

## David Hunted - Part Four

by Charles E. Wigg

### **Hunted By Saul And Amongst False Brethren**

David loved Saul, and never lost his respect for him, ever mindful that he was the Lord's anointed. But Saul hated David, and was petulant and full of self-pity. It is sad to read of the things that he did to this servant of his, who loved him, and was faithful amongst Saul's servants. It was this experience that led him to write later, "They that hate me without a cause", Psalms 69:4 *For my love* they are my adversaries: but I *give myself unto* prayer. Psalms 109:5 And they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred *for my love*", and "for my love they are my adversaries". Psalms 109:4. These words reveal how much David felt the undeserved hatred of Saul and those who followed him!

Like the One of whom he became a type, David was a "man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief". He was despised and rejected of men. But this was not the only sorrow that he experienced. When the Philistines attacked his people, David inquired of the Lord, went and smote the Philistines, and saved the people of Keilah, gaining much spoil. We might have thought that the inhabitants of that town would have felt some gratitude for the one who had saved them, but they proved to be false brethren. David learned a very important lesson through all this. He learned to seek the will of God, to inquire of God. He did not rely upon his own judgement, nor trust those he loved and saved. He called for the ephod, and sought answers and direction from the One who could be trusted absolutely. A valuable lesson to us all!

This treachery and ingratitude might have easily discouraged David. But God used a most unlikely person to bring him encouragement. Poor Jonathan, though unwilling to share David's rejection, yet came to him in the wood, and strengthened his hand in God. He assured him that Saul would never find him. That one day David would surely be king, and he would be next, but it was not to be. David did become king, but Jonathan died with his father on Mount Gilboa. This is a solemn warning to us, that if we are not willing to share the reproach and rejection of Christ, we will not share His kingdom. If we deny Him now, He will deny us then.

### **The Power Of Grace**

Saul continued his mindless hatred towards David, and pursued him like a partridge on the mountains. He threw caution to the winds, and put himself into David's hands, in a cave. David's men bade him destroy his enemy, but he was unwilling to repay evil with evil. However he cut off the skirt of Saul's robe, but his tender heart smote him, and he followed Saul when he left the cave. He cried after the king, asked him why he was pursuing him. Why he listened to the words of evil men when he held in his hand the skirt of Saul's robe? This spirit of grace on David's part was too much for the king, it reduced the hardened murderer to tears. One would almost think that David was living in New Testament times. We are instructed in Rom. 12:19-20, to treat our enemies with kindness, and in so doing we will heap coals of fire on their head. But David lived in other times, under a law that entitled him to exact revenge, to take eye for eye and tooth for tooth. David preferred to leave vengeance in the hands of God.

David repeated this same attitude on a later occasion, with similar results. David's kindness on this occasion led to Saul confessing his sin, the unrighteousness of his actions, and his foolishness. and the greatness of his error. This all goes to demonstrate the power of grace. Let us learn this lesson! It is so sad, when Christian believers, who have been forgiven so much, find it so hard to forgive their fellow believers that have injured, or offended them in some way.

### **A Bride For David During The Time Of His Rejection**

David's marriage to Michal, Saul's daughter was short lived, because Saul gave her to another man as his wife. (1Sam. 25:44.) This meant that humanly speaking his life was very lonely, but God provided for the need of His servant. During his exile, David and his men had been a force for good, protecting shepherds etc. One group that benefited from this kindness were the shepherds of Nabal. These men felt safe and secure, while ever David and

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his men were nearby. When it came time to shear the sheep, ( a time of rejoicing and feasting), David sought to share the festivities. However Nabal was a churlish man, and he insulted the servants of David.

David was incensed by the insult, and determined to take vengeance on Nabal and his house. However as he prepared for the escapade, God was working in the heart of Nabal's wife Abigail. Nabal also was drinking to excess, and when his much wiser wife, warned him of the disaster that was about to descend on them. Without her husbands knowledge she prepared a gift of generous proportions for the enraged David. When they met, Abigail took a humble place, and sought to show David the wrong of what he was about to do. She warned him of the repercussions of his act, when he did ascend Israel's throne.

