

# David, King of Israel

by Bob Roe



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## Chapter One

### Saul Chosen and Anointed King

#### I Samuel, Chapters 8-14

A man after God's own heart is what David is called in I Samuel 13:14. So, it is very helpful to discover that he is not sinless but a man of great passions and driven by great desires. He has a violent temper and is a vicious, cruel killer. However, when the Lord puts the finger on him, he is also completely repentant. He has the whole spectrum of emotions that you and I have, yet God calls him a "man after His own heart," because, even though he fails God many times, he loves God wholeheartedly.

As a background for our study of David, I want to look at a "man after the world's own heart." We will start with a quick review of the life of Saul in order to see the contrast between Saul and David. In putting Saul on the throne, God was giving the Israelites the king they clamored for. Saul was not a straw king nor was he a pawn in the hands of God. God put him on the throne to reign over Israel and to reign forever. God chose him and was committed to him. The problem was Saul's lack of commitment to God. As a result, God had to first disqualify his line from reigning and then to disqualify Saul and actually take him off the throne. We see in Saul a vivid demonstration of the flesh, a picture of a carnal believer, and, according to Samuel, he was a believer. Even though Saul was a prophet of God, God finally had to take him home. Beginning, then, with Chapter 8 of 1 Samuel, we will do a short review of Saul's life to see how the flesh acts so we can get some concept of why God had to disqualify him. Saul just would not deal with the flesh.

If you want a simple definition of the flesh, it is "Me without Christ"; all the great things in a life; all the bad things in a life. It can be giving your body to be burned as a sacrifice to Christ, or it can be taking Bathsheba and murdering her husband to cover up her pregnancy and your adultery. It can be a good thing, self-sacrifice, or a despicable thing, self-centeredness. The flesh runs the whole gambit of human actions, motives, and attitudes, but it is "without God" and "without Christ." That is why it cannot please God. Romans 8:8 says the flesh "cannot" please God. It does not say it "will not." It is not an issue of the will. The flesh wants to please God much of the time, but it cannot..

The flesh "cannot" please Him because instead of allowing God to be God in us, the flesh does its best to be God in God's place. We simply will not believe Scripture, so we try to do our best for God and consequently tell God he is a liar. We are saying that the sacrifice of God's Son, and the risen and indwelling life of his Son is not really enough for everything in our lives. We need to help out a little. We are also telling God that we are not incurably, hopelessly self-centered in our own being, but that somewhere in us is a little bit of good, a little spark of deity. All

we have to do is fan it, and it will burst into a beautiful flame with walking on water, healing and everything else. But the fact of Scripture is that we are totally depraved. It does not mean that we are as bad as we could be, but it does mean that there is no possibility of me, in my own strength, ever pleasing God. There is God's standard as God and nothing less than God is acceptable to Him. The sooner we understand this the sooner we will stop trying to be godly in and of ourselves and allow God to be God in us. Since God is God, he can be godly without effort. For Jesus Christ it is easy to be Christlike. Anything he does is Christlike.

So let us take a look at Saul in the flesh. In Chapter 8 we start with the old prophet Samuel who was raised by God to rule the nation of Israel. The Israelites have gone into the land, but they have not taken all the land as they were instructed. For their own economic benefit, they have allowed the nations in the land to live. Because of this, the nation of Israel is sliding into idolatry chasing foreign gods, as God had warned them they would. In sin and taken captive by invading forces, they are plunged into the pit of despair. So they cry out to God in repentance, and God raises up a Judge [a Leader] who releases them by the power of God. As long as the Judge lives, the Israelites behave. Then down to the pit they go, and again God gives them over to their captors. Again they cry out in repentance, and God responds with a Judge. God raised up Samuel as the last of the Judges and the first of the prophets. God is moving now from a theocracy, by which he governs his nation through these Judges and through the priesthood, to a monarchy where he will rule the nation through kings, prophets and priests. They are all to be equal. The priests mediate between God and man, the prophets speak from God to man, and the kings reign for God over man.

So in I Samuel, Chapter 8 we see the Israelites being threatened by the Ammonites, a vast group of vicious people living across the Jordan River, who came out of the incestuous union of Lot and his youngest daughter. They have been a thorn in the side of the Israelites for years. They worship Molech, a great metal idol with outstretched hands that they heat until it is red hot. Then, as a sacrifice to this god, they lay one of their new born babies on those red hot hands. This is the kind of people they are. The Israelites are not allowed to touch them, however, because they are the children of Lot.

At this time Samuel is old, and his sons are just like the sons of Eli, the priest before him. Samuel was not a good father. Apparently he was too busy about the Lord's work to raise his family properly. Now his sons are dishonest and are taking bribes. The people are saying about Samuel, "You are old. Your sons are dishonest. We do not want you anymore. We want a king to rule over us who will fight our battles and who will deal with the Ammonites." Samuel runs to God feeling very rejected, and God says, "It is not you they are rejecting, Samuel. It is me." Israel wants a king they can see, a king who looks like a king not some God they cannot see. So God warns them, "You asked for a king like all the other nations; I'll give you a king like all the other nations. But he will draft your sons into his army and take them away from the plow. He will take a tenth of all your goods to feed them. Your daughters will become bakers and cooks in his kitchen. He will, if he likes, take a tenth or more of your land to give to his warriors. This is what a king will do for you. As God, I own everything. I'm free. You can have me for nothing, the "grace of God," or you can have a king and a throne and it will cost you everything. What do you want?" "King!" came the reply. So God said, "All right,, I will give you the king you want."

Here you see "the wrath of God" in action. As in Romans 1:18-32, he gave them over to what they wanted. The wrath of God acts in the lives of both believers and unbelievers, and if God wants you to go His way and you insist on going your own way, the worst thing that can happen to you is for Him to let you have your way. That is exactly what he does with the Jewish nation. He gives them what they want, a king just like the nations around them.

In Chapter 9, Saul is sent out by his father to look for some lost donkeys. God brings Samuel and Saul together and tells Samuel, "This is the king." Samuel takes Saul aside for a long discussion, probably laying out his responsibilities as God's king over Israel.

