

## Lesson 23: Facing the Final Battle (First Samuel 30-31)

Last week we left Saul and David facing a final battle. Saul is up in the Jezreel Valley facing the Philistines. David is in the southern desert facing the Amalekites. Today, we will finish the fight for both men, and then consider the reward each gained in their pursuit of their crowns.

### 17 David Returns to Ziklag (Chapter 30, pt 2)

We pick up today in First Samuel 30:11 with David and his 600 men in pursuit of the Amalekites who have burned Ziklag and taken their livestock and families. We started that pursuit last week but only got as far as the Brook Besor where 200 of David's men were forced to remain because they were too weary to fight. Now David crosses over with 400 men and continues the pursuit.

#### David and the Egyptian Captive (v11-16)

1. What do we know about the Egyptian?
2. Where were David and his men three days before?
3. What information did the Egyptian give about the raid?
4. What is the Egyptian's condition for helping David?

#### The Battle (v17-20)

5. What do we know about the battle?

#### David Rebukes the Men of Belial (v21-25)

6. What do we know of the men of Belial (v22)?
7. What issue do the men of Belial raise?
8. What was David rebuke for these men?

#### David Shares the Spoil (v26-31)

9. Why would David send spoil to the elders?

## Application

What is being modeled for us in this scenario (good or bad) by:

- David:
- The men at Besor:
- The men of Belial:
- The issues of:
  - Covetousness among those of the faith
  - The need to see ourselves as part of one body
  - The need to value each other's individual labor
  - Our responsibility toward the other members of our body as we pursue this shared goal

### **David models the Isaiah 61 passage in a literal, physical way.**

*"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn" - Isaiah 61:1-2*

- Did Christ model this in His first coming or second (or both)?

### **David models the Isaiah 62 passage (Revelation 22:12) in a literal, physical way.**

*"Indeed the LORD has proclaimed to the end of the world: 'Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Surely your salvation is coming; behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him.'"" - Isaiah 62:11*

*"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work." - Revelation 22:12*

### **Issue of being one body**

Up until now, David's men had been working together as one army – one body. They were aligned under one king, pursuing the same reward (we thought), for the same reasons and in the same way. But now we find a small group of men among them contesting the right to the reward, and contention and division has sprung up within the group. Why?

- These men are still aligned with David, but are they aligned with David's values?
- Are they pursuing the right reward?
- Are they going about it the right way and/or for the right reason?

**Covetousness** is driving the men of Belial to deny their brothers not just the enemy spoil but what actually belongs to them.

- What is covetousness?
- Why is covetousness a form of idolatry? (Ephesians 5:3-5, Colossians 3:5)
- Why is Christ's promise never to leave us or forsake us a help in battling covetousness? (Hebrews 13:5)
- Why is grudging giving a reflection of covetousness? (2 Corinthians 9:5)
- David reminded the men of Belial that God is the one who gave them the increase of their efforts. So Paul reminds us of the same thing. (1 Corinthians 3:7-8, 1 Corinthians 1:27-29)

We are taught how we are to value one another's effort in pursuing our crowns and how we should see our responsibility toward one another in that joint effort so that we do not follow the model of the men of Belial. (1 Thessalonians 5:12-15, Hebrews 12:12-15, Romans 12:3-8, 1 Corinthians 12:20-27, Ephesians 4:11-16)

## 18 The Death of Saul (First Samuel 31)

This last picture is divided into two parts: **1) The death of Saul** (v1-7) and **2) the disposal of Saul** (v8-13).

10. How does Saul's death unfold?
11. What details does the author give about Saul's inglorious death?

The Philistine brutality in verses 8-10 is contrasted to the compassion of the men of Jabesh Gilead in verses 11-13.

