

MAY 20

1 Samuel 26-28

We are only getting a few stories from this time in David's life. I guess you could call The Psalms, David's journal. In Chapter 27 we come to a point where we know some dates and how much time is passing. David will live in Ziklag 16 months, and he became king in Hebron when he was 30. This means that in chapter 27, David is 28 and eight months or so. David has been running for years, probably since he was 20.

1 Samuel 26

Vs. 1-12 I think this is the first time we hear of Joab the son of Zeruah and any of his brothers. During this time of running, David acquired his mighty men, amazing warriors who could really kick donkey (I think they said that back then). There were the "three," and then there were the "thirty." While the "three" refers to three actual guys, "the thirty" probably refers to a group whose members changed. Abishai was part of the thirty.

Apparently, as they observed how everyone was sleeping, David knew that it was a God-induced sleep.

Notice in v. 8 that Abishai was willing to do the job that he knew David didn't have the conscience for. Abishai might have been with David in the cave when David spared Saul. David spared Saul again and told Abishai the reasons why this shouldn't be done, even appealing to God's own judgment. Here, knowing what Joab's character is like, I find it interesting that the Lord lets us know it was Abishai who suggested this murder.

Vs. 13-25 Notice how David went after Abner; and then in v. 19 said if the Lord was doing this, good, but if it was men who were inciting the king, then they should be cursed. It seems to me that with the length of time David had been running, and with the length of time David will be in a civil war with the house of Saul after Saul is dead, that there were other players and people working to keep Saul on the throne and to kill David. I'll bet Abner played a major role in keeping the political intrigue and misinformation alive. In many of his psalms, David talks about lying and treachery. Saul had powerful men around him who knew that if David came to power, they would lose their jobs and their income.

V. 21 There is nothing more uncertain and unstable than someone who says he's wrong and keeps on doing the same wrong thing. I'm sure this is what led to David's actions in chapter 27. David finally saw there would be no human solution.

Vs. 23-24 David seems to be saying that he expected the Lord to keep him safe and understood this was a kind of test that the Lord had given him. The opposite would be true of Saul, who was neither righteous nor faithful.

1 Samuel 27

Vs. 1-4 This is the same Achish, king of Gath, that David did the drool thing with back in 1 Samuel 21:13. Now, possibly seven or eight years later, the madness of Saul and the plight of David were a kind of legend. Achish had proof that David was hated by Saul and alienated from his people.

For some undisclosed period of time, David lived at Gath with his small army and their families. This must have been crowded, but it did achieve a purpose. In v. 4 it shows that Saul was still actively pursuing and trying to kill David, but there was no way Saul would go to the gates of Gath to do it. Saul stopped.

Vs. 5-7 This is ironic. In return for David's loyalty, Achish gave David Ziklag. According to Joshua 15:31, Ziklag belonged to the tribe of Judah. This would be David's home, with his 600 men and their families, for the next 16 months.

Vs. 8-12 What do you do if your only skill is killing and looting? Somehow when I read this, I don't think David's lying is noble or honoring to the Lord. I don't know what David should have done, but his lying and deception will come back to haunt him, I think.

On a positive note, in v. 8 I finally noticed that the people David preyed upon were the "old" inhabitants of Canaan, who Israel, in disobedience, did not drive out. Some of these people were preying upon Israel. In effect, David was acting as a judge in Israel and fulfilling some of what God had told Joshua and Israel to do.

Apparently the times were so lawless that you almost expected some nomadic group to swoop in and destroy a town. That must have added to David's deception and have kept him safe.

V. 12 Achish definitely got the wrong idea. David was a thoroughly true-blue Jew and follower of Yahweh.

1 Samuel 28

Vs. 1-2 I think this put David into a hard situation, but he played along. The words, *you shall know what your servant can do*, would have been an amazement to Achish, if David had gone into battle with him. David would have fought to defend Israel, and Achish would have been toast.

Vs. 3-7 In the years of David's hiding, Saul did some "god things" to show he was religious and was a "good" follower of Yahweh. One of those is that he had all those who communicated with the dead put out of the land or put to death. Apparently Saul did this out of some emotional response to Samuel's death. Later in 2 Samuel 22:1, we'll find out that during this time, Saul also almost exterminated the Gibeonites from Israel. These are the people who tricked Joshua and with whom Joshua made a covenant. Saul apparently thought killing these people would make God happy. This act of Saul's will come back to haunt his family. Whereas David promised not to kill Saul's family, because of God's judgment on what Saul did to the Gibeonites, most of Saul's male heirs will die. Anyway, during this time Saul was busy doing "god things" to get back into God's good graces. He just never changed his heart. God never rejects true repentance.

Vs. 8-14 I heard a Walter Martin tape on this one time and it made sense to me. The woman had a "familiar spirit," a demon she worked with that could impersonate the dead person who was "called." What freaked her out was that this wasn't her lying spirit, it was actually Samuel whom she saw. Therefore she freaked and knew that she had been tricked and was in danger.

Notice that Samuel appeared in bodily form, as do Moses and Elijah later with Jesus. Texts like these help give us the "doctrine" or teaching of the intermediate body. That is, before we receive a resurrection body, we will still have a body. For the church, the resurrection body comes at the coming of Christ for the church (1 Cor. 15:51-58 ...the dead in Christ shall rise and we [those of the church living at that time] will be changed), and then for all other believers (pre- and post-church age) they will be given a resurrection body at the second coming of Christ at the end of the Tribulation. Finally, for those who have rejected God from every age, they will receive a resurrection body, albeit, without a sinless nature, at the end of the Millennium (Rev. 20:12-13) and thrown into eternal judgment.