Even though the Israelites have rejected God in favor of a human king, they are still his people, and he does not forsake them. He has committed himself to giving them the king they want and has picked out Saul. Saul is an unusually handsome man, probably the most handsome in all Israel, a choice man in the prime of life, bigger and

more comely than any other in Israel; the perfect specimen of a king. He is the son of a valiant father, the ideal picture of a man's man, a martial king coming from a long line of martial men. His father Kish and Abner [later commander-in-chief of Saul's army] are brothers who come from a long line of warriors. Saul is just what the Israelites ordered, but, as we will see, he is a fleshly man.

It would appear "the flesh" fulfills every requirement for whatever is needed. If it would only say, "I am evil," we would not have half the problems we have. But it is so treacherous because it says, "That need out there and my skills here mesh. I don't need God. I can handle this." As a classic example: I have an MBA from Stanford with a major in investment. I had the finest teachers in the land, and all you have to do to make money is buy low and sell high. Simple? But the only major investments I have made in my whole life have failed. Without consulting God I have made investments, and I have had a consistent pattern of failure. According to my natural strength I should be wealthy. This is the key to the flesh: "Natural Strength" not "Godly strength".

God has chosen a king for Israel, and he intends for him to reign well even though he is a fleshly man. Will the flesh hinder a sovereign God from working out his perfect will for my life, or for the nation of Israel, or for the kingdom of God? No, it will not! Saul is known by God to be a failure, but he has chosen him, and he is committed to him. The Scriptures say so. Actually, Saul is a good king by fleshly standards. He throws off the yoke of all the enemies around him and is certainly no failure in this area. Even in the flesh God can use us to accomplish his will. He used the vicious Assyrians to take the 10 Northern tribes of Israel into captivity. He used the Babylonians to take the 2 Southern tribes of Israel into captivity 125 years later. He used the Medio-Persians to bring the Israelites back into the land. These three nations were totally pagan, and yet they all three did the will of God. So, you see, God can use the flesh. The problem lies in what happens at the judgment seat of Christ. When I stand before the Lord and the things I have done in the body are judged, the question is, "Will they be good or will they be worthless?" If God accomplished them through me when I was acting in the flesh, they are burned up! They are worthless! Do not kid yourself; God will never honor the flesh.

The first person I ever led to Christ was an act of the flesh. There was a file clerk at Standard Oil in Los Angeles who gave me a very bad time when I accepted Christ. Before I became a Christian, I lived a pagan life before my colleagues. After I became a Christian, I tried to undo all I had done, and this file clerk gave me nothing but trouble. She constantly needled me. One day I let fly and told her she was going to hell. I literally scared the hell out of her, and I did it because I was angry as hell. She could not sleep that night and at 6 o'clock in the morning called up her brother, who was a Christian. He took her to his pastor, and she received the Lord. Now I can give you a written guarantee that at the judgment seat of Christ it is my temper that will be discussed not the soul that came to Christ because of my temper. God is not thwarted by us. While acting in the flesh, we have nothing to offer the Lord that warrants a "Well done, thy good and faithful servant" or any reward. I firmly believe the "rewards" at the judgment seat of Christ will come from the ability to glorify the Lord. Therefore, the above is an area of my life in which I could have glorified Christ but did not, so in the area of glorifying Christ, I will be missing something for all eternity.

In Chapter 10 Samuel, as a sign of Saul's kingship, takes a flask of oil, pours it on his head, kisses him and says, "Has not the LORD anointed you a ruler over His inheritance?" He also gives him certain signs, one of which is that he will be filled with the Spirit of God and will prophesy, which he does. Then Samuel warns him saying, "You shall go down to Gilgal."

Gilgal was where the Jews crossed the Jordan River before taking Jericho. Apparently during the 40 years of wandering no circumcision had been done. So at Gilgal, which means "rolling", the whole nation was circumcised, thus rolling away the reproach of the years of disobedience in the wilderness. Before God allows the Israelites to take over any of the Promised Land, he insists that they all be circumcised. Why? Colossians tells us. Circumcision is a deliberate, objective symbol of the removal of the flesh. It is intriguing that Saul makes his headquarters at Gilgal, a symbol of the removal of the flesh, and that he fails every time he goes to Gilgal because of the flesh.

Continuing in Chapter 10, Samuel tells Saul, "There will be a critical time when I will come to Gilgal, offer

offerings and show you what to do." But as a prophet of God, God would be the one to instruct him. Saul does experience the enabling power of God, and God does change his heart. Saul was not sent out in the flesh to do the job. God called him and God equipped him.

If God commits himself to Saul, fills him with the Spirit "mightily", allows him to prophesy, to become a prophet of God and changes his heart, who, then, is responsible for the failure of Saul? It cannot be God. So, do not ever accuse God of causing you to fail. We are going to see that Saul does exactly that. Whatever God calls you to do, God equips you to do. Saul understands where the power lies to do the job. Saul, who does not come from a school of prophets, [in fact the people question what he is doing when he prophesies] is allowed to experience the indwelling power of God in a way he has never experienced in his whole life. He gets a taste of what could be his if he obeys. God really wants Saul to succeed. He does not like for Christians to fail. He is a loving father. Therefore, before He does anything with regard to Saul's kingship, he lets Saul understand all the power of God is at his disposal if he chooses.

In Chapter 11 Nahash the Ammonite surrounds Jabesh-gilead, a town that belongs to Israel. He has so much power and such disdain for the Israelites that when the men of the town wish to make a treaty with him, he says, "I'll make a treaty with you if you let me gouge out your right eyes." [Soldiers in that day protected their left eyes with their shields, and used their right eyes for the sword. Therefore, if the right eye was removed, they could never fight again.] This was a very common way not only of humiliating but also of disarming a people. With only one eye, they also lacked depth perception.

So Jabesh-gilead pleads with Nahash,

**"Give us seven days respite that we may send messengers through all the territory of Israel. Then, if there is no one to save us, we will give ourselves up to you."**

Nahash, which means "the serpent", says, "Go ahead."

The men of Jabesh send word to Saul, and when Saul hears what has happened, he goes to Jabesh and destroys the Ammonites. It was a tremendous victory. Scripture says "the spirit of God came upon Saul mightily." Now, as king, he has had an experience of the power of God.