12. Why would the men of Jabesh Gilead do this honor for Saul and his family?

### Wrap-up: The Big Picture of Two Kings

Throughout First Samuel, Saul was the current king over a rich and glorious earthly kingdom with all the wealth and benefits for his taking. But he was a king who had lost the blessing of an eternal kingship and kingdom, and as a result, had only the physical kingdom to which he grasped with oppressive force. All

of his identity and worth was wrapped up in the physical kingdom, and he pursued power and glory in the earthly realm. He was a man of violence, hate, treachery, lies, vengeance, and rebellion against the God of heaven, and was possessed of terrifying demonic spirit. He had all the characteristics of a son of Belial, and prophetically, the Man of Lawlessness in the End Times.

By contrast, David was a king who had not yet come into his kingdom. He had been anointed. He had not been proclaimed king, although many of the people unwittingly gave him kingly praise, nor had he been crowned. He could not be crowned and come into his kingdom until the current king was dethroned.

Saul and David were two opposing pictures in:

- What King they acknowledged over themselves
- What values they pursued
- Where they looked for support and validation
- How they took glory for themselves
- How they regarded authority
- How they dealt with their enemies
- How they shared their own glory and reward

They represent the choice we must make between following the world or Christ, sometimes to our own loss in this world, as Jonathan demonstrated for us in the pivotal scene in Chapter 20.

Jonathan came to a crossroads in life. He was a man in pursuit of a crown, although he did not realize it at the moment when he was asked to make a decision over where to align his loyalty: with David or Saul. He was asked to choose between all that the king of an earthly kingdom had to offer—that which Jonathan saw and understood, even valued—and something much greater, much less tangible, and might not even be realized in his own lifetime, which was the promise of something that David embodied.

Jonathan understood the earthly kingdom, and the loyalty that was demanded of him. His father was family, and he had certain obligations in regards to family loyalty. His father was king and demanded loyalty due that station as well. As his father's son, Jonathan himself was royalty, and so his identity, status, and future inheritance were bound up in that familial relationship. His father was wealthy and powerful, but he was also fearful, angry, jealous, treacherous, suspicious of his own family, and possessed at times by a demonic spirit that made him mentally unstable. There will never be peace or safety in his father's kingdom, and Jonathan knew it.

Jonathan was a man who ached for faithfulness, peace, and safety, more so than riches and power.

Jonathan could only imagine what a physical kingdom under David's authority would entail, but he knew David's character. He saw David as a man after his own heart. A covenant relationship with David offered that potential reward of a kingdom of peace and safety, and even if it wasn't realized in his own lifetime, it might be realized in his descendant's lifetime. Jonathan wanted an eternal reward. Jonathan turned his loyalty to David, even though it cost him everything in terms of his relationship with his earthly father, his king, and his earthly inheritance.

When Jonathan learned that the physical kingdom was lost to him—that there was never any hope of it to begin with—then the covenant with the new king became that much more significant. He had made the right choice over the king with whom to align himself and which kingdom to pursue. Though

Jonathan has lost an earthly kingdom, in doing so he has gained a heavenly one, and he did not grieve that loss of an earthly kingdom. And that is the way to pursue the crown.

**There are right and wrong kings with whom to align yourself when pursuing a crown.**

Israel threw off God as king and turned their allegiance to the lesser human king with disastrous consequences. King Saul denied the LORD's headship over him and became disqualified. We, too, have to consider who we acknowledge as headship over us. Our faith can become derailed when we shift alliances and align ourselves under the wrong king.

**There are right and wrong crowns to pursue.** Do you seek a perishable one or an imperishable one? Is what you are pursuing of earthly value in the eyes of men or heavenly value in the eyes of God? What are some heavenly values?

**There are right and wrong reasons for pursuing a crown.** Do you pursue the crown for your own glory and building your own kingdom or for God's glory and building God's kingdom?

**There are right and wrong ways to pursue crowns.** You cannot flail about aimlessly, without vision or restraint. It takes self-control and discipline to achieve the crown and claim the full reward in the kingdom. It requires bringing your carnal nature into submission even as you push back the influence of the external carnal culture around you.