

DAVID FACES TWO ENEMIES

A LESSON IN PATIENCE

Introduction:

1. In these two chapters, we see two sides of David's character as he faces two different enemies.
2. In relation to Nabal, David was overcome with anger and a desire for vengeance.
3. Yet, in relation to Saul, David remained patient and restrained.
4. We can learn much from the two stories in these chapters.

- I. David Spares Saul's Life Again (26:1-12)
 - A. For a second time, the people of Ziph attempted to turn David over to King Saul.
 1. Some commentators claim that this record is just another version of the events recorded in chapter 24.
 2. While there are some similarities, there are numerous differences.
 3. It is not difficult to imagine that this kind of situation presented itself to David on more than one occasion.
 - B. Again, Saul chose 3,000 men and began to seek for David in the wilderness.
 1. This reaction demonstrates that Saul's previous remorse did not involve true repentance.
 2. In fact, as we read Saul's response to this situation it can be seen that his heart was hardened even further against David and God.
 - C. When David saw that Saul was pursuing him, he sent out spies to make certain of the fact.
 - D. David learned where Saul's army camped and where in the camp Saul made his bed.
 - E. Abishai volunteered to accompany David into the enemy camp.
 1. Abishai will become one of David's "mighty men" (2 Sam. 23:18).
 - a. He was the son of Zeruiah, David's sister (1 Chron. 2:16).
 - b. Thus, Abishai and Joab were David's nephews.
 2. Ahimelech the Hittite is mentioned only here, but demonstrates the appeal of David as a leader – even to those not of Israel.
 - F. Saul's place in the camp was easily identified by his spear being stuck in the ground at his head.
 - G. Abishai requested permission to kill Saul as he lay sleeping.
 - H. David refused, reminding him that Saul was still the Lord's anointed.
 1. David understood that he would be guilty of sin if he killed Saul.
 2. Yet, he also trusted in the Lord to work things out in His own time and in His own way.
 3. David waited patiently for the Lord to make him King of Israel.
 - a. He prepared himself instead of asserting himself.
 - b. He proved himself instead of promoting himself.
 - c. He respected God's will instead of imposing his own will.
 - d. He followed God instead of running ahead of him.
 - I. Instead, David took Saul's spear (the symbol of his authority) and his canteen and crept out of the camp.

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- II. David Confronts Saul (26:13-25)
- A. After David had removed some distance from Saul's camp, he stood on top of a hill and cried back to the camp.
 - B. First, David singled out Abner – the man who had been assigned to guard and protect the King.
 - C. As David spoke to Abner, Saul recognized his voice and called out to him.
 - D. Again, David rebuked Saul.
 - 1. He asked why Saul continued to pursue him when David posed no threat to his life.
 - 2. He encouraged Saul to repent and make an offering to God for his sins.
 - 3. He warned Saul not to listen to the lies of men.
 - 4. He reminded Saul that he had driven him from the land of inheritance into the lands of pagans and idolaters.
 - a. This verse does not mean that David was idolatrous or even considering worshipping other gods.
 - b. It means that fleeing from Saul caused him to be separated from the Promised Land and the tabernacle for true worship.
 - c. In essence, Saul was saying to David, "Leave God's land and go worship other gods."
 - 5. David humbly pointed out the folly of Saul's continual pursuit of him.
 - a. He said it was like a King chasing a flea.
 - b. He compared it to a hunt for partridges in the mountains.
 - E. As he did previously, Saul said the right things in response to David.
 - 1. He said, "I have sinned."
 - 2. He told David to return, promising not to do him harm.
 - F. However, he still did not follow through by acting upon his words.
 - G. In fact, David realized that he could not trust Saul's words (27:1).
 - H. So, Saul returned home and David "went on his way," continuing to hide from Saul.