There were some people who did not want Saul as Israel's king because he stemmed from Benjamin the smallest of the tribes. When the majority of the people see what a tremendous job Saul has done, they say, "Bring all the people who did not want Saul as king that we may put them to death." Saul says, "Not a man shall be put to death this day, for today the LORD has accomplished deliverance in Israel." At this time, he is still God's man. So Saul is "made king before the LORD" at Gilgal, and he starts out as a beautiful picture of the power of God.

In Chapter 12, Samuel, in his final speech, demands of all Israel that they bring forth any charges they have against him. He admits that his sons are no good, but he claims that he himself has had a perfectly honorable reign. He admonishes them that they have sinned against God in rejecting God as king, and he calls down a thunder storm as proof of this. The people get frightened because of the thunder storm and repent of their choice of a king. Whereupon Samuel says, "Do not fear. God has forgiven you, but remember, you must fear and obey your God if you want a king who will fear and obey your God."

Paul wrote Romans 13:1-7 when Nero, an evil man and evil ruler, was on the throne. He persecuted the church, made torches out of Christians, threw them to the lions, murdered his own mother and lived with a young homosexual whom he castrated and made into his wife. He was insane, but Paul admonished the Christians to pray for him. He did not change and died insane. We won't know until we get into eternity how much, if any, those who obeyed God and prayed for him restrained him, but they were faithful. That is the point. If the Israelites are faithful to God, they may not change Saul, but they will be changed. That is God's purpose, and Saul will be without excuse for any failure as king.

In Chapter 12 God warns them that if only they will fear and obey him, he will not abandon them. He will be their

God, and they will be his people.

In Chapter 13 we will see Saul begin his movement toward rejection as king, and unfortunately his downward slide as believer. The Philistines are a people from out of the Aegean Sea area who went to Egypt, were thrown out of Egypt, and wound up on the southeastern seacoast of the Mediterranean where they cannot be dislodged by the Israelites. They have learned iron smelting, the process of which they keep secret. When a Jew wants his plowshare, his ax or his scythe sharpened, he must seek the Philistines. The Philistines realize that as long as they keep a monopoly on iron the Israelites cannot make weapons of war. With this new monarch of the Jews posing a threat to them, the Philistines set out to eliminate him. The Jews feel really trapped.

In Chapter 10, Verse 8 we saw that Samuel promised to meet Saul in Gilgal seven days hence at which time he would offer burnt offerings and sacrifice peace offerings. But in Chapter 13 we see the Jews beginning to desert, because the Philistines are approaching with iron swords, spears and chariots, and all they have are mattocks, scythes, and axes. Only Saul and his son Jonathan have a sword and a spear.

Chapter 13, Verse 8:

**"Now he [Saul] waited seven days according to the appointed time set by Samuel, but Samuel did not come to Gilgal; and the people were scattering from him."**

So Saul says,

**"'Bring to me the burnt offering and the peace offerings.' And he offered the burnt offering. And it came about as soon as he finished offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him and to greet him."**

What does the flesh always do when God does not appear on schedule? It takes over, "If God won't do it, I'll do it for God." We have an incurable desire, or demand, that God adhere to our time schedule. He has told Saul, "I will be with you forever. Just fear and obey me." Samuel has promised, "I will be there in seven days." Apparently Saul waits seven days, up to but not including the last minute, and the people are deserting. So, instead of fearing and obeying his God, because the people are not fearing and obeying their God, he takes things into his own hands. Worse yet he offers an offering that only the priests are allowed to offer. [Samuel was a priest, as well as a prophet, as well as a judge. He was from the tribe of Ephraim, but he was also a Levite.]

Interesting enough Saul offers a "sweet odor" offering, the "burnt offering," the holocaust, the one that was totally consumed on the altar. The non-sweet odor offerings were the sin offering and the guilt offering. The "sin" offering was the death of Christ for the penalty of sin, and the "guilt" offering was the death of Christ for the injury of sin. They were "non-sweet odor" offerings because they involved the death of God's beloved Son. But "sweet odor" offerings, the peace offering, the cereal offering and the burnt offering, pictured the perfections of Christ. The cereal offering pictured Christ's suffering through temptation yet without sin. The peace offering was sacrificed, and then eaten with your friends and the priest. It was a picture of peace with God and the peace of God. It was yours in Jesus Christ. But the key offering was the burnt offering. It pictured Christ totally consumed to do the Father's will. So, here Saul sacrifices the burnt offering in direct violation of the known will of God. He knows he is not allowed to do this, but he does it anyway, thus making a travesty of it. The flesh always, even when it tries to please God, makes a travesty out of the situation.

The very moment Saul finishes offering the burnt offering here is Samuel right on God's schedule. One minute to midnight, and he says, verse 11,

**"What have you done?"**

Listen closely to the flesh when it is pinned down.

Saul says first, verse 11:

**"Because I saw that the people were scattering from me..."**

Who is at fault? The people. Saul is in essence rationalizing thus, "If they fear and obey God, then I will fear and obey God. If they had done it, I would have done it So they are to blame."

Second rationalization:

**"and that you did not come within the appointed days..."**

"They are at fault, and so are you, Samuel."

Third rationalization:

**"and that the Philistines were assembling at Michmash..."**

[Michmash was only 8 miles NE of Jerusalem; not very far] "It was the circumstances. I couldn't help myself, you see."

Fourth rationalization, verse 12:

**"Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not asked the favor of the Lord."**

Who is number 4 on Saul's fault list? God himself. "He apparently is not going to help me, so I had better buy him off."

Fifth rationalization:

**"so I forced myself and offered the burnt offering."**

"The people, Samuel, the circumstances and you, God, twisted my arm, and I just could not help myself."

This is the flesh in action. The major thing missing in the reasoning of Saul is repentance. He has remorse but not repentance. There is the key. In the life of David we will see rotten actions, but David is a repentant man. When the finger is put on him, he confesses and repents [changes his mind about what he has done] and fully acknowledges his sin. The flesh can never ever acknowledge it is wrong. It only rationalizes and blames someone or something else. The incurably self-centered flesh believes to the depths of its soul that there is something still there, no matter how badly it has behaved, that can still please God. There may be only be a little spark, but it is totally and irrevocably committed to the idea that that little spark somehow can be fanned it into a flame that will glorify God. The flesh can never repent. It has only remorse. That is all Saul has.

