

LIFE OF DAVID STUDY

STUDY NO 25 - TOUCH NOT YAHWEH'S ANOINTED

PARALLELS BETWEEN 1 SAMUEL CHAPTERS 23, 24 and CHAPTER 26

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF - BUT NOT QUITE!

1. The treacherous conduct of the Ziphites	23:19 & 26:1
2. David hides in the area of Hachilah	23:19 & 26:1,3
3. Saul seeks David with an army of 3,000 men	24:2 & 26:2
4. David's men plead for Saul's death	24:4 & 26:8
5. David rejects their request	24:6 & 26:9,11
6. Saul's identification of David's voice	24:16 & 26:17
7. David speaks of himself as a "flea"	24:14 & 26:20

WHY THE SIMILARITY? AND WHERE IS THE DIFFERENCE?

The events of 1 Samuel 26 show that David had matured in his understanding of things since the incident where he cut off part of Saul's robe in the cave at Engedi. That incident, plus his rashness in moving against Nabal, had taught David to proceed with greater caution; to be more conscious of Yahweh's will in all the events and circumstances of life. While David had been prepared to cut off a piece of Saul's robe in chapter 24, in chapter 26 he will not violate Saul's person in any way - not even to the extent of touching his garment.

1 SAMUEL 26

V5 AND DAVID BEHELD THE PLACE WHERE SAUL LAY

David observed the situation in Saul's camp. David was on top of a hill and Saul was camped in a depression below it, thus allowing David to look down on the scene.

ABNER THE SON OF NER

Ner was also the father of Kish (1 Chron 8:33) who was the father of Saul (1 Sam 9:1). So Kish and Abner were brothers, and consequently Abner was Saul's uncle. Having Abner as captain of his army was in keeping with Saul's philosophy of only trusting people of his own tribe and his own family. See note on "ye Benjamites" 1 Samuel 22:7 (page 59). Ner means "light" and Ab-ner "the father of light". He was blessed with a name he should have lived up to, but he utterly failed to do so. Thus his name was a misnomer. In baptism we have put on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. His is the name that we bear in our dealings with others. We thus have a name to live up to. Abner held the place in Saul's army that Joab was later to hold in David's army. The two men were alike in that both were very conscious of their own self-interest. It is always a great tragedy when people who have a capacity to help in ecclesial life are more concerned with their own self-interest, their own

1 SAMUEL 26

desires, their own goals, than they are with their responsibilities to God and the Lord Jesus Christ. A little later in history, Abner slew Joab's brother Asahel, and in due time Joab took his revenge stabbing Abner under the fifth rib (2 Samuel 3:27,31).

SAUL LAY IN THE TRENCH

See note on page 96

V6 WHO WILL GO DOWN WITH ME

Abishai who was somewhat impulsive and impetuous readily responded but Ahimelech did not. This is not to suggest that there was anything wrong in Abishai's decision which was very courageous. Ahimelech too was a courageous man who later on acquitted himself very well, but he appears to have declined the opportunity to go with David on this occasion. Perhaps he did not feel equipped to stand in the forefront of the battle at this time as many of us may also feel. However there is something that we all can do, and that is give **full support** to those who are in the forefront of the battle for the Truth.

V7 VERSE 7

Jer B "So in the dark, David and Abishai made their way towards the force, where they found Saul lying asleep inside the camp, his spear stuck in the ground beside his head, with Abner and the troops lying round him."

BOLSTER

This was the equivalent of a pillow. Hebrew *meraashah* meaning as the head-rest or pillow (Strong 4763). Many versions e.g. Jer B, Rotherham, N.I.V., simply indicate beside, at, or near his head.

ABNER AND THE PEOPLE LAY ROUND ABOUT HIM

They were all sound asleep, including Abner and Saul's other bodyguards.

V8 THEN SAID ABISHAI TO DAVID

Abishai was enthusiastic. He said in effect 'Just give me one chance, that is all I need to dispense with Saul.' Abishai was enthusiastic: but he was also impulsive and wrong.

