



DIVINE HELP • God Protects and Vindicates David Again

What Do I Need to Know About the Passage?

1 Samuel 27:1-31:13

As we close out 1 Samuel, we cover a wide swath of narrative in this final lesson. You do not need to read chapter 31 during the study, but it is important that your students know what it says. This narrative focuses on one theme: God pursues His people and rejects those who reject Him.

David Lives with the Philistines (27:1-28:2)

Immediately after experiencing deliverance from the LORD, David doubts God's protection of his life. In 27:1, David says, "Now I shall perish one day by the hand of Saul. There is nothing better for me than that I should escape to the land of the Philistines." What a drastic change of heart and attitude! David turns to his flesh as he worries whether God will continue to watch over him. Certainly we have experienced this before, but God has a perfect track record of never letting His people down. Make sure the group understands that God's promises are always just that – promises! He can't break them.

David goes to King Achish for help, but this time, David doesn't present himself as a crazy man (see 21:10). In fact, David asks an upfront question, "Can I live in one of the country towns? (v. 5). Achish gives him Ziklag and he stays there for 16 months! Surely David is wondering if he will ever become king. As the chapter ends, the Philistines are yet again gathering for war against Israel. Achish tells David that he is to go to battle against Israel for him. David responds proudly, "Very well, you shall know what your servant can do." This shows David's tendency toward arrogance and vanity, as he puts himself before God. David is God's anointed king, but he is not at all perfect. This passage should point us to David's greater son, Jesus, who will never question God's plan or doubt His promises.

Saul and the Medium of En-dor (28:3-25)

After Samuel dies, Israel mourns and Saul kicks all the mediums and sorcerers out of the land. Samuel was the last judge of Israel and attempting to do something good (he hasn't gotten much right), Saul drives out the witches and warlocks. However, when Saul tries to call on the LORD because of the Philistine threat, God did not answer. Saul gets nervous, so he seeks the help of (you guessed it) a spiritual medium. Saul's servants find a woman who lives in En-dor, so Saul visits her and the medium gets her Ouija Board and crystal ball. Okay, not really, but I'm sure the situation got pretty weird. This illustrates Saul's complete collapse. Not only does he make a law outlawing spiritual mediums, but he breaks his own law! When God is silent, people go to

What's the Big Idea?

In this narrative, God graciously pursues His people with goodness and love despite their sinfulness. These chapters give us a picture of God favoring David, who loves Him, and rejecting Saul, who rejects God. This passage shows us that God's mercy rests on those who have right relationships with Him and that His wrath afflicts those who reject Him.

What's the Problem?

We do not seek to find our worth, significance, and strength in God so we resort to puffing ourselves up and seeking our own glory instead of God's.



extreme measures to get guidance. Saul has become more and more miserable in the last several chapters and this is the culminating act of his life before he dies in chapter 31. Continually loving and seeking the LORD, unlike Saul, not only glorifies God, but it will mean peace and joy for our own soul.

The medium, per Saul's request, calls up Samuel. As he appears, Saul becomes very afraid. Saul complains that the Lord is silent, but Samuel tells Saul what he already knows. "The LORD has done to you as he spoke by me, for the LORD has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, David" (v. 17). Your group should remember the reason why. If they do not, Samuel tells Saul once again in verse 18: "Because you did not obey the voice of the LORD and did not carry out His fierce wrath against Amalek." Saul is beside himself, falling to the ground weak and helpless. Saul was a miserable, lonely, obsessed man because he didn't seek the LORD's face. God's mercy on those who love Him should amaze your group. Help them come to see how the opposite is present in Saul's life and that we should hate every grievous way in us that opposes God's commands.

The Philistines Reject David (29:1-11)

In this short situation, we see that the Philistine commanders slap some sense into Achish. There was no way that David was going to fight against and kill his own people. The commanders realized this and said, "Is this not David, of whom they sing to one another in dances, 'Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands?'" This shows the Lord's kindness to David, which delivered him from the hand of the Philistines and from having to fight against his own people. Even though David has not been honest and is living selfishly, God honors him. This doesn't give us a license to sin and try to get away with what David did. Instead, it should draw us to worship God and desire to live holy lives because God honors those who are right with Him.