Thus the tragedy is that Samuel has to say to Saul, verse 13;

**"You have acted foolishly; you have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God, which He commanded you, for now the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever."**

If he had obeyed this one test, and it was a scary one [Philistines with a vast army and iron weapons], the Lord would "have established his kingdom over Israel forever."

Samuel continues, verse 14:

**"But now your kingdom shall not endure. The Lord has sought out for Himself a man after his**

**own heart,...because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you."**

The time is not yet right for David to ascend the throne for Saul has not yet been disqualified, but God has rejected Saul's line because of his actions and the actions of the people who wanted a human king in place of God.

Chapter 14 gives us a picture of Jonathan, the son of Saul, who is a magnificent man, a man of faith. Just he and his armor-bearer sneak up and attack one of the outposts of the Philistine garrison and destroy it. His statement is, "God can save by little or by many. Let's go." The armor-bearer says, "I'm right with you." Those two alone go up the hill, take on the Philistines and slaughter them. Then God answers that act of faith and fear comes over the Philistine host. There is an earthquake. They get all confused, begin butchering each other, and scatter.

Saul hears what is going on, looks around to see who is missing from his army and discovers it is just Jonathan and his armor-bearer. He then calls for the Ark of God in order to inquire of God. This sounds great. The only problem is that, as he looks out, he sees the Philistines fleeing and takes off after them as he says to the priest, "Withdraw your hand." He does not complete his inquiry of God. In the flesh he pursues the obvious which is to slaughter Philistines. He also makes a rash oath and says Chapter 14, verse 24;

**"Cursed be the man who eats food before evening, and until I have avenged myself on my enemies."**

Me, myself and I, the unholy trinity of the flesh. He puts God aside and flees after the enemy. With no food, all the men run out of energy. They don't kill half of the people they should have killed. By evening they are so hungry that, when they come across part of the spoil of the Philistines, they tear into the meat and eat the flesh with the blood, thus sinning against the Lord.

Meanwhile Jonathan has not heard anything about this oath of his father's since he was fighting, so when he finds some honey, he dips the end of his staff in the honeycomb and puts his hand to his mouth.

Saul wants to go on attacking the Philistines and taking spoil all night and "not leave a man of them." The priest suggests they "draw near to God." So Saul asks God, "Shall I go after the Philistines? Will you give them into the hand of Israel?" But the Lord does not answer him. Saul, therefore, figures there must be some great sin amongst the Israelites. So he says, "Let's cast lots and find out who the sinner is. Even if it is my own son I will kill him." When they cast the lots, they find out it is indeed Saul's son, Jonathan, the hero, who had brought about this great deliverance in Israel. Saul says, "You shall surely die, Jonathan." Do you see the flesh here? Saul is willing to kill his son to save face. True he did make an oath to the Lord, and even though he should not have made it, an oath to the Lord is binding. So, since Jonathan did break it, the lot fell on him. God was rebuking Saul to his face because he had not inquired of God and had instead made an impetuous oath. Fortunately the people would not let Saul kill Jonathan.

To sum up, let me say again that the flesh will do anything to maintain its ego. It has only one standard, i.e., self. Whether I like it or not and whether I will admit it or not, my flesh comes before my Lord, before my wife, before my children, before anything in my life. It loves Me, first, last and always, and it will never change. If I do not believe that, look at Saul who would have killed his beloved son, his innocent son, heir to his throne, to maintain "face" in front of his people, and Saul knew he was wrong. The flesh is dirty, filthy, wicked, and we must not allow it to live at anytime in our lives.

The last part of Chapter 14 gives a description of the tremendous things Saul does in freeing Israel.

Up to now Saul has only forfeited the right of his line to rule Israel. In Chapter 15 we will see the climax of his life and the loss of his kingship.

### **Prayer:**

Father, we thank you so much for your Word and the way it illuminates our lives and makes us



see ourselves as we really are apart from You. We really have nothing to offer you at all, and in my flesh there dwells no good thing, not even one. It shows that I am incurably, irrevocably, hopelessly self-centered. I love me so much in the flesh, Father, that nothing, not even your Son's death for me will ever change the self-love, and if that flesh is not put to death and rendered inoperative and kept in its place, I will allow that filthy "old man" out of the pit to possess me to the detriment of my God, my wife, my children, everything I hold dear. God help us to realize how deceitful, how desperately wicked, the flesh really is and, therefore, be willing to deal with it ruthlessly as Samuel does in Chapter 15. Thank you, Father, in Jesus' Name. Amen.

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## Chapter II

### Saul's Partial Obedience

#### I Samuel, Chapter 15 Lesson #2

Paul, talking about his ministry in I Corinthians, 9: 24-27, says:

**Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.**

There is a graphic illustration in 1 Samuel, Chapter 15, of the disqualification of a believer whom God personally chose and anointed. Saul was filled with the Holy Spirit and filled "mightily." God equipped him with everything needed to do the work of the King of Israel. He intended for Saul and his line to be the reigning kings of Israel from this point on. Saul was not set up to be knocked down; He disqualified himself. It is critical to understand this since, in our study of the life of David, we will see that he has all kinds of problems yet is never disqualified. We will also see how we can have struggles and failures and sin mightily and still not be disqualified by God. We do not have to be a Saul. We may right now have some besetting sin we cannot break. It is hurting our ministry. It may be destroying our family or wiping out our testimony, and we know it. Thankfully, God does not look at our performance. He looks at our attitude. What is the attitude toward this besetting sin? Are we willing to offer it on the altar to God? Do we really want to be free of it, and are we willing to pay the cost of being free of it or, do we insist on having our own way? "I'll give you ten of these, God, but that one stays." With an attitude like that, I guarantee you, based on the Word of God and on 1 Samuel 15 and 1 Corinthians 9, we will be disqualified. However, I also guarantee you, based on the life of David, which we are about to study, that if we desire to be rid of that sin and are willing to pay the price, even though at the moment we are failing miserably, we will not be disqualified. We will be victorious when God has finished with us!

How does a man chosen of God, anointed by God, promised and guaranteed a ministry by God, empowered by the Spirit of God disqualify himself? We will see how in Chapter 15. Up to now we have just seen a gathering storm, but in Chapter 15 we see it all wrapped up.