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- III. The Death of Samuel (25:1)
- A. In between the events of chapters 24 and 26, we learn of the death of Samuel.
 - B. Samuel's death is mentioned only briefly here and in 28:3.
 - C. Men from throughout the nation gathered to mourn Samuel's death.
 - 1. It would have been better had they followed him while he lived.
 - 2. Compare with Matthew 23:29-31
 - D. A Eulogy for Samuel
 - 1. He was a man concerned with rectifying the past (1 Chron. 9:22).
 - 2. He was a man concerned with faithfulness in the present (2 Chron. 35:18; Acts 3:24; 13:20).
 - 3. He was a man concerned with preparation for the future (1 Chron. 26:27-28).
 - 4. He was a man worthy of imitation and honor (Hebrews 11:32-34; Psalm 99:6; Jeremiah 15:1).
 - E. Though it is likely that David was unable to attend Samuel's funeral, he may have had him in mind when he penned Psalm 12:1.
 - F. Samuel was buried humbly at his own home in Ramah (cf. 15:12).
 - G. Apparently, Samuel's death had an effect upon David, for he fled further away from Saul than he had been before – to the wilderness of Paran.
- IV. Nabal Rejects David's Request (25:2-13)
- A. Near the settlement of Maon (where David and his men had previously hidden out [23:24]) there lived a man name Nabal.
 - 1. The name Nabal means, "fool, dolt, senseless one."
 - 2. He is described as being churlish – "severe, cruel, stubborn" – and evil.
 - 3. ESV – "harsh and badly behaved;" LITV – "cruel and evil;" YLT – "hard and evil;" MSG – "brutish and mean"
 - B. Yet, he was a man of great possessions including 3,000 sheep and 1,000 goats.
 - C. When David and his men had previously dwelt in this region, they had helped to protect Nabal's shepherds and herds from thieves and other dangers.
 - D. Now, as Nabal was engaged in the shearing of his sheep, David sent word to him asking for food for his men.
 - 1. The time of shearing was one of feasting and hospitality to one's neighbors.
 - 2. Dr. Alfred Edersheim wrote: "Every part of this [David's] courteous address is in admirable keeping with Oriental etiquette, and perfect in all its detail in this very region to the present day."
 - 3. Thus, David was simply asking for hospitality from Nabal, much like he had shown this cruel man by helping to protect his flocks.
 - E. However, Nabal's response was not neighborly or kind.
 - 1. First, he asked, "Who is David?" – indicating that he did not recognize David even though he knew him.
 - 2. He compared David to a rebellious servant who broke away from his master.
 - 3. This seems to indicate that Nabal was loyal to Saul and viewed David as an outlaw.
 - F. Thus, he refused to help or support David and his men.
 - G. David's response was immediate and severe.
 - 1. He and 400 of his men put on their swords and began the journey to Nabal's house.

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2. David's plan was to kill Nabal and all the men of his household, including the young boys (vs. 22).
 3. How different is this response from David's attitude toward Saul (cf. 24:5)!
 - a. Grief
 - b. Fear
- V. Abigail Intercedes with David (25:14-35)
- A. One of the young men of Nabal's household reported what had happened to Nabal's wife, Abigail.
 1. She is described as a woman of good understanding – intelligence and wisdom.
 2. We are also told that she was beautiful – physically attractive.
 - B. Upon learning this, Abigail secretly prepared food to take to David and his men in order to intercept them and persuade them not to harm her family.
 - C. Abigail proved herself to be a woman of humility, but also one who trusted in Jehovah.
 1. She repeatedly acknowledged David as "my lord."
 2. She declared that God would make him a "sure house" – kingdom.
 3. She understood that David fought the battles of the Lord.
 4. She even recognized that Saul would not capture or kill David.
 5. Finally, she reminded David that he did not want to look back when he was king and realize that he had avenged himself on Nabal.
 - D. David saw the wisdom of Abigail's words and recognized that God had sent her to keep him from making a terrible mistake.
 - E. So, David took the food offered by Abigail and allowed her to return home in peace.
- VI. The Death of Nabal and Marriage of Abigail (25:36-44)
- A. Upon returning home, Abigail found her husband drunk – so she did not tell him what she had done.
 - B. The next morning, after he had sobered up, she reported the facts of the story to him.
 - C. Nabal was so overcome by what had happened that he became immediately sick and, ten days later, he died.
 - D. Thus, God removed another enemy of David – but, He did it in His time and by His plan.
 - E. Following Nabal's death, David asked Abigail to be his wife.
 - F. She agreed and they were married.
 - G. By this time, Saul had given his daughter, Michal (David's first wife) to be married to another man.
 - H. We also learn that David married another woman named Ahinoam.