Conclusion of I Samuel (29:1-31:13)

In chapter 30, David faces an harsh situation. After defeating Ziklag in battle, his wives and children are captured by the Amalekites. It was so bad that the people wanted to stone David. "But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God" (v. 6). Here's a turning point for David – he finally comes back to full fellowship with the LORD after not seeking God's honor for a few chapters. David inquires of the LORD, "Shall I pursue after this band? Shall I overtake them?" (v. 8). God commands David to go and He vindicates David. He rescues his wives and everything that the Amalekites stole is recovered. Chapter 31 ends the book and tells the story of Saul's death. During battle, Saul was wounded by arrows and the outlook was not positive. Giving up on the battlefield, verse 4b says, "Therefore Saul took his own sword and fell upon it." His death is a sad ending to a sad life.

In the lesson, the students should continue to look to Jesus, the ultimate expression of God's love and faithfulness. As great as David may seem, he is still just as broken as you and I. He is not our example; Christ is the ultimate example of what we should strive to be. Most importantly, I Samuel should point us to gospel truth and transformation only found in Jesus Christ.

What's Our Response?

We should seek our strength in the LORD and not ourselves and should not resort to God-less, selfish speech.

What Are the Questions?

I Samuel 27:1-31:13

LAUNCH

Talk about a time when you tried to solve a problem on your own instead of turning to God and created a big mess for yourself.

EXPLORE

Read I Samuel 27:1-28:2

1. What does David do as this chapter begins?
2. How did David manage to thrive securely side-by-side with the Philistines, Israel's perennial enemy?
3. What insights does 28:2 give about David's motive in pursuing this course of action?
4. In what ways can you relate to David's mistake of engaging in misguided self-talk instead of strengthening yourself in the LORD your God?

Read I Samuel 28:3-25

5. As this section begins, why is Saul afraid?
6. How does Saul react?
7. What happens as Saul seeks this sorcerer?
8. How would you compare and contrast David and Saul's problems at the end of chapters 27 and 28?

Read I Samuel 29

9. Explain in your own words David's dilemma?
10. How does God work to deliver David from the mess he's gotten himself into?
11. What contrast do you see between the end of chapter 28 and the end of chapter 29?

Read I Samuel 30

12. Summarize David's crisis as this chapter begins.
13. How does David respond to this crisis?
14. How does God work to turn a tragedy into a triumph? How does David's response in the aftermath of this triumph show his understanding of the way God has been gracious to him?

APPLY

15. Read Psalm 23:6. How do you see the LORD's goodness and love following David in these chapters?
16. Read Matthew 27:45-46 and Hebrews 13:5. How does Jesus' suffering and death deliver us from experiencing the abandonment from God that we, as well as Saul, deserve for our disobedience?
17. Read Hebrews 4:14-16. In light of these verses and God's graciousness to David, what practical steps do you need to take to turn to God in a crisis you're facing and strengthen yourself in the LORD your God?

What Are the Answers?

1. He flees from Saul to live among the Philistines.
2. He performed raids on other people who were common enemies to the Philistines and Israelites, but he told the Philistines he was attacking the Israelites.
3. He indulged in self-talk that was devoid of God's perspective.
4. Allow the group to discuss.
5. The Philistines are preparing a massive attack.
6. He seeks the LORD. When God does not answer him, he seeks a sorcerer.
7. He has her call up Samuel, who reiterates God's word that he has rejected him because he himself had rejected God's word.
8. They're both in grave situations. But God has not abandoned David while he has abandoned Saul.
9. The Philistines are preparing to attack the Israelites, and they want David to fight with them against his own people.
10. He causes the Philistine leaders to distrust him, so they won't let him fight with them against the Israelites.
11. Saul's dilemma ends in hopelessness at night, while David's dilemma ends in hopefulness in the morning.
12. The Amalekites have plundered Ziklag and captured the women and children. David's men want to stone him.
13. He strengthens himself in the LORD his God and seeks His direction.
14. He leads David to someone who knows where the Amalekites are. He allows David and his men to recover their families and goods and destroy their enemy.
15. God delivers David from Saul's pursuit. He delivers David from attacking his own men. He lets David recover the women and children and defeat the Amalekites.
16. Even though we were the ones who deserved the Father's abandonment because of our rejection of Him, Jesus experienced that abandonment in our place so that we would never need to.
17. Allow the group to discuss.

Memorize

And David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because all the people were bitter in soul, each for his sons and daughters. But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God.

I Samuel 30:6