At this point the line of Saul has been disqualified even though God himself had promised that not only Saul but also his line would reign in Israel. Saul caused this to happen by failing to obey Samuel. Without waiting for Samuel to appear, as promised, he offered sacrifices that only the priests were allowed to offer. He did this as a dedicated, zealous, religious, albeit fleshly, effort to please God. Interestingly enough, he did it at Gilgal, the very place where, after crossing the Jordan River, the Jews had been circumcised-- God's symbol of the cutting away of the flesh. Now, even though his line has been disqualified, Saul himself is still king. God has not yet

disqualified him. God still wants him to succeed. So let's look at what he does to disqualify himself.

God will give Saul one more major test. Chapter 15, verse 1;

**Then Samuel said to Saul, "The LORD sent me to anoint you as king over His people, over Israel; now therefore, listen to the words of the LORD. Thus says the LORD of hosts, 'I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he set himself against him on the way while he was coming up from Egypt. Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.'"**

In other words, every living thing of Amalek's is to be put to death. Amalek was the grandson of Esau. Esau, as we saw in the book of Hebrews, was a fleshly man. He was called "godless" and "immoral." The word "immoral" literally means "secular." He was not immoral in that he had a lot of illicit affairs, but he was a godless man. He married pagan Hittite wives, which he was not supposed to do. He married an Ishmaelite, which he was not supposed to do. He took the purity of the line of God and mixed it with paganism. Then he was also secular. He sold his birthright for a bowl of lentil stew. He wanted the flesh fed now. The birthright was his as number one in the family, the first born. In the patriarchal days, it would have made him the priest in the family and the mediator between his family and God. But he did not care about that. All he wanted was the present fleshly need of the fleshly body taken care of now. So he sold his birthright. He still had the "blessing" which was to come. The "blessing" was the oral binding will of the father given on his deathbed to his first born. It provided the first born twice as much as anyone else and put him over the head of the family. You can see Esau's reasoning, "Who cares about being God's man. Who cares about a birthright. I don't want all the problems of being the religious head of the family. But I will take the double share and the headship, and I'm sure I'll get those since Isaac likes me best. So let Jacob have the birthright. He can play the priest. I'll take the blessing and I'll play king." Of course, in God's scheme of things he lost both the birthright and the blessing. Now, Amalek was his grandson.

In the Scriptures, Amalek is a picture of the flesh at work. He attacked the Jewish nation as they came out of Egypt and headed down the barren rugged peninsula toward Sinai. The Jews were rather soft slaves coming out of Egypt. Although they had spent their time building bricks, which could be strenuous, they were not used to long hard marches. They were not yet the lean, mean, guerrilla warfare people they would be forty years later when God was through with them. When they were weary and straggling, the Amalekites charged down on them, attacked the weak ones in the rear and picked them off one by one. So, the Jews went to war with the Amalekites. As you will remember during that war, as long as Moses pointed his spear up toward God, the Israelites won. As his arm grew tired and his spear sagged, the Israelites were pushed back. So Aaron and Hur, brother and brother-in-law, propped up Moses's arm, and the Jews destroyed the Amalekites. God says from this time on, "exterminate them." They were a picture of the flesh. They deliberately positioned themselves against the Lord God Almighty, who had just delivered the Israelites from the Egyptians with a devastating blow at the Egyptian pantheon of gods.

If you will look at the ten plagues of Egypt and lay them alongside the gods of Egypt, you will see that each plague struck at a god or gods of Egypt. The highest god was Ra, the sun god. All the firstborn were dedicated to him, and God's ultimate stroke against the Egyptians, which broke their backs and broke Pharaoh's will, was the destruction of their firstborn. We have indirect confirmation of this in the so-called "Dream Inscription of Thutmose IV" recorded on an immense granite slab near the Sphinx at Gizeh. [All the details on this are available in Merrill Unger's book "Archaeology and the Old Testament" in the chapter on "The Date of the Exodus." The destruction of the first born of Egypt did actually happen!]

The Amalekites have the audacity to attack these people of Yahweh after he has just wiped out Egypt, the country in control of all that area, part of which is Amalekite territory. The Amalekites are not just fighting the Jews, they are shaking their fists in Yahweh's face. That is not a healthy thing to do. God had said, "There will be continual war between me and the Amalekites. There will never be peace with them. In fact, when I have given you the land of Canaan [which is a picture of the rest of God], and you are at rest there, I want you to exterminate them." He

meant man, woman, child, infant, oxen, camel, sheep, goat, everything!

This may seem cruel to you, but if you will remember, God promised Abraham that if there were ten righteous men in Sodom he would spare the whole valley, the whole cesspool, not just Sodom but Gomorrah, Zeboim, Admah, Bella, the whole five cities of the plain. "For just ten righteous men in Sodom, I will give you the whole valley," he said, and he would have. The Lord himself, in Matthew 11:23-24, told Capernaum, his headquarters in Galilee and the home of Peter, "The works I have done in you, Capernaum, had I done them in Sodom and Gomorrah, they would have repented. Therefore, I tell you, Capernaum, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah at the Day of Judgment than it will be for you." God does not delight in the death of the wicked. He does not delight in judgment. It is called his "strange" work.

In examining this command to "exterminate" the Amalekites you may ask why? It is because the flesh is something like cancer cells in the body. When a doctor operates, he attempts to get every single one. To leave even one in your body could bring you back for another operation. Like cancer cells, the flesh must be continually cut out of our lives to prevent its recurrence. The flesh is incurably evil, incurably malicious. The word used to describe it sometimes is "pernicious." [i.e., Webster, "destructive; having the power of killing, destroying, ruining or injuring; fatal; deadly]. It is also incurably deceitful. It does not broadcast, "Destroyer." Instead it appears enticing and noble.

God has been giving Saul every opportunity to be God's man. He does not want to have to judge him. He is testing Saul to see whether Saul is going to be ruler of Israel or whether God is going to be ruler of Israel through Saul. God is not creating a monarchy after the example of the monarchies in the Ancient East. He wants a theocracy, the king, the prophets and the priests all at the same level.

