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1SAMUEL 30: 1 When David and his men had come to Ziklag on the third day, the Amalekites had made a raid on the South, and on Ziklag, and had struck Ziklag, and burned it with fire,

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While David is absent with the army of Achish, the Amalekites invade Ziklag, and burn it with fire, and carry away captive David's wives, and those of his men, 1Sam 30:1, 1Sam 30:2. David and his men return; and, finding the desolate state of their city, are greatly affected, 1Sam 30:3-5. The men mutiny, and threaten to stone David, who encourages himself in the Lord, 1Sam 30:6. David inquires of the Lord, and is directed to pursue the Amalekites, with the promise that he shall recover all, 1Sam 30:7, 1Sam 30:8. He and his men begin the pursuit, but two hundred, through fatigue are obliged to stay behind at the brook Besor, 1Sam 30:9, 1Sam 30:10. They find a sick Egyptian, who directs them in their pursuit, 1Sam 30:11-15. David finds the Amalekites secure, feasting on the spoils they had taken; he attacks and destroys the whole host, except four hundred, who escape on camels, 1Sam 30:16, 1Sam 30:17. The Israelites recover their wives, their families, and all their goods, 1Sam 30:18-20. They come to the two hundred who were so faint as not to be able to pursue the enemy, with whom they divide the spoil; and this becomes a statute in Israel, 1Sam 30:21-25. David sends part of the spoil which he had taken to different Jewish cities, which had suffered by the incursion of the Amalekites; and where David and his men had been accustomed to resort, 1Sam 30:26-31.

#### Verse 1

On the third day - This was the third day after he had left the Philistine army at Aphek. Calmet supposes that Aphek was distant from Ziklag more than thirty leagues.

The Amalekites had invaded - These were, doubtless, a travelling predatory horde, who, availing themselves of the war between the Philistines and the Israelites, plundered several unprotected towns, and among them Ziklag. It is likely they had not heard of what David did to some of their tribes, else they would have avenged themselves by slaying all they found in Ziklag.

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1SAMUEL 30: 2 and had taken captive the women and all who were therein, both small and great. They didn't kill any, but carried them off, and went their way.

1SAMUEL 30: 3 When David and his men came to the city, behold, it was burned with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captive.

1SAMUEL 30: 4 Then David and the people who were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep.

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#### Verse 4

Wept, until they had no more power to weep - This marks great distress; they wept, as says the Vulgate, till their tears failed them.

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1SAMUEL 30: 5 David's two wives were taken captive, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite.

1SAMUEL 30: 6 David was greatly distressed; for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David strengthened himself in the LORD his God.

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Verse 6

The people spoke of stoning him - David had done much to civilize those men; but we find by this of what an unruly and ferocious spirit they were; and yet they strongly felt the ties of natural affection, they "grieved every man for his sons and for his daughters."

David encouraged himself in the Lord - He found he could place very little confidence in his men; and, as he was conscious that this evil had not happened either through his neglect or folly, he saw he might the more confidently expect succor from his Maker.

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1SAMUEL 30: 7 David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, "Please bring me here the ephod." Abiathar brought the ephod to David.

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Verse 7

Bring me hither the ephod - It seems as if David had put on the ephod, and inquired of the Lord for himself; but it is more likely that he caused Abiathar to do it.

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1SAMUEL 30: 8 David inquired of the LORD, saying, "If I pursue after this troop, shall I overtake them?" He answered him, "Pursue; for you shall surely overtake them, and shall without fail recover all."

1SAMUEL 30: 9 So David went, he and the six hundred men who were with him, and came to the brook Besor, where those who were left behind stayed.

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Verse 9

The brook Besor - This had its source in the mountain of Idumea, and fell into the Mediterranean Sea beyond Gaza. Some suppose it to have been the same with the river of the wilderness, or the river of Egypt. The sense of this and the following verse is, that when they came to the brook Besor, there were found two hundred out of his six hundred men so spent with fatigue that they could proceed no farther. The baggage or stuff was left there, 1Sam 30:24, and they were appointed to guard it.

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1SAMUEL 30: 10 But David pursued, he and four hundred men; for two hundred stayed behind, who were so faint that they couldn't go over the brook Besor.