GOD HATH DELIVERED THINE ENEMY INTO THINE HAND THIS DAY

It sounds all very spiritual and very appealing. 'GOD has organised things so Saul can be killed' says Abishai. By attributing things to God we can justify many things in life. But Yahweh may not approve of the action we are seeking to justify in His name. He may see things very differently, as He certainly did on this occasion. And Abishai's attitude became yet another trial for David. According to Abishai here was another opportunity to expedite what Yahweh had promised David. Should David act at this moment, or should he wait on Yahweh? - that was the question. Abishai was actually tempting David without realising what he was doing. There is a certain similarity here between Abishai's temptation of David and the temptation of the Lord Jesus Christ recorded in Matthew 4:8-10. Like the Lord's tempter, Abishai wanted to lead David straight to the throne and the kingdom. Like Christ, David resisted the temptation. David saw the issue now even more clearly than he did in the cave at Engedi (1 Sam 24:4). That is why we have this record. Abishai was making assumptions as to what the will of Yahweh was. It is dangerous to make decisions based on assumptions. The real question was 'What was the will of Yahweh - what was the correct thing to do?' Abishai would have known that David had refused to take Saul's life at Engedi, but

1 SAMUEL 26

Abishai has not learned the lesson. Abishai was later to save David's life (2 Sam 21:17), but on this occasion his urgings are wrong.

V9 VERSE 9

David understood how he had almost been led into making a serious mistake in Chapter 24, and in fact did make a mistake in cutting off the hem of Saul's robe (see 1 Samuel 24:4-6 and notes on page 75). He also realised that his immediate rash reaction to Nabal's contempt in chapter 25, almost led him into disaster. But here he expresses the matter correctly. Saul was Yahweh's anointed, and as long as Saul remained king, he was in that office under Yahweh, even if Saul did not recognise it himself.

V10 YAHWEH SHALL SMITE HIM; OR HIS DAY SHALL COME TO DIE; OR HE SHALL DESCEND INTO BATTLE, AND PERISH

In this verse David is saying that Saul's destiny lay in the hands of Yahweh, not his. David knew that whatever Yahweh decided to do with Saul, it would be just, as it was in the case of Nabal. David says that eventually one of three things would happen to Saul. In fact David was right on all three counts. Yahweh smote him: his day came to die: and he went into battle and perished.

V11 TAKE THOU NOW THE SPEAR.....AND THE CRUSE OF WATER, AND LET US GO

In the cave at Engedi, David cut off a piece of Saul's robe (1 Sam 24:4-5), But here he says "Yahweh forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against Yahweh's anointed." This is in fact the identical wording to 1 Samuel 24:6 where David expresses his thoughts **AFTER** he had cut the hem of Saul's robe. Here he expresses that principle **BEFOREHAND**, and will not lay his hand upon Saul - he will not violate Saul's person, and that extended to the garment that Saul wore. However, Saul was still going to be taught that David was in a position to kill him, and for that reason his spear and his water bottle are taken.

V12 NO MAN SAW IT....NEITHER AWAKED

Young's Literal "and there is none seeing, and there is none knowing, and there is none awaking." Rotherham "no man saw, and no man knew, and no man awoke."

BECAUSE A DEEP SLEEP FROM YAHWEH WAS FALLEN UPON THEM

Yahweh provided the protection that David needed. Faith when acted upon will bring the blessing of Yahweh. If we act carefully, in faith, and with courage, Yahweh will bless what we do. "A deep sleep" is exactly the description of what happened to Adam when Yahweh took his rib to create Eve. The men in Saul's camp were unconscious to that which was happening. While David did not know why Saul's camp were so unconscious, he did recognise the principle that "the angel of Yahweh encampeth round about them that fear him and delivereth them" (Psa 34:7). Like David we have to learn to be very conscious of the presence of Yahweh in our lives. Life in the Truth is very real. Trials come upon us for the development of our characters that we might do that which is right.

V13 VERSE 13

From the point of view of tactics, this was a smart thing to do. David went in the opposite direction to where his own camp lay, and called to Saul from the opposite hill.