Getting back to I Samuel, Chapter 15, verse 4:

**Then Saul summoned the people and numbered them in Telaim, 200,000 foot soldiers [those would be the Northern Tribes] and 10,000 men of Judah [the Southern Tribes]. And Saul came to the city of Amalek, [situated way down in the southern part of Canaan, called the Negev today] and set an ambush in the valley. And Saul said to the Kenites. "Go, depart, go down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them; for you showed kindness to all the sons of Israel when they came up from Egypt." So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites. So Saul defeated the Amalekites, from Havilah as you go to Shur, which is east of Egypt. And he captured Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. But [There is the but] Saul and the people spared Agag [who, of course, is the worst of all. He is their king] and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good [what was good in their eyes] and were not willing to destroy them utterly; but everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.**

Notice that God never forgets when you have obeyed. The Kenites were a Midianite tribe. In Exodus, Chapter 18, when the Israelites were coming out of the wilderness, Jethro, the priest of Midian and the father-in-law of Moses, met Moses, blessed him and thanked the Lord for what the Lord had done for the Israelites. He noticed Moses trying to govern 2,000,000 people all by himself and said, "That is not good. Why don't you appoint captains over 1,000s and 100s and 10s? Pick people who have maturity, wisdom, ability to discern, and let them make judgments. Then you represent them to the Lord." In Numbers, Chapter 10, Moses asked Hobab, his Midianite brother-in-law, to lead the Israelites through the wilderness. These Kenites were nomads and knew that territory like the palm of their hand. They joined the Israelites and led them through the wilderness. Finally they settled with the tribe of Judah in the Promised Land. Although by this time they had wandered down into the southern part of Judah and may have been dwelling with the Amalekites, 400 years before they had made a choice. That choice was to follow God and be God's instrument. God remembered that. Now, 400 years later, the Kenites are separated and spared during the slaughter of the Amalekites.

You will note that Agag the king of the Amalekites was spared. The ancient kings used to keep the kings they captured. They did not kill them. They kept them alive as a monument to personal success. One king in the Bible

chopped off the thumbs and the big toes of the seventy kings he had captured. He kept them under his table and threw them crumbs. Without thumbs, they would not be able to grasp things. Without big toes, they would not be able to stand straight but would sway. He treated them like pet dogs. Incidentally, Judges 1:6-7 indicates he received payment in kind.

So, it appears that Saul fell right in with the pagan kings. He and the people had killed everyone of the Amalekites except the king. What do you suppose went through Saul's mind that he kept the king? Well, Saul was a man of the flesh. The flesh always feels, "Wasn't it fortunate that I was on God's side today. What a good job I did for the Lord." Agag was a visible monument to Saul's success. The flesh loves that. Have you every had that feeling? Yes, you have, and so have I. Well, the Lord had probably 100 other people who could have done the same job Saul did, or the same job you and I did.

Now, let's look at the "best" of the things? The people's reasoning might go something like this. It's how the flesh reasons. "Could God possibly mean that we should kill even non-moral animals. Surely not! Look at all these fine specimens. What a waste! I know, we'll keep the best. Then we'll take the best-of-the-best and sacrifice them to God. Won't God be pleased." There is only one problem with keeping the "best" and sacrificing the "best of the best" to God. In Leviticus 27 anything that is "devoted to destruction", anything that God puts under the ban proscribed to be exterminated, is already sacrificed to God, already belongs to him. It is not allowed to be used for sacrifice. So, the people are violating one of the principles of Scripture. They are keeping what is God's already, giving it back to God and expecting him to give them brownie points. What they are really saying is, "I am as smart as God. God made a mistake, and I am going to straighten Him out."

Scripture goes on, Chapter 15, verse 10:

**Then the word of the LORD came to Samuel saying, "I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not carried out My commands." And Samuel was distressed and cried out to the LORD all night. And Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul; and it was told Samuel, saying, "Saul came to Carmel, [not Mt. Carmel up by Galilee. This was down 7-1/2 miles south of Hebron], and behold, he set up a monument for himself, [here's good old Saul again] then turned and proceeded on down to Gilgal."**

Here Saul goes right back to the place where God cleansed the Jews from the reproach of Egypt by circumcision, a symbol of the "cutting off" of the flesh.

Verse 13: [Watch these pronouns.]

**And Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed are you of the LORD! I have carried out the command of the LORD." But Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?" And Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and oxen, to sacrifice to the LORD your God; but the rest we have utterly destroyed." Then Samuel said to Saul, "Wait, and let me tell you what the LORD said to me last night." And he said to him, "Speak!"**

Notice again how beautifully the flesh rationalizes, how it never accepts responsibility for its actions. Saul says, "I carried out the command of the Lord, but they spared the best." Typically the flesh will obey God as long as it does not cost anything. The people didn't mind killing the men, women, children, infants and worthless of the flocks, but when it came to the best of the flocks what happened? This is when the flesh will never obey God. When it really costs what you want, then the flesh springs into action. That is exactly what you see here.

It is interesting to note, in verse 11, that Samuel himself is greatly distressed that God regrets having made Saul king. Why? Samuel, a known prophet of God, has publicly anointed Saul and publicly declared to the people, "This is the king God has given you." Well, remember Samuel is oriental. He is Mideastern and "face" is very important to them. He has publicly proclaimed, "This is God's man." Now God has said, "This is not God's

man." How does that make him look? The flesh is still the flesh even in a prophet of God.

Samuel goes on, chapter 15, verse 17:

**And Samuel said, "Is it not true, though you were little in your own eyes, you were made the head of the tribes of Israel? And the LORD anointed you king over Israel, and the LORD sent you on a mission, and said, 'Go and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are exterminated.' Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD, but rushed upon the spoil and did what was evil in the sight of the LORD?" Then Saul said to Samuel, "I did obey the voice of the LORD, and went on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and have brought back Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took some of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the choicest of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the LORD your God at Gilgal.**

Notice Samuel says to Saul, "'Though you were little in your own eyes,' Saul, when God chose you." And he was. Remember in chapter 9, verse 21, when Samuel tells Saul he has been picked by God as king, Saul says;

**Am I not a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then do you speak to me in this way?"**

Saul was being used of God here, and a man of the flesh cannot handle being used of God without applying it to himself. A good way to tell whether you are walking in the flesh or walking in the Spirit at a time like this is to check your feelings. I hate to tell you how many times the thought has crept into my life, "How lucky the Lord is to have me on his side." You will feel great, but there are two different ways of feeling great. There is one that says with quiet confidence, "Though I am little among the people, God condescended to use me to change lives, and I am grateful to a great God." If there is a very natural, and not put on, gratitude and thankfulness to God, then you are safe. But when your feel, "I was extra special this morning. I did a good job of counseling that couple. I'll have to remember that technique." Then you know you are in trouble. The flesh always takes credit. It always points toward self. It may be disguised, but it always points toward self.

