

1 SAMUEL CHAPTER 24

"REVENGE", HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE REVENGE? WEBSTER DEFINES REVENGE "TO INFLICT HARM IN RETURN FOR AN INJURY". SINCE REVENGE IS SUCH AN UNPLEASANT WORD, WE FREQUENTLY DRESS IT UP WITH MORE ACCEPTABLE TERMS: WE SAY, "I'M STANDING UP FOR MY RIGHTS." OR "IT IS A MORAL OBLIGATION!" WHATEVER WE CALL IT, THE LORD CALLS IT REVENGE. ROMANS 12:17-19 TELLS US HOW THE LORD WANTS US TO RESPOND TO INJURY AND HURT. 17 Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. 18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. 19 Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. SINCE WE ARE NOT ALL-SEEING AND ALL-WISE, IT IS BEST TO LEAVE VENGEANCE IN THE HANDS OF OUR JUST AND HOLY GOD. IN PSALM 54 DAVID HAD PRAYED TO THE LORD TO VINDICATE HIM AND GIVE HIM OPPORTUNITY TO PROVE TO SAUL THAT HE WASN'T AN OUTLAW WHO WAS TRYING TO KILL HIM AND SEIZE THE THRONE. DAVID NEVER CONSIDERED SAUL TO BE HIS ENEMY. THE LORD ANSWERED DAVID'S PRAYER WHEN SAUL AND HIS TROOPS CAME TO FIND HIM AT ENGEDI.

IN THIS CHAPTER WE ARE GOING TO SEE DAVID HAS THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY TO AVENGE HIMSELF AGAINST SAUL. THE TEMPTATION TO GET EVEN WAS STRONG, ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF SAUL'S RECORD OF MISTREATMENT IN CHAPTERS 22-23.

SAUL HUNTS DAVID- SAUL TAKES SOME TIME OFF FROM FIGHTING THE PHILISTINES TO PURSUE HIS OBSESSION: TRYING TO KILL DAVID. THE LORD DELIVERED SAUL INTO DAVID'S HANDS. DAVID WAS GIVEN THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY TO FINALLY END THIS MADNESS.

VS 1. WHAT IS SAUL TOLD ABOUT DAVID? SAUL'S KINGSHIP WAS MARKED BY CONSTANT FIGHTING AGAINST THE PHILISTINES AND THE NATION KNEW FEW TIMES OF PEACE DURING HIS REIGN. AS IMPORTANT AS THE PHILISTINE THREAT WAS TO SAUL, THERE WAS ANOTHER PRIORITY THAT WAS HIGHER STILL: KILLING DAVID! SO WHAT DOES SAUL DO?

VS 2 THREE THOUSAND MEN! CHOSEN FROM ALL ISRAEL! IT IS CLEAR THAT SAUL MEANS BUSINESS!!! WHERE ARE SAUL AND HIS MEN LOOKING? THE LOCATION OF THIS CAVE IS UNKNOWN, ALTHOUGH "WILDGOATS" STRESSES THE INACCESSIBILITY OF THE CAVE. DAVID WAS REDUCED TO LIVING IN CAVES AND ATOP WILD CRAGS, MOVING CONSTANTLY TO KEEP ALIVE.

DAVID'S TEMPTATION- VS 3 SAUL CHOSE TO USE THE VERY CAVE WHERE DAVID AND HIS MEN WERE HIDING AS A PLACE TO RELIEVE HIMSELF. THE LAW OF MOSES WAS VERY STRICT WHEN IT CAME TO THE MATTER OF SANITATION, ESPECIALLY IN THE ARMY CAMP (DEUT. 23:12-14). EACH SOLDIER WAS REQUIRED TO LEAVE THE CAMP TO RELIEVE HIMSELF, AND HE HAD TO CARRY A SMALL SHOVEL OR TROWEL AMONG HIS WEAPONS SO HE COULD DIG A HOLE AND COVER HIS EXCREMENT. THIS MEANT THAT SAUL WAS AWAY FROM THE CAMP AND THEREFORE QUITE VULNERABLE. HE

3. THE CLOTH PROVED THAT DAVID DID NOT INTEND TO KILL THE KING. DAVID'S MEN WOULD HAVE KILLED SAUL IN A MINUTE, BUT THEIR WISE CAPTAIN RESTRAINED THEM. WHAT DO YOU THINK WOULD HAVE HAPPENED IF DAVID HAD KILLED SAUL IN THE CAVE?

VS 6. DAVID GIVES HIS MEN TWO REASONS FOR NOT KILLING SAUL. WHAT ARE THEY? DAVID RECOGNIZED THAT THE LORD HIMSELF HAD PLACED SAUL INTO THE KINGSHIP. THUS THE JUDGMENT AND REMOVAL OF SAUL HAD TO BE LEFT TO THE LORD.

VS 7 SO WHO SAVED SAUL IN THE CAVE? THE JEWS WERE NOT EVEN TO CURSE THEIR LEADERS, LET ALONE KILL THEM, FOR CURSING A RULER WAS IN THE SAME CATEGORY AS BLASPHEMING THE NAME OF THE LORD. SENSITIVE TO EVEN THE "LITTLE SINS"-SINS WE DON'T TAKE SERIOUSLY- DAVID CONVINCES HIS MEN THAT THIS APPROACH IS WRONG. THEY ALL NEED TO LEAVE THE VENGEANCE TO GOD. WHAT ABOUT US?

VS 8 BECAUSE DAVID REFUSES TO GET EVEN WITH SAUL, GOD BLESSES HIM. PROVERBS 16:7 When a man's ways are pleasing to the Lord,

He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.

