

LIFE OF DAVID STUDY

STUDY NO 31 - PROVIDENCE DELIVERS DAVID

1 SAMUEL 29

V1 NOW THE PHILISTINES GATHERED TOGETHER ALL THEIR ARMIES

Jer B "The Philistines mustered all their forces". This was to be not merely an incursion into Israel, but a full scale attack. The five kings of the Philistines were united in the ideal of conquering the whole of Saul's kingdom. They had chosen their time to attack with care. They were well aware of the weakness of Saul's army (see for example V 10 and the note "with thy master's servants that are come with thee" p 123). They saw their opportunity and decided to take it. The world will always make its strongest attack against the Ecclesia when the Ecclesia is at its weakest. If the world can see that the Ecclesia, which should be united in its outlook and in its upholding of Godly standards, is divided or care-less, it will exploit the situation with the objective of further undermining the Truth and destroying it.

APHEK

The name means "fortress". There were a number of towns with this name. There was an Aphek which lay some 45 kms N.N.W. of Jerusalem and 18 kms N.E. of Joppa, and this would seem to be the Aphek mentioned here. This Aphek (later known as Antipatris) lay on the road that led to the Meggido pass by which the Philistine armies would have entered the Valley of Jezreel.

IN JEZREEL

There was a place know by that name. Note that it does **not** say in **the Valley of Jezreel**. The Israelitish army were extremely fearful at this time. It was not just that Saul was a weak leader. It was that instead of having their eyes fixed on Yahweh, and instead of placing total confidence in Him, their eyes were on Saul. Deuteronomy 20:1-4 sets out the procedure that Israel should have followed **every time** they went into battle. It was not the king, or the leaders of the nation who should have stood before the army. Rather it was **the priest** who was to address the nation and exhort them to put their trust and confidence in Yahweh. No such meeting was held; no such exhortation was delivered at this time. This requirement of the Law was abandoned with disastrous consequences.

V2 BUT DAVID AND HIS MEN PASSED ON IN THE REREWARD WITH ACHISH

Jer B "with David and his men bringing up the rear with Achish". Because David and his men were at the rear, they would have seen this huge Philistine army pass before them as they waited to fall in behind them with Achish. Imagine David's thoughts as he watches this massive army move north to slaughter his people - the people of Israel. Contrast this situation as David stands here **silent**, with what he **said** in 1 Sam 17:45-46 when he went out to fight Goliath. David's plight as he marches northward with the Philistines, was self-inflicted. The spiritually minded in Israel had been confident that David would assume the throne and save the nation. See Abigail's attitude in 1 Sam 25:28-30. Even Saul expected that the kingdom would be established in David's hand (1 Sam 24:20). Many in Israel looked to David to provide the leadership the nation so desperately needed. Yet here he is marching with the Philistines. There is however a marked difference between the sin of Saul and

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the foolishness of David. Saul's sins were of a radical nature. On the other hand, David's sins were the result of the weakness of the flesh, which revealed human nature as prone to do evil, rather than good. This is not to make an excuse for David, but rather to show the difference between David, who was a man after God's own heart, and men like Saul who rebelled against Yahweh and turned to a witch. In Psalm 51:1-2 David reveals that he learned from his experiences in life. There he uses the words "transgressions", "iniquity", and "sin". These same three words were used of the nation by the High Priest on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:21). And so David is mindful of his need for atonement. In Psalm 51:5 he expressed himself in words which also show that he was mindful of the nature which he bore. Like Job (Job 14:4), David is saying that by conception his nature had a proneness to evil rather than good. Unfortunately, on occasions such as we have in 1 Samuel 29, David let himself be dominated by the flesh rather than faith. David was however chastened by his experiences. But Saul was not. This is why David escaped the worst consequences of his actions while Saul did not.

V3 WHAT DO THESE HEBREWS HERE?

Whenever the Philistines use the term "Hebrews" it is used as a term of contempt - of loathing.

I HAVE FOUND NO FAULT IN HIM

Thus Achish attempts to justify his decision to have David and his men march with the Philistines.

V4 AND THE PRINCES OF THE PHILISTINES WERE WROTH WITH (ACHISH)

The rest of the Philistine "princes" were not going to have David at any price. They had very strong reservations about David's loyalty to them. They believed that he was not to be trusted. How would David have felt about that? If there was one thing that characterised David's life in his dealings with others, it was trustworthiness and faithfulness. But David had been double-dealing with the Philistines.