1SAMUEL 30: 11 They found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David, and gave him bread, and he ate; and they gave him water to drink.

1SAMUEL 30: 12 They gave him a piece of a cake of figs, and two clusters of raisins. When he had eaten, his spirit came again to him; for he had eaten no bread, nor drunk any water, three days and three nights.

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Verse 12

A cake of figs - See on 1Sam 25:18 (note).

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1SAMUEL 30: 13 David asked him, "To whom do you belong? Where are you from?"

He said, "I am a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite; and my master left me, because three days ago I fell sick.

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Verse 13

My master left me, because three days ago I fell sick - This was very inhuman: though they had booty enough, and no doubt asses sufficient to carry the invalids, yet they left this poor man to perish; and God visited it upon them, as he made this very person the means of their destruction, by the information which he was enabled to give to David and his men.

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1SAMUEL 30: 14 We made a raid on the South of the Cherethites, and on that which belongs to Judah, and on the South of Caleb; and we burned Ziklag with fire."

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Verse 14

Upon the south of the Cherethites - Calmet and others maintain, that the כרתי kerethi, which, without the points, might be read Creti, were not only at this time Philistines, but that they were aborigines of Crete, from which they had their name Cherethites or Cretans, and are those of whom Zephaniah speaks, Zep 2:5 : Wo to the inhabitants of the sea-coasts, the nation of the Cherethites. And by Ezekiel, Eze 25:16 : Behold, I will stretch out mine hand upon the Philistines, and will cut off the Cherethim. In 2Sam 15:18 we find that the Cherethites formed a part of David's guards.

South of Caleb - Somewhere about Kirjath-arba, or Hebron, and Kirjath-sepher; these being in the possession of Caleb and his descendants.

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1SAMUEL 30: 15 David said to him, "Will you bring me down to this troop?"

He said, "Swear to me by God that you will neither kill me, nor deliver me up into the hands of my master, and I will bring you down to this troop."

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## Verse 15

Swear unto me - At the conclusion of this verse, the Vulgate, Syriac, and Arabic add, that David swore to him. This is not expressed in the Hebrew, but is necessarily implied.

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1SAMUEL 30: 16 When he had brought him down, behold, they were spread around over all the ground, eating, drinking, and dancing, because of all the great plunder that they had taken out of the land of the Philistines, and out of the land of Judah.

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## Verse 16

Out of the land of the Philistines - That these Amalekites were enemies to the Philistines is evident, but it certainly does not follow from this that those whom David destroyed were enemies also. This, I think, has been too hastily assumed by Dr. Chandler and others, in order the better to vindicate the character of David.

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1SAMUEL 30: 17 David struck them from the twilight even to the evening of the next day. Not a man of them escaped from there, except four hundred young men, who rode on camels and fled.

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## Verse 17

There escaped not a man of them - It is well known to every careful reader of the Bible, that the Amalekites were a proscribed people, even by God himself, and that in extirpating them it has been supposed David fulfilled the express will of God. But all this depends on whether he had an express commission to do so, received from God himself, as Saul had.

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1SAMUEL 30: 18 David recovered all that the Amalekites had taken; and David rescued his two wives.

1SAMUEL 30: 19 There was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither plunder, nor anything that they had taken to them. David brought back all.

1SAMUEL 30: 20 David took all the flocks and the herds, which they drove before those other livestock, and said, "This is David's plunder."

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## Verse 20

And David took all the flocks - He and his men not only recovered all their own property, but they recovered all the spoil which these Amalekites had taken from the south of Judah, the Cherethites, and the south of Caleb. When this was separated from the rest, it was given to David, and called David's spoil.

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1SAMUEL 30: 21 David came to the two hundred men, who were so faint that they could not follow David, whom also they had made to stay at the brook Besor; and they went out to meet David, and to meet the people who were with him. When David came near to the people, he greeted them.

1SAMUEL 30: 22 Then all the wicked men and base fellows, of those who went with David, answered and said, "Because they didn't go with us, we will not give them anything of the plunder that we have recovered, except to every man his wife and his children, that he may lead them away, and depart."

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#### Verse 22

Men of Belial - This is a common expression to denote the sour, the rugged, the severe, the idle, and the profane.