V14 VERSE 14

Imagine the drama in the camp of Saul when in the middle of the night the camp is wakened by the voice of David. The Jer B translates it as "David then called out to the troops and to Abner son of Ner, 'Abner, will you not answer?' Abner replied, 'Who is that calling?'" Imagine Abner being suddenly awoken from a deep sleep; being somewhat disorientated; with the whole camp stirring into an uneasy wakefulness. In speaking to Abner, David would have known that he was almost certainly wasting his time. However, he is like the Lord Jesus Christ, who in addressing the Pharisees (who he describes as blind leaders of the blind), realised that he would achieve nothing with them. But in speaking to the Pharisees others were listening, and they were the people the Lord really wanted to address. In Psalm 78:70-71 we are informed that Yahweh took David to shepherd His people. So like the Lord, David was a shepherd of Yahweh's flock. He was interested in getting through to the people of Saul's army that he might elevate Yahweh in their hearts.

V15 ART THOU NOT A VALIANT MAN?

"Man" is from the Hebrew *ish* meaning a great or mighty man. The adjective "valiant" is implied. Jer B "are you not a man?" Roth "Art thou not a man?" David's words here are heavy with irony. Abner had been guilty of dereliction of duty. By going to sleep he had left Saul in a vulnerable and dangerous position. Perhaps Abner had said "I will sleep - you stay awake and guard the king." However, if so, it was an abrogation of his responsibility. We cannot afford to do this in the Truth. We ALL have a responsibility to do all that we can by study of the Word of God, and influence, to keep the body unified and educated in the right principles of the Truth. We cannot delegate our responsibility to others. We cannot say to them 'You stay awake, while I sleep.'

V16 THIS THING IS NOT GOOD THAT THOU HAST DONE

Jer B "What you did was not well done." Abner had failed the king. We cannot afford to fail OUR king.

YE HAVE NOT KEPT YOUR MASTER, YAHWEH'S ANOINTED

David, having got the principle that Saul was Yahweh's anointed firmly fixed in his own mind, he is not going to let others forget it. The voice of the greater David (the Beloved) speaks to us now through the Word. The time will come when we will be called upon to give account of how we have safeguarded the interests of our king. We do not want to be in the position of having failed like Abner.

AND NOW SEE WHERE THE KING'S SPEAR IS, AND THE CRUSE OF WATER THAT WAS AT HIS BOLSTER

We can imagine the scrambling around that would have gone on in a vain attempt to find the king's spear and water bottle.

V17 AND SAUL KNEW DAVID'S VOICE

Abner could not recognise the voice, but Saul knew the voice of David. Saul knew instinctively that he had been at death's door. He would have remembered the previous incident of this kind (1 Samuel 24:1-16).

IS THIS THY VOICE, MY SON DAVID?

See 1 Samuel 24:16. What a pitiable state Saul was in. He calls David "my son", when he had come down with the express purpose of killing him.

LIFE OF DAVID STUDY

STUDY NO 26 - SAUL'S LAST WORDS TO DAVID

1 SAMUEL 26

V17 IT IS MY VOICE, MY LORD, O KING

Despite everything that had happened, David still maintains a respectful disposition toward Yahweh's anointed.

V18 FOR WHAT HAVE I DONE? OR WHAT EVIL IS IN MINE HAND?

Here was an awkward, pointed question for Saul, because David was guiltless in his actions and attitude towards Saul, and Saul knew it. David was a man of honour, faith, and integrity in the Truth, but Saul could not bring himself to acknowledge this. We must not be like Saul. We must be able to acknowledge what is right in accordance with the Word of God when we see it and hear it. This places a great responsibility on us. To acknowledge what is right, we have to KNOW what is right in the first place. Upholding the righteousness of Yahweh is a vital aspect of life in the Truth. Because of David's own righteous dealings with others, he is able to ask Yahweh to deal with him on the same basis. In Psalm 7:4-5 he says "If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me; (yea, I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy:) let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it; yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth, and lay mine honour in the dust. Selah." David had exercised mercy towards Saul, so Yahweh was going to exercise mercy towards David. Nevertheless the words of Psalm 7:4-5 were going to come back and haunt David later in his life, in the matter of Bathsheba and Uriah. Although Yahweh forgave David his sin because David had exercised mercy, nevertheless, on the basis of David's own words in Psalm 7:4-5, David's whole family and David himself were to pay a tremendous price for his sin. So we need to be very careful in our words - our vows - before Yahweh.