I'm sure you wondered where we get all this theology and teaching from. It's from the Bible and all of this stuff you're reading. Pretty cool, huh?

Anyway, Samuel had a body.

V. 19 almost sounds like that "good news/bad news" joke, where the good news is that there's baseball in heaven, and the bad news is that the guy getting this report will be pitching tomorrow. But Saul didn't think this news was funny.

Vs. 20-25 At the end of the story there is a little more going on than meets the eye. Saul refused to eat...almost made a vow; but in typical fashion, Saul was talked out of it and gave in to those urging him. He was a man of no resolve, except to resist God and kill David.

But, on the part of the woman, if they received her hospitality, they couldn't kill her. That is why she did the elaborate *fattened calf* thing. I mean, how long did that take? They didn't have microwave *fattened calf*. This had to have taken hours. A couple of sandwiches would have worked too. Saul must have rested during this time and talked with his men. Anyway, they couldn't receive her kindness and then kill her. It looks too, that she wanted Saul healthy enough to get up and get out of there.

What a messed-up deal, but really, on this earth, all of us are messed-up, walking encyclopedias of contradictions. That's what sin does to us.

John 11:1-53

This is another great chapter in John with great disclosures about Jesus' identity, and it shows us how Jesus abided in the Father.

Vs. 1-4 When Jesus heard this, He understood from the Spirit that this situation was for the glory of God, and would be a testimony to His identity. I think that in abiding in Christ, this is how we also are to understand the situations the Lord brings into our lives. We are here to serve Him in the harvest and He designs every intersection. Our job is to remain alert and ready for what He has for us.

V. 2 is an editorial note. Apparently this event was known throughout the church. Mary anointed Jesus' feet weeks after this event.

Vs. 5-6 Under the Spirit's direction Jesus knew what was happening, and therefore stayed until Lazarus was not just dead, but good and dead.

Vs. 7-16 It is interesting to see that the disciples were very concerned with their lives. They knew the danger of going anywhere near Jerusalem, and Bethany was only two miles away from Jerusalem. Jesus' comment for them to walk in the day either meant to follow Him while He was still there, or to follow when God's will is clearly laid out before us. In any case, following the Lord, we can have absolute confidence that nothing can happen to us that is not allowed by the Father.

I don't know that they understood Jesus would raise Lazarus, but Thomas spoke for all of the disciples by his willingness to follow to the death. He wasn't being funny. He meant that.

Vs. 17-19 This is all very interesting information. That Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days is important. The Jews thought that the spirit hovered over a dead person for three days. So, it is significant that Jesus waited until the fourth day to arrive. Also, it says that many Jews, leading people from Jerusalem, were present with Martha and Mary.

Vs. 20-27 When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went into action and met Him. Apparently as a result of Jesus' teaching, she had a good idea of the coming judgment and resurrection. Her remark that Jesus could ask anything of the Father and receive it could have been her hoping against hope that Jesus might raise Lazarus, but when she raised a stink at the tomb, it appears that she didn't believe Jesus would raise her brother. She must have only understood that Lazarus would be raised on the last day.

V. 25 Jesus told her that the resurrection wasn't focused on a time, but on a person, Him.

V. 27 This is a great confession of faith.

Vs. 28-37 It is interesting to see how the Father set up this situation. The Jewish leaders all followed Mary, and when Jesus was faced with all this sorrow, He too was overcome. Verse 35 is the shortest verse in the Bible.

When it says Jesus was *deeply moved*, that can be translated as "angry." I've heard a lot of spiritual explanations of why Jesus was angry, but I think Jesus looked angry because He was simply fighting back tears. I think His face was contorting, because he was trying to keep from crying, and this is what John expressed.

Vs. 36-37 Now the Jewish leaders were also caught in the emotion, wishing Jesus had been there.

Vs. 38-44 There isn't a lot of build up here. Martha objected to the stone being removed, but Jesus told her that faith was necessary in order for *the glory of God* to be seen. Jesus prayed very briefly, shouted, and out popped Lazarus. The expression in Greek is, "Loose him and let him go." I like that.

So, was this resurrection or recreation? If the spirit had returned to that body, it would have been a mess. After four days the body was just rotting flesh and dead blood, yuck! In order for the body to have been made ready for the spirit of Lazarus to return, the body had to have been fully recreated: every cell and every function. Who says God needs billions of years to create? Jesus did it there. It took no time, and there was no pause, or grunt of exertion.

Vs. 45-53 Many Jews believed but some were snitches. The entire discussion of the leaders was a profound lesson in irrationality. Jesus did mighty signs. Everyone might *believe in Him*. The Romans would come and destroy Jerusalem. But if Jesus was the Christ, the signs were from the Father, and believing in Him was right. If the nation had turned to Him, the Romans would not have been a problem.

V. 51 God can even use the mouths of evil men.

V. 52 This is John showing that this was for the plan of redemption.

Psalm 117

V. 1 Paul quotes this in Romans 15 when talking about Jesus coming to save the Gentiles. *Nations* and *Gentiles* are the same word.

Romans 15:8-12 *For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, ⁹and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, "Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name." ¹⁰And again it is said, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people." ¹¹And again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples extol him." ¹²And again Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse will come, even he who arises to rule the Gentiles; in him will the Gentiles hope."*

V. 2 God's *faithfulness* is to fulfill His promise of redemption, to save and rescue those lost in sin and darkness. We, the rescued, work with Him as His disciples, following Christ in the harvest. In so doing, He continues to show His *steadfast love* and *faithfulness* to those who need Him.

Proverbs 15:22-23

Amen.