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1SAMUEL 30: 23 Then David said, "You shall not do so, my brothers, with that which the LORD has given to us, who has preserved us, and delivered the troop that came against us into our hand."

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#### Verse 23

That which the Lord hath given us - He very properly attributes this victory to God; the numbers of the Amalekites being so much greater than his own. Indeed, as many fled away on camels as were in the whole host of David.

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1SAMUEL 30: 24 Who will listen to you in this matter? For as his share is who goes down to the battle, so shall his share be who carries by the baggage: they shall share alike."

1SAMUEL 30: 25 It was so from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel to this day.

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#### Verse 25

He made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel - Nothing could be more just and proper than this law: he who stays at home to defend house and property, has an equal right to the booty taken by those who go out to the war. There was a practice of this kind among the Israelites long before this time; see Num 31:27; Jos 22:8; and the note on this latter verse.

Unto this day - This is another indication that this book was composed long after the facts it commemorates. See the hypothesis in the preface.

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1SAMUEL 30: 26 When David came to Ziklag, he sent of the plunder to the elders of Judah, even to his friends, saying, "Behold, a present for you of the plunder of the enemies of the LORD."

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#### Verse 26

Unto the elders of Judah - These were the persons among whom he sojourned during his exile, and who had given him shelter and protection. Gratitude required these presents.

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1SAMUEL 30: 27 He sent it to those who were in Bethel, and to those who were in Ramoth of the South, and to those who were in Jattir,

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Verse 27

To them which were in Beth-el - This was in the tribe of Ephraim.

South Ramoth - So called to distinguish it from Ramoth Gilead, beyond Jordan. This Ramoth belonged to the tribe of Simeon, Jos 19:8.

In Jattir - Supposed by Calmet to be the same as Ether, Jos 15:42, but more probably Jattir, Jos 15:48. It was situated in the mountains, and belonged to Judah.

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1SAMUEL 30: 28 and to those who were in Aroer, and to those who were in Siphmoth, and to those who were in Eshtemoa,

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Verse 28

In Aroer - Situated beyond Jordan, on the banks of the river Arnon, in the tribe of Gad.

Siphmoth - Supposed to be the same with Shepham, Num 34:10, on the eastern border of the promised land.

Eshtemoa - Another city in the tribe of Judah. See Jos 15:50.

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1SAMUEL 30: 29 and to those who were in Racal, and to those who were in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, and to those who were in the cities of the Kenites,

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Verse 29

Them which were in Rachal - We know not where this place was; it is mentioned nowhere else in the Bible. Calmet conjectures that Hachilah, 1Sam 23:19, may be the same place; here we know David did conceal himself for some time, till the Ziphites endeavored to betray him to Saul.

The cities of the Jerahmeelites - See before, 1Sam 27:10 (note).

And - the cities of the Kenites - A very small tract on the southern coast of the Dead Sea.

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1SAMUEL 30: 30 and to those who were in Hormah, and to those who were in Borashan, and to those who were in Athach,

Verse 30

Hormah - The general name of those cities which belonged to Arad, king of Canaan; and were devoted to destruction by the Hebrews, and thence called Hormah. See Num 21:1-3.

In Chor-ashan - Probably the same as Ashan in the tribe of Judah: see Jos 15:42 (note). It was afterwards ceded to Simeon, Jos 19:7.

To them which were in Athach - Probably the same as Ether, Jos 19:7.

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1SAMUEL 30: 31 and to those who were in Hebron, and to all the places where David himself and his men used to stay.

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Verse 31

To them which were in Hebron - This was a place strongly attached to David, and David to it, and the place where he was proclaimed king, and where he reigned more than seven years previously to the death of Ishbosheth, Saul's son, who was, for that time, his competitor in the kingdom.

David's having sent presents to all these places, not only shows his sense of gratitude, but that the booty which he took from the Amalekites must have been exceedingly great. And we learn from this also that David sojourned in many places which are not mentioned in the preceding history; for these are all said to be places where David and his men were wont to haunt.

We are not to suppose that the transactions mentioned here and in the preceding chapter took place after Saul's interview with the woman of En-dor, they were considerably antecedent to this, but how long we do not know. What is recorded in the following chapter must have taken place the next day after Saul left En-dor.