MAY GO AGAIN TO HIS PLACE

I.E. to Ziklag (1 Sam 27:6).

V5 VERSE 5

Isn't it remarkable that the Philistines knew the songs of Israel. The world often knows what goes on in the Ecclesia of God. And certainly they remembered David's victories over themselves. Their memories may have been prompted by the Elohim. It was Yahweh who was delivering David out of this appalling situation. It was possible for the Philistines to have taken an alternative view of David's presence among them, namely, that it would have been very, very demoralising for the Israelites to know that David and his valiant men were marching to war with the Philistines, and so have concluded that David's presence among them was a good thing, rather than a bad thing. But they don't think of it like that, because undoubtedly the Elohim were at work.

V6 THEN ACHISH SAIDSURELY, AS YAHWEH LIVETH

These were astonishing words in the mouth of a Philistine. But the Philistines had seen before the work of Yahweh in their midst when they were in the possession of the Ark of the Covenant (1 Samuel chaps 5 and 6).

NEVERTHELESS THE LORDS FAVOUR THEE NOT

Jer B "You are not acceptable to the leaders".

V7 WHEREFORE NOW RETURN, AND GO IN PEACE

Here are words in the mouth of Achish which could have been spoken by Yahweh Himself. So David is off the hook! All he needed to do was express his heartfelt thanks for the hand of Providence in his life. Here we see how lovingly, and tenderly, Yahweh deals with his servant David.

V8 AND DAVID SAID UNTO ACHISH

At this point David did not need to say anything at all. All he needed to do was to offer a silent fervent prayer to Yahweh in thanks for his deliverance. But instead of that, he uses words which continue his deception of Achish. David does not openly say the Israelites were his enemies and that he wanted to fight against them. But his words are designed to deceive Achish into thinking that that was the position. There is little difference between deception and a lie. He also uses words which could have caused Achish to go back to the other Philistine leaders with a view to getting them to change their mind about David, so that he would have been hooked again. There is a compelling lesson here. David is shown in his worst light when he is in the company of gentiles. It is right that we should seek the company of those who know and love the Truth, and have no company with those who walk in darkness. In Psalm 119:63 the Psalmist says "I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts". David had not been doing that while he was associated with Achish.

V9 AS AN ANGEL OF GOD

Jer B "As blameless as an angel of God". This shows that Achish did not know much - he did not realise he had been misled by David. He could use the name of Yahweh (v 6) without understanding what it meant. He can liken David to an angel, without knowing much about angels, either. He speaks according to the reasoning of the flesh which often sees the need to placate the aggrieved party.

V10 WHEREFORE NOW RISE UP EARLY IN THE MORNING

The Philistines wanted David and his men gone as soon as possible.

WITH THY MASTER'S SERVANTS THAT ARE COME WITH THEE

This is a reference to Saul's servants who had come down and joined David at Ziklag (1 Chron 12). The Philistines knew what was going on in Israel and in Saul's army. They knew where many of David's men had come from.

V11 TO RETURN INTO THE LAND OF THE PHILISTINES

David did not head for Israel to fight with the army of Saul. He returned to Ziklag (1 Sam 30:1). Yahweh will exercise mercy and deliverance towards his servants, far above what they deserve. Psalm 130:3-4 expresses it this way "If thou, Yahweh, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared." The Psalms are not presented in chronological order in our Bible. Psalm 1 is written later in David's life. Having learnt the lesson from his stay among the Philistines he says "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of Yahweh ; and in his law doth he meditate day and night" (Psa 1:1-2). In all our own difficulties, trials and problems in life, we

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need to make our own situation a matter of prayer and then "stand still and see the salvation of Yahweh" (Exod 14:13).

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STUDY NO 32 - CRISIS AT ZIKLAG

1 SAMUEL 30

INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER 30

The events of this chapter provide a major turning point in David's life. In addition, the Amalekites who dwelt south of the Negev come dramatically into the record. Having been freed from the obligation to march north with the Philistines, undoubtedly David and his men would have experienced a great sense of relief. Unquestionably they would have been looking forward to being re-united with their wives and children in Ziklag. So as the Philistines march north from Apek to join battle with Saul and his army, David and his men march south towards Ziklag no doubt anticipating a happy home-coming. But although they had escaped out of the hands of the Philistines, they were going to pay a heavy price for their folly - the folly brought about by David talking to himself rather than to Yahweh (1 Sam 27:1).