LET'S SEE HOW GOD BRINGS PEACE BETWEEN DAVID AND SAUL THROUGH THEIR CONVERSATION ON THE CLIFFS. NOTICE THE DEEP RESPECT DAVID SHOWED TO SAUL. WHEN SAUL WAS FAR ENOUGH AWAY FROM THE CAVE THAT IT WAS SAFE, DAVID LEFT THE CAVE AND CALLED TO HIM. HOW DOES DAVID ADDRESS SAUL? BY USING THE TITLE "MY LORD THE KING" AND BOWING TO THE GROUND, DAVID EMPHASIZED WHAT HE HAD SAID TO HIS MEN AND LET SAUL KNOW HE WAS NOT A REBEL. DAVID SHOWED HIS RESPECT BY CALLING SAUL "MY MASTER" (1 SAM 24:6), "THE LORD'S ANOINTED" (VS 6,10), "MY LORD" (VS 8,10), "THE KING" (VS 8,14), AND "MY FATHER" (VS 11). DAVID'S BOLD PUBLIC APPEARANCE ALSO LET SAUL AND HIS ARMY KNOW THAT THEIR OFFICIAL SPY SYSTEM WAS MOST INEFFECTIVE.

VS 9 WHAT DOES DAVID ASK SAUL? DAVID OPENS HIS DEFENSE BY EXPOSING THE DECEPTION OF THE COURTIER WHO SLANDERED DAVID TO SAUL. WHAT WERE THEY SAYING TO SAUL?

VS 10 WHO DOES DAVID SAY BROUGHT SAUL INTO THE CAVE AND GIVEN HIM INTO DAVID'S HAND? WHY DID DAVID NOT KILL SAUL?

VS 11 DAVID WANTS TO PROVE BOTH HIS INNOCENCE AND HIS INTEGRITY. DAVID SHOWS PHYSICAL PROOF. WHAT DOES HE SHOW SAUL?

VS 12-15 WHAT TWO THINGS WILL DAVID LEAVE TO THE LORD? WHAT WILL DAVID NOT DO? DAVID TELLS SAUL HE WILL LET GOD JUDGE BETWEEN THEM. DAVID DESIRES THE LORD'S WILL BE DONE. DAVID QUOTED A FAMILIAR PROVERB TO PROVE HIS POINT "WICKEDNESS PROCEEDS FROM THE WICKED" (24:13) WHICH SIMPLY MEANS THAT CHARACTER IS REVEALED BY CONDUCT. THE FACT THAT DAVID DID NOT KILL THE KING INDICATED THAT DAVID DID NOT HAVE THE CHARACTER OF A REBEL OR A MURDERER. BUT AT THE SAME TIME, DAVID WAS STRONGLY SUGGESTING THAT SAUL'S CHARACTER WAS QUESTIONABLE.

SLOW TO ANGER IS BETTER THAN THE MIGHTY, AND HE WHO RULES HIS SPIRIT THAN HE WHO TAKES A CITY". (PROVERB 16:32). THIS IS A GOOD EXAMPLE FOR ALL OF US TO FOLLOW.

1. IF HOLLYWOOD HAD WRITTEN THE STORY OF SAUL AND DAVID, HOW DO YOU THINK THEY WOULD HAVE WRITTEN "THE CAVE SCENE"?

2. WHY DO YOU THINK GOD COMMANDS US NOT TO TAKE OUR OWN REVENGE?

3. IN WHAT WAYS DOES DAVID'S HONEST CONFRONTATION WITH SAUL GIVE YOU A POSITIVE EXAMPLE OF HOW TO DEAL WITH SOMEONE WHO HAS INJURED YOU?

4. IF WE CATALOGUED ALL THE INJURIES IN OUR LIVES, IMAGINE HOW LONG THE LIST WOULD BE! HAS SOMEONE INJURED YOU SO DEEPLY THAT YOU STILL CARRY THE WOUNDS WITH YOU? HOW DO WE RECEIVE HEALING FOR THESE INJURIES?

5. REVENGE IS AS OLD AS HUMAN NATURE. LET'S LOOK AT SOME PRINCIPLES THAT WILL HELP US RELINQUISH OUR DESIRE FOR REVENGE:

SINCE HUMANITY IS DEPRAVED, EXPECT TO BE MISTREATED- THE SAME HUMAN NATURE THAT BEAT IN SAUL'S HEART BEATS IN ALL OUR HEARTS.

TROUBLE COMES WHEN WE EXPECT AND THEN DEMAND TOO MUCH FROM OTHERS. PEOPLE ARE FALLIBLE, HURT FEELINGS ARE PAR FOR THE COURSE.

SINCE MISTREATMENT BY OTHERS IS INEVITABLE, WE CAN ANTICIPATE OUR DESIRES FOR REVENGE. WE HAVE TIME TO FEEL AND PRAY AND THINK AND THEN CHOOSE A COURSE OF ACTION THAT REFLECTS OUR TRUST IN GOD.

SINCE THE TEMPTATION TOWARD REVENGE IS PREDICTABLE, REFUSE TO FIGHT IN THE FLESH. WE CAN MAKE UP OUR MINDS AHEAD OF TIME TO LEAVE THINGS IN GOD'S HANDS.

A PSALM OF DAVID

Behold, God is my helper;
The Lord is the sustainer of my soul.

5

He will recompense the evil to my foes;
Destroy them in Your faithfulness.

6

Willingly I will sacrifice to You;
I will give thanks to Your name, O Lord, for it is good.

7

For He has delivered me from all trouble,
And my eye has looked *with satisfaction* upon my enemies.