Samuel knows this, chapter 15, verse 22:

**And Samuel said, "Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of divination, [incidentally Saul destroyed all the witches. He put them to death himself] and insubordination is an iniquity and idolatry, because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has also reject you from being king."**

Since in the Old Testament God himself ordained the sacrifice, why would Samuel say, "to obey is better than sacrifice?" What are you sacrificing when you obey God that you are not sacrificing when you sacrifice an animal? Self. I give up my rights to my actions, to my person, to my thought processes. Here are these goodly animals. They would make a great sacrifice. But, if I bring them into the nation of Israel, I am questioning God. However, if I don't bring them in, I am sacrificing me, my will, my rights, my thought processes. That is when the going gets tough.

Chapter 15, verse 24:

**Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned; I have indeed transgressed the command of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and listened to their voice."**

Here is another mark of the flesh. Saul fears the people rather than the voice of God. We fear the response of our peers rather than the voice of our God.

Verse 25:

**"Now, therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me, that I may worship the LORD." But Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you; for you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel." And as Samuel turned to go, Saul seized the edge of his robe, and it tore. [literally, 'it was torn off,' in the original]. So Samuel said to him, "The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today, and has given it to your neighbor who is better than you. [Saul is disqualified.] And also the Glory [or the Eminence] of Israel will not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man that He should change His mind." Then he [Saul] said, "I have sinned; but please honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel, and go back with me, that I may worship the LORD your God." So Samuel went back following Saul, and Saul worshiped the LORD.**

The flesh is told Saul is no longer king of Israel. What does it do? It still demands. Saul still demands to reign. God has told him, "Today you are no longer king." If he had been a godly man, he would have said, "O.K., I accept the will of the Lord, and I will abdicate." But that was not Saul's response. God had said, "The [Eminence] Glory of Israel will not change His mind. He is not a man that he will repent." There is no turning God back from what he has just finished saying. What is Saul's attitude toward that? "Make me look good in front of the people. I am still going to be king. I am still going to reign." This will show up every time in the flesh. The flesh will keep on trying in every way possible to reign in your life even though it has been rendered inoperative, has been crucified and even is alien there. That is exactly what is going on in Saul here.

Interestingly enough what did Samuel do at this juncture? He said he wouldn't go back, and then he did. Why? Samuel understands the New Covenant. So, when Saul insists, Samuel says, "O.K., I'll leave it up to God. It is not my issue. It is between you and God, and I'll go back with you." Saul never understands this. Why do you think David twice spared Saul when Saul was delivered into his hands, as we will see later on? David allowed God to be God and to work things out in his own time and in his own way. He did not touch Saul because Saul was God's anointed. He left him in God's hands.

In verse 22 we have seen God reject Saul as king of Israel and yet Saul actually reigns for some time to come. We are going to see Saul used as a training tool for David. God chooses David and Samuel anoints him in the very next chapter, but Saul still reigns. In our lives why does God leave the flesh? God can do anything, so, why doesn't he remove the flesh from our lives and leave just Jesus Christ, the Holy One of God, as our new nature with no "Old Man" hanging around? We learn through struggle. We learn faith and obedience. God is going to teach that to David, and we are going to see a man after God's own heart as he learns it.

Chapter 15, verse 32:

**Then Samuel said, "Bring me Agag, the king of the Amalekites." And Agag came to him cheerfully. And Agag said, "Surely the bitterness of death is past." [I have been beaten. You have won. I am a slave.] But Samuel said, "As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women." And Samuel hewed Agag to pieces before the LORD at Gilgal.**

Here is a helpless man, probably in chains, whom Samuel chops up into little pieces while doing the will of God. That should give us some idea that our attitude toward the flesh should be utterly ruthless and without mercy.

Finally, verse 34:

**Then Samuel went to Ramah, but Saul went up to his house at Gibeah of Saul. And Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death; for Samuel grieved over Saul. And the LORD regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel.**

It is intriguing that both God and Samuel have deep emotional hurt over this situation. What does Saul have? Nothing. He just goes on being king.

## **Prayer:**

Father, we thank you now for the way you demonstrated the flesh and what it is like and how it acts. Father, we just pray that we might not be disqualified, that we might realize that each one of these things that you ask us to do pleads for obedience, that obedience is better than the fat of rams, is better than any sacrifice, for obedience involves our will. So, Father, we just give you ourselves and ask you to be Lord and God in our lives and bring up each little area of our lives that needs dealing with and let us be ruthless, Father, as you are ruthless, to something that you know will hurt your children. Thank you, Father, for being a ruthless, loving God, who will not allow anything that is hurting us to live, but will take whatever step is necessary, without mercy, to deal with that thing in our lives that could disqualify us. Thank you, Father, in Jesus's name. Amen.

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# **Chapter Three**

## **David Chosen and Anointed**

### **I Samuel, Chapter 16:1-15**

Today we begin a look into the life of David. We have looked at Saul, a man of God, chosen by God to rule, and have seen how he was "disqualified." In Chapter 16, we will look at another man of God who was chosen by God to rule. This time, however, we will see a man who, though not sinless and with all the failings, foibles and tendency to do stupid things that you and I have, yet was a man after God's own heart. God rejected Saul as king and accepted David as king, and both of them performed very badly; a striking illustration of the fact that God accepts us because we are his and not because we perform. Our performance is something in addition to our acceptance. Later when Samuel is called up from the dead, he says to Saul, "Tomorrow you and your sons [one of whom was Jonathan, a tremendously godly man] will be with me." So God did not reject Saul as Saul. He rejected him for the purpose for which he had been called. That is disqualification [I Corinthians 9:24-27] not loss of salvation.

David's performance is as bad as, if not worse than, Saul's, but he is not "disqualified." The difference between these two is the attitude of the heart. When Saul was confronted with disobedience, he either rationalized or blamed somebody else. He never accepted the discipline of God. David, on the other hand, commits murder, adultery, is vicious, cruel, bloody, and emotionally unstable, but when God puts the finger on him, he cracks. He just breaks. No arguments! No rationalizations! He repents. Now, until God puts the finger on him, he rationalizes, but when he is confronted, he breaks every time. David really wants to be God's man. He is not quite sure how to go about it, but inherently that is what he wants. This is the only difference between these two kings. One is disqualified. One is called "a man after God's own heart."

That is not to say that God winks at bad behavior. David must face the consequences of his rebellion or his stupidity. His household is destroyed. The seeds he sows in Solomon's life wipe out the kingdom. Solomon begins as an extraordinary man of God and ends up a tyrant estranged from his God. There is no escaping the consequences of rebellion, but also there is no escaping the love, the grace, the mercy and the acceptance of God.

Let us look, now, at the beginning of Chapter 16. We know from Chapter 15 that Samuel is grieving over Saul. He has left him and has no more contact with him, even though they live only a few miles apart. Only at the end of Saul's life, when Samuel is called back from the dead, do they meet again. Remember how rejected Samuel felt when the people insisted on a king? But God instructed him to anoint Saul as king, and he did. In public! Now Saul has been "disqualified." It would appear to Israel that Samuel is not a very good prophet, so he is grieving not

only over the loss of Saul, but probably over the loss of face also.

Chapter 16, Verse 1, God rebukes him:

**Now the LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel?" [You are acting contrary to what I have chosen to do] Fill your horn with oil, and go; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have selected a king for Myself among his sons." But Samuel said, "How can I go? When Saul hears of it, he will kill me." And the LORD said, "Take a heifer with you, and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.' And you shall invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for Me the one whom I designate to you."**

There was nothing wrong with Israel requesting a king. God made provision for it in Deuteronomy. He knew such a day would come. The issue was the kind of king they wanted. In Deuteronomy 17:14-20, look at God's qualifications for a king, verse 14 of Chapter 17:

**When you enter the land which the LORD your God gives you, and you possess it and live in it [Moses is addressing the Israelites on the eastern side of the Jordan. This was Deuteronomy, the second giving of the Law, a recapitulation of all that God had done. It was the funeral oration of Moses, in a sense, because he died shortly afterward], and you say, "I will set a king over me like all the nations who are around me." [One] you shall surely set a king over you whom the LORD your God chooses [He is to be chosen of God] [Two] one from among your brothers, [It says "countrymen" here, but literally it is your brothers.] you shall set as king over yourselves; you may not put a foreigner over yourselves who is not your brother. [He must be one of you, a Jew.] [Three] Moreover, he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor shall he cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, since the LORD has said to you, 'You shall never again return that way.' [Four] Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; [Five] nor shall he greatly increase silver and gold for himself ["for himself," "for himself," "for himself." He is not to use the office to personal advantage. He is to be God's representative to the people and is not to be somebody special]. [Six] Now it shall come about when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself a copy of this law on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests [an exact copy]. And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, by carefully observing all the words of this law and these statues, [He is to be a man of the Word of God. The law of God is to rule supreme over the king and, through him, over the nation.] that his heart may not be lifted up above his countrymen [The king is to be a servant of the people, not their lord. There is to be only one Lord in Israel, Yahweh. So, as a prophet is to speak for Yahweh to the people, and a priest is to mediate for the people to Yahweh, the king is to rule as a vicar, or deputy, for Yahweh.] and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, to the right or the left; in order that he and his sons may continue long in his kingdom in the midst of Israel.**

Those are the rules that God laid down for the king of Israel. We will see that David fulfills these requirements. We saw that Saul did not. Although Saul was a big kingly man, from the valiant tribe of Benjamin, a tremendous leader and warrior, freeing a lot of Israel from the enemy, he was not a man of God, not a man of the Word, and not a servant. He was, however, the king that Israel wanted and so God gave him to them.

Now God is going to return to the rules of Deuteronomy 17, and we will see his king out of the tribe of Judah, David.

At this time, the Ark was not in a central sanctuary. It had just been brought back from the Philistines, who had captured it, and it was being kept in Kirjath-jearim, a few miles northeast of Jerusalem. As a result, Samuel regularly traveled around sacrificing for the people and drawing them to God. So, when God wanted David anointed, he told Samuel to just take a heifer and go down and sacrifice as he normally did. He was then to invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and God would designate the person to be anointed.

By this time, and in spite of the fact that he had been set aside by God, Saul is apparently willing to commit murder to retain his place on the throne. [He does, in fact, murder all the priests of God except one, as we will



see.] Here is a perfect picture of the flesh in action. It will do anything to maintain its hold. Either you reign or it reigns. There is no halfway mark.

Chapter 16:4:

**So Samuel did what the LORD said, and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the city came trembling to meet him and said, "Do you come in peace?" And he said, "In peace; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." He also consecrated Jesse and his sons, and invited them to the sacrifice.**

You will remember that the priest, the king and the prophet were all equal in God's eyes. Therefore, Samuel, a prophet from the tribe of Ephraim, had all the authority of God in Bethlehem of Judah, and the Israelites knew it, as witness by their fear of him. You notice, also, that the man of God, appointed over the sheep of God, is to be a servant to those sheep and not their lord.

I am a pastor and elder of Peninsula Bible Church. My authority, however, comes from the Word of God and my servitude. The moment I begin to lord it over the flock is the moment I lose my authority. I can exercise tyrannical authority, but I no longer have authority from God. Israel may have had a king, but Samuel, as a servant of God, exercised tremendous authority as long as he continued to be a servant. When God said, "Go anoint." He went and anointed. He may have pleaded with God not to let Saul murder him, which is a very human feeling, but when God indicated, "Don't worry. I'll take care of that. Go!" He went. As you see, the concept of leadership in the church is totally different from the concept of leadership in the world.

After Samuel had consecrated Jesse and his sons and had made the sacrifice, he proceeded to search for the one to be anointed and again God rebukes him.

Chapter 16, verse 6:

**Then it came about when they entered, that he looked at Eliab [Jesse's eldest son, one of Saul's warriors, and apparently a big husky fellow who looks like a king should look] and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed is before Him." But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." Then Jesse called Abinadab' [the second son, also one of Saul's warriors], and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." Next Jesse made Shammah [the third son, another one of Saul's warriors] pass by. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. But Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen these."**

The Lord looks upon the heart, not the outward appearance. Every once in awhile when you look in the mirror and say, "Isn't God fortunate that I am available today," remