Be not thou envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them" (Proverbs 24:1).

Perhaps David reasoned with himself as to what he should do. Should he refuse to go to battle against the Children of Israel? Should he remain at home as a coward, ungrateful for what Achish had done for him? Or should David be a traitor to his own people? Should he fight against Israel as an enemy? Would not that make David unworthy to be king? If Saul were slain, would David be to blame? Perhaps, as David considered the matter, it appeared that there would be sin and scandal whatever he did. Was there no way out, without guilt or grief for David?

The King's Guard

David and his men were given a place as a rear guard with Achish. It is probable that David meant to be only the king's guard. It is doubtful that David meant to take any other part in the battle of the Philistines against Israel. David had lived an upright and faultless life among the Philistines. He was in a strange circumstance. No doubt, he depended upon God to help him do the right thing.

The princes of the Philistines opposed David and his men. They insisted that David be dismissed from going to battle with them. The Philistines were afraid that, once in battle, David and his men would turn on them. In days past they had been enemies, and they reasoned that David was more dangerous than Saul. Perhaps they remembered that David was the one who had slain their champion, Goliath (Lesson No. 211). To please the princes of the Philistines, Achish discharged David and his men. Achish had a good report of David's life. Achish had found no fault or evil in him. Achish had been pleased and satisfied with David's conduct and association. Lest the Philistines be displeased, Achish ordered David and his men to depart early in the morning. So God delivered David out of the army of the Philistines, out of the battle of the Philistines against Israel.

Their Home

David and his men hastened to their own city, Ziklag. For

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*.

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

three days they marched. Very likely they were tired and eager to be at home. What a sad sight they beheld! While they had been gone, the Amalekites had invaded Ziklag, captured all the people, and burned the city. David and his men, these mighty and brave men of war, were so grieved that they wept. David and his men loved their children and homes. No wonder the men wept that their families had been carried away and their homes destroyed.

Correction

Perhaps God permitted the destruction of Ziklag and the capture of the people to correct David. There is no record that David prayed or asked God about living among the Philistines. David seemed to doubt that God would protect him from Saul. When David went among the Philistines, God did not permit him nor his family to be slain, but they did suffer. "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth," or correcteth (Hebrews 12:6).

Sometimes today, for the good of His people, God finds it necessary to permit trouble and sorrow. It does not mean that God has turned His face away. It is God's way of drawing us closer to Him. God loves us and wants us to learn to trust Him more.

Never before, so far as we know, had David's family been molested when he was away in the line of duty. God had cared for and protected David's family. This time David was not in the way of duty. It was his idea to be away from home. God had not told him to go, nor did duty demand his absence.

Encouragement in the Lord

David was distressed, but "David encouraged himself in the LORD his God." When it appeared that everything was against David, he looked to God. Saul had driven David from his country. The Philistines had dismissed David from their army. The Amalekites had plundered his city and taken David's family captive. Then David's friends turned against him — his own men threatened to stone him. At such a time of misery and distress, David knew what to do. He had faith in the Lord. Perhaps David had learned a lesson, for this time he prayed. David inquired of God and showed that he was depending upon God to help him. David asked God a definite question, "Shall I pursue after this troop?" God gave David a definite answer, "Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all." Perhaps the reason some people do not receive definite answers when they pray is that they pray in a general way and do not pray a definite prayer. God had an unmistakable message and promise for David.

The Amalekites Pursued

The 600 discontented men who were with David recognized his faith and patience. He dealt kindly with them, so they went along as he pursued the Amalekites. Some of these men were so tired that they could not keep pace with David as he went to overtake those who had stolen his family and possessions. David did not urge his men to go beyond their strength. At the brook of Besor, one third of David's men remained behind.

Mercy and Help

David dealt kindly with a young Egyptian whom he found in a field. David showed mercy by giving him food and water. Some people would have been in too much of a hurry to help the young man, and would have considered his trouble none of their affair. Although David took of his time and provision for the

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.

young man, he was repaid by information given him. The Egyptian had been a servant of an Amalekite, and told David just what he wanted to know. When the Egyptian had become sick, his master had left him. Now the young man was capable and willing to be of service to those who had befriended him and to punish his master, the one who had abused him.

Nothing Lost

The Egyptian directed David to the camp of the Amalekites who were making merry because of their spoils from David's city. At a time when the Amalekites thought they were safe and had laid aside all thoughts of war, David surprised them, caught them off-guard when they were unable to make much resistance. Only 400 of them escaped, while "David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away." The families were rescued, and the spoils were recovered. David lost nothing and gained a great deal in spoils.

His Trust in God

May it be impressed upon us how much better David fared when he prayed and had faith in God. When David fled to the land of the Philistines, he became a servant and had to go to war. When David trusted God, he found that all plans against him failed. As long as David believed God, no weapon formed against him could prosper (**Isaiah 54:17** ¹⁷ No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This *is* the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness *is* of me, saith the LORD.). So it will be in our lives when we are willing to trust God and depend upon Him.

Dividing the Spoils

When David and his men returned to the brook Besor, they were met by those who had remained there. Though they had not been able to go with David, they rejoiced in the good work that was done. But among those who went with David were some wicked men who were selfish and greedy. They were willing to return the families to those who had stayed, but they did not want to share the spoils.

David did not listen to his men. He told them that out of gratitude to God who had helped and protected them, all would share the spoils. It would be only just and right to divide the spoils with those who stayed with the "stuff." That day David made an ordinance and law that there would be equal shares of the reward and spoils for all the people.

Just as it is today, every branch of service for the Lord is for the good of all and is worthy of a reward. We are not all able to take an active part in all the work of the Lord; but by praying faithfully — staying "by the stuff" — we shall receive gratitude for our help, and a reward.

QUESTIONS

- 1 Why did David go to live in the land of the Philistines?
- 2 What city was given to David?
- 3 What did Achish expect of David?
- 4 Why did the Philistines object to David's fighting with them?
- 5 What had happened while David was away from his home?
- 6 Why did David need to be corrected?
- 7 What kind of answer did David receive when he prayed?
- 8 What did David receive for befriending the Egyptian?
- 9 Why did all the men receive a part of the spoils?
- 10 How can we stay at home "by the stuff"?