V19 VERSE 19

David sees only two possibilities. One was that his persecution was divinely inspired (for the development of his character). The other was that it sprang from the wicked motives of wicked men.

IF YAHWEH HATH STIRRED THEE UP AGAINST ME, LET HIM ACCEPT AN OFFERING

The "offering" David refers to here is the *minchah* or meal offering, which was compulsorily offered with burnt offerings and peace offerings, which were the beginning and end of the Mosaic code so far as sacrifices were concerned. The burnt offering represented a life dedicated to Yahweh. The peace offerings brought the faithful Israelite into fellowship with God.

BUT IF THEY BE THE CHILDREN OF MEN, CURSED BE THEY BEFORE YAHWEH

Jer B. "If Yahweh himself has incited you against me, let him accept an offering; but if men have done it, may they be accursed before Yahweh..." Proverbs 6:19 declares that one of the things that Yahweh hates is "he that soweth discord among brethren." "Discord" means precisely that, but it also carries the meaning of "strife" and "contention". Discord, strife and contention are an abomination unto Yahweh (Prov 6:16). Proverbs 16:28 declares that "A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends." The hebrew word for "froward" *tahpukah* only occurs ten times in

1 SAMUEL 26

scripture of which nine are in the Book of Proverbs. Gesenius gives its meaning as perversity, foolishness, deceit, fraud. When brethren rise up with ideas and concepts different from those we have always believed, there is going to be contention, but as in the case of David, it is not of our doing. When Paul stood firmly for the principles of the Truth, he (like David) found himself labelled as a troublemaker and divisive.

FOR THEY HAVE DRIVEN ME OUT THIS DAY FROM ABIDING IN THE INHERITANCE OF YAHWEH, SAYING, GO, SERVE OTHER GODS

Roth "for they have driven me out to-day from joining myself with the inheritance of Yahweh saying - Go, serve other gods!" Yahweh's inheritance was the Nation of Israel. What David means is that he wanted to be with his people - he did not want to be separated from the ecclesia. If he were driven out of the land of Israel it would be the same as being expelled from the presence of Yahweh into other lands where he would be expected to serve other gods. He saw his persecution as driving him away into exile.

V20 NOW THEREFORE, LET NOT MY BLOOD FALL TO THE EARTH BEFORE THE FACE OF YAHWEH

Roth "Now therefore let not my blood fall to the earth, **away from** the presence of Yahweh". David did not want to be forced to die in a land which was alien to Yahweh where other gods held sway. For ourselves this would be the equivalent of being sent away from the ecclesia and having our burial conducted by a Roman Catholic priest.

FOR THE KING OF ISRAEL IS COME OUT TO SEEK A FLEA

See 1 Samuel 24:14 and note there - page 77. David was personally powerless against Saul.

AS WHEN ONE DOTHT HUNT A PARTRIDGE IN THE MOUNTAINS

Condor in his 'Handbook to Bible Lands' in commenting on this says "Here among the rocks of the wild goats the herds of ibex may be seen bounding, and the partridge is still chased on the mountains as David was followed by the stealthy hunter Saul". So David likens himself to a partridge darting in and out of the scrub and fleeing for its life through the rocks of the mountains, as the hunter closes in upon it.

V21 THEN SAID SAUL, I HAVE SINNED

Was David deeply moved by Saul's confession? No! The last words of this chapter are "So David went his way, and Saul returned to his place." David did not believe Saul - he had no evidence upon which to believe him. Such emotional confessions as this do not indicate a change of basic disposition. A recognition of sin and failure must be manifested in a changed way of life. This principle is demonstrated in Proverbs 28:13 "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth **and forsaketh them** shall have mercy", and James 4:17 "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and **doeth it not**, to him it is sin." Saul knew what was right, and although he confessed to sin, what did he do to put matters right? What did he do to convince David that he was now motivated by the power of the Word? Saul does nothing, and so remained a convicted sinner. The Word did not become a life-changing power in his life. 1 Samuel 27:4 tells us that Saul "sought no more again for him". But this was not a change of heart. It was a merely negative action recording the finality of the matter. Saul simply gave up