V1 ON THE THIRD DAY

The distance from Apek to Ziklag was approximately 86 kms. On the very day that David and his men commence their journey south, the Amalekites invaded Ziklag, took the women and children captive, and burned Ziklag with fire.

THE AMALEKITES HAD INVADED THE SOUTH

South in the Hebrew is *negeb*. The Amalekites had invaded the area known as the Negev. They were a warlike, ferocious, plundering people. They would have taken full advantage of the fact that the Philistines were absent from their cities. In addition the Amalekites had a great hatred for the Israelites. In 1 Sam 15:3 Saul is instructed by Yahweh to "Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." This Saul had done in part. So understandably their hatred of Israel was intensified. But they had a special hatred for David and the town of Ziklag - see the following note.

AND ZIKLAG

Why specifically mention Ziklag. Well in the minds of the Amalekites they owed David a pay-back for his attacks against them as recorded in 1 Samuel 27:8-9.

AND BURNED IT WITH FIRE

Imagine David and his men coming over a hill or round a corner, and finding Ziklag burned to the ground, with the ruins possibly still smouldering. David had tried to avoid the calamity of Saul in his own way. But his action in going to the Philistines did not ensure that disaster would not come on him from another quarter altogether. And so it happened. If we say that we believe that "the angel of Yahweh encampeth about those that fear him and delivereth them" (Psa 34:7), but then proceed to make our own decisions without consulting God, then we are in fact distrusting Yahweh, because we show by action that we trust only ourselves. If we are weak in faith in such matters, then sometimes it takes a devastating blow to bring us to our senses.

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V2 THEY SLEW NOT ANY

This was very, very unusual. It is not what David had done himself to the Amalekites (1 Sam 27:8-9). Why did the Amalekites slay not any? Firstly, there would have been no need: with all the army away, there would have been no resistance. Secondly, they were not far from Egypt and historians say that there was a good market for slaves in Egypt at this time. And there is a third **PARAMOUNT** reason, and that is that the hand of Providence was still at work. The words of the Lord Jesus Christ encapsulate the situation. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows" (Matt 10:29-31). Nothing escapes the all-seeing eye of Yahweh - He is very conscious of His people and aware of their difficulties, as He was on this occasion, and so these families were preserved.

V3 SO DAVID AND HIS MEN CAME TO THE CITY

We can imagine the sense of disbelief in which David and his men would have viewed the scene of devastation that was before them. They would have been absolutely stunned by what they saw. Our own state of mind can sometimes make it difficult for us to accept what we see. Because trials and difficulties and sometimes calamities can arise in the course of life, it is very wise to always start the day with prayer - a prayer of praise, giving glory to Yahweh for who He is, and what He is, and asking that He will oversee our lives throughout the coming day. That is the attitude of mind that will help us prepare for sudden calamity, or hardship, or distress. It will help us accept Yahweh's will for us, whatever it is.

V4 UNTIL THEY HAD NO MORE POWER TO WEEP

Jer B "till they were too weak to weep any more". They wept themselves into a state of exhaustion. They were weeping for their wives and children, not knowing what had happened to them - not knowing if they were dead or alive - not knowing if they had been abused by the uncircumcised Amalekites. Unfortunately, it is extremely doubtful that they wept because of their past folly that had brought this calamity upon them.

V6 AND DAVID WAS GREATLY DISTRESSED

This was one of the lowest points ever reached in David's life. "Distressed" is from the Hebrew *yatsar* meaning to press, that is, to be narrow, and figuratively meaning to be in distress. It also means to squeeze into shape; to mould into a form, especially as a potter does clay (see Strong 3334 and 3335; also Gesenius). When the potter takes the clay, it has to be malleable in his hands. The potter presses it. He shapes it. The clay is made to conform to the will of the potter. David was being put under pressure at the hands of the Master Potter, that his character might be moulded into something that would reflect to the honour of the Potter. In the New Testament, there occurs a Greek word *thlipsis*, often translated "tribulation", but meaning "pressure" (Strong 2347). It occurs, for example, in Acts 14:22; Romans 5:3-5; Revelation 7:14; which see for the exhortation.

