



30:26-31 Dovid sends around spoils – and a poem

1. The cities (based on Professor Yehuda Kil, Daat Mikra)

Cities of Shimon	Beit El, Ramot Negev, Chormah, Bor Ashan, Atach
Kohanim	Yateir, Eshtimoa
City of Refuge	Chevron
Regular	Aroeir, Sifmot, Rachal
Looted	Yerachmieli, Keini

2. Rashi to Shemuel I 30:31

אשר התהלך שם דוד - שהיו מחבאים אותו מפני שאול.

“Where Dovid had travelled” – for they hid him from Shaul.

3. Abarbanel to Shemuel I 17:54

והגיד הכתוב שדוד לא הלך לשלול שלל ולבוז בו כיתר העם, אבל היה שללו ראש גלית הפלשתי ואת כליו אשר לקח ויביא אותם לפני שאול, ומשם הוליכו את הראש בכל ערי ישראל לבשר הנשים והטף עד שהביאוהו ירושלים.

The text said that David did not go to despoil and pillage as the rest of the nation did. But his spoils were the head of Goliath the Philistine and his *kelim*, which [David] took and brought before Shaul. From there, they brought the head through all of Israel's cities, to inform the women and children, until they brought it to Jerusalem.

4. Ralbag to Shemuel I 30:25

ולפרסם הנס אשר עשה הש"י לדוד, ולגדירותו, שלח מן השלל לזקני יהודה לרעהו בכל המקומות הנזכרים פה:

And to publicize the miracle that Hashem performed for Dovid, and in his generosity, he sent from the spoils to the elders of Yehudah, to his allies in all of the places listed here.

5. Midrash Tehillim 15:6

"ואת יראי ד' יכבד" זה דוד, שנאמר "ויבא דוד אל צקלג וישלח מהשלל [לזקני יהודה לרעהו לאמר]..."

“And he honours those who revere Hashem” – This is Dovid, as it says, “And Dovid came to Tziklag, and he sent from the spoils [to the elders of Yehudah, to his allies, saying]”...

6. Rabbi Ovadia Seforno, Commentary to Bamidbar 31:27

וחצית את המלקוח. מפני שהיתה המלחמה מלחמת נקמה על מה שנעשה נגד כולם רצה שיתקיים בכולם "ואכלת את שלל אויביך". כענין דוד בשלל עמלק כאמרו "הנה לכם ברכה משלל אויבי ד'".

“And you shall split the take in half” – Because it was a war of revenge for what was done to all of them, he wanted to fulfill for all of them, “And you shall eat the spoils of your enemies. (Devarim 20:14)” Like with Dovid and the spoils of Amalek, as it says, “Behold, for you, a gift from the spoils of the enemies of Hashem.”

7. Radak to Shemuel I 30:31

ועוד כי מארץ יהודה היה השלל ההוא, כמו שאמר הנער המצרי "אנחנו פשטנו נגב הכרתי ועל אשר ליהודה וגו'":

Further, for the spoils were from the land of Yehudah, as the Egyptian youth said...

8. Abarbanel to Shemuel I 30:26-28

ר"ל שלא היה שולח להם זה בעבור ששללוהו העמלקים מהם, כי אין להם כבר דין במה שהתיאשו, אבל היה שולח להם ברכה משלל אויבי ד' כי כבר היה משלהם. וגם כוון בזה לומר אל תחשבו שיש קללה באכילת השלל הזה שבעליהם יצעקו אל ד' ויקללו עליו...

Meaning that he did not send to them because the Amalekites took the spoils from them, for they no longer had a claim to that of which they had despaired. Rather, he sent them a gift from the spoils of the enemies of Hashem for it was their due. Also, he intended with this to say: Don't think there is a curse in eating these spoils, for their enemies will cry out to Gd and curse you...

9. Professor Yehuda Kil, Daat Mikra to Shemuel I 30:27, Summary of the Perek

המסורה שיוטה לפרשה צורה של שירה... ואכן דברים אלה מעין שירה הם, וחשיבותם שנאמרו על נצחוננו של דוד על העמלקי, והוא ראשית יסוד מלכותו...

אף יש בשירה זו גם משום בשורה ליסוד מלכותו. ויצא שאותה מלחמה עצמה, מלחמת אכיש בישראל, שגרמה למפלת שאול, היא שגרמה לעליתו של דוד על כס מלכות ישראל.

The tradition gave this portion the form of a poem... And in truth, these words are a sort of poem. Their significance is that they were said regarding Dovid's victory over Amalek, the beginning of the establishment of his reign...

This poem also includes a sort of heralding of the establishment of his reign. As it turned out, the war itself, the war of Achish against Israel, which caused the fall of Shaul, was what caused Dovid's ascent to the throne of the reign of Israel.

How Dovid and Shaul Differ

10. Similar distress (Rav Bazak)

- צר 28:15 and 30:6
- Weak 28:20 and 30:4

11. Different responses (Prof. Kil)

- Appealing to Gd vs Sinning
- Fighting Amalek vs Not destroying Amalek
- Ruling the nation vs Being intimidated by the nation

From Desperation to Exhilaration

12. Midrash, Shemot Rabbah 19:1

זש"ה (משלי יד) "לב יודע מרת נפשו ובשמחתו לא יתערב זר"... התחיל דוד בוכה שנאמר (ש"א ל) "ותצר לדוד מאד כי אמרו העם לסקלו". לא עשו אלא הצילו נשותיהן ובניהן ובנותיהן ובאו לא"י והעלו את ארון ד' ונתנוהו למקומו, מה כתיב שם? (ד"ה א כט) "וגם דוד המלך שמח שמחה גדולה."

This is what Mishlei 14 said, "The heart knows the bitterness of its spirit, and in its joy no outsider can join"... Dovid began to cry, as it says, "And Dovid was very pained, for the nation said they would stone him." They didn't do this, but they saved their wives and sons and daughters, and they came to Israel and brought up the Ark of Hashem and put it in its place. What does it say there? "Also King David rejoiced with a great joy."

Review Questions

- 1) Where did these Amalekites come from, if Shaul destroyed Amalek?
- 2) Why did Amalek attack Tziklag?
- 3) Why did the men blame Dovid for the attack by Amalek?
- 4) Why did Hashem allow the Amalekites to succeed against Tziklag?
- 5) Why didn't 200 of the 600 go to fight against Amalek, and how do the explanations fit their title as פגרים?
- 6) Did Dovid ask Gd whether he should go fight Amalek, or only whether he would succeed?
- 7) What do we learn from Dovid's treatment of the Egyptian captive?
- 8) Why does the text mention the 400 young Amalekite escapees?
- 9) Why did the warriors declare that the spoils belong to Dovid?
- 10) Which spoils did the 400 men refuse to split with the 200 men?
- 11) In what tone does Dovid respond to the 400 men who don't want to split the spoils?
- 12) Why does Dovid insist on splitting the spoils evenly between the fighters and non-fighters?
- 13) Why would it be just for the non-fighters to receive an equal share?
- 14) What biblical precedent is there for Dovid's splitting of the spoils?
- 15) Why does Dovid share the spoils with communities in Yehudah?
- 16) Why do we record the splitting of the spoils as a poem?
- 17) What does our chapter tell us about Dovid's men?
- 18) What does our chapter tell us about Dovid's leadership style?
- 19) How does our chapter contrast Dovid and Shaul?