David listened to her reasoning and her plea. He saw the wrong of what he was about to do, in taking up his own cause, in acting hastily. He turned back from his disastrous errand, and praised Abigail for her advice, and her wisdom. He acknowledged that God had sent her, and used her to keep him back from making this great mistake; from avenging himself with his own hand.

When he returned, and left all in the hands of the Lord, Jehovah intervened on his behalf. Nabal's merriment came to a sudden end. When told of the disaster that had been narrowly averted, it is said that his heart died within him. On hearing of what God had done, in removing the one that had insulted him, David then sent some of his men to talk with Abigail, to ask her to become his wife. Abigail quickly accepted the proposal, with characteristic humility, and went to become David's wife.

Here then we have a type of Christ and the Church. We who were sinners of the Gentiles, have all had a past history, but God has justified us from all those things. When we were born again, we became new creatures in Christ. All our past history was forever finished, cleansed away, and through the work of justification, God looks at us now, just as if we had never sinned. We now are baptised into one body, and form the Church, the Bride of Christ.

Let us learn from David's near failure. How often we seek revenge on those who have spoken against us, and as a result bring great sorrow and shame on ourselves, on the testimony, and worst of all, on the precious name of our Lord Jesus. Let us follow the example of our Master, who "When He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not: but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously". 1Pet. 2:23.

### **David's Second Lapse**

Saul continued his murderous ways, and found ready support from those who sought a place of prominence, or reward for themselves. Let us be warned by this! If we seek to do what is wrong, we will always find those who will support us. They are often driven by ulterior motives, and will profit from our wrongdoing. The Ziphites must have later been shamed by what they sought to do, in inciting king Saul to hunt for David, when he ascended Israel's throne.

However Saul's lapse into hunting David again after he had sworn that he would never do so any more, was too much for David's faith, he lapsed into unbelief. He said in his heart, it was deeper than his mind. It is perhaps an example of the "wicked heart of unbelief", spoken of in Hebrews chapter three. "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul". Before this could happen, God had to prove Himself to be a liar. It would show that though God had revealed His will, yet He was unable to fulfil what He had promised. Such thinking David learned earlier, was madness. Yet he showed his human weakness, by entertaining such thoughts in his heart. So he fell away to the Philistines, he made friends with the enemies of God.

Those were sad months that he spent in the territory of the Philistines. He was given a town to dwell in, and he used his military skills to attack others of the enemies of God, yet he had to lie about what he had done. He even offered to go with the armies of the Philistines against his own people, but God intervened, and did not permit him

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to do this sad thing. He was sent home in disgrace, only to find that the Amalekites had attacked his own town, plundered and burned it, and taken their wives and children captives.

What a scene of desolation must have met his gaze! It brought forth the tears, they wept until they could weep no more. It seemed that all was lost. To make matters worse, his men rebelled, and even spoke of stoning him. He had lost his authority and control. What was he to do? It was God's way of teaching him the folly of doing his own will, going his own way. He did what he should have done before coming into the land of the Philistines. He called for the ephod; once again he was going to inquire of God, as to what he should do. God told him to pursue the enemy, assuring him that he would overtake them, that in spite of the impossibility, the hopelessness of the situation, he would recover all. God is the God of the impossible

One third of his army were so exhausted that they could not cross the brook Besor. It is interesting to note that Besor, means 'cheerful', there seemed nothing to be cheerful about. However faith lifts the drooping spirit up, and with the remaining four hundred men David pursued the troop. An Egyptian who was at the point of death, once revived by the kindness of David, was able to become guide to his army, and brought them down to the troop of the Amalekites. The enemy was celebrating their victory, rejoicing over all the spoil that they had taken, but their merriment was short lived. David and his men seemed to get new strength and energy. They smote the enemy until the evening of the next day. That seems to mean that they were in constant attack for twenty-four hours. What a battle it was! But it resulted in total victory, only four hundred men escaped who rode on camels.

"And David recovered all", what a miracle, but in addition they gained much spoil. What a testimony this is to the faithfulness of God. There is a lovely verse in 2Tim.2:13, "If we are unfaithful, He abides faithful, for He cannot deny Himself." (J.N.D. Trans.)