

## **November 4**

**Scriptures:** Read 1 Samuel 30 & 31

**Key Verse:** “But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God”. (1 Samuel 30:6)

### **Overview**

While David and his army were away at the Philistine military encampment in the central area of the country (29:1-2), the Amalekites took the opportunity to take vengeance upon David for attacking them (27:8). The Amalekites were nomadic people, and their various tribes were scattered throughout the desert region of the south. Knowing that the men were away on the battlefield, they must have organized a united attack to plunder the unprotected cities. In retaliation, they burned David’s village of Ziklag but did not kill the women or children, because they were of value in the slave trade.

What a shock it must have been for David to return and see his home smoldering, as well as his wives and all the families of his men missing. Everyone angrily blamed David for the disaster, because he was responsible for their absence at the time of the invasion. This all came as a result of his deception to the Philistine king Achish (ch. 27; 28:1-2). In great distress, David turned to the Lord and received encouragement and strength (30:6). Like David, if we come up against a seemingly hopeless situation, rather than become discouraged and sinking into depression, we should go directly to God and seek His guidance, casting all our cares upon him.

God answered David, giving him confidence to pursue the Amalekites and promising success in recovering all that had been taken. When this was accomplished, David gave all the credit to God. It was not by the strength of the warriors that the battle was won, but by the strength of God; therefore, as David wisely ruled, all in God’s army were to share the spoil, whether they had been active participants or not.

While God was with David to give him victory over the Amalekites, Saul, in fulfillment of Samuel’s words (28:19), was suffering defeat by the Philistines, for God was not with him. The Israelite army was forced to retreat from the Plains of Jezreel (29:1) to Mount Gilboa, where Saul’s three sons died (31:2) and he was wounded so that he could not retreat further. Since his armourbearer would not carry out his orders to kill him (probably because he did not want to take the judgment of God into his own hands), Saul chose to commit suicide rather than be found alive, humiliated, and then killed by the Philistines.

What a tragic end for a man who had been king over Israel for forty years (Acts 13:21) and was once chosen and honoured by God. The first time Saul gave leadership to Israel, after he had been anointed by Samuel, was in delivering the people of Jabesh Gilead (11:1, 11). They never forgot Saul’s bravery and expressed their indebtedness to him by recovering the bodies of his sons and his own decapitated body (which the Philistines had mutilated) and giving them an honourable burial.

Because Saul’s heart became rebellious and he no longer honoured God, he and his sons suffered greatly. In contrast, David honoured the Lord and obeyed Him as his Commander-in-Chief; therefore, in replacement of Saul, the Lord honoured David by making him the commander of His inheritance (10:1).

### **Prayer**

Lord our God, the reason we are reading “Day unto Day” is that we know that, like David, we need to be strengthened in you. Help us to “rescue the perishing”. We praise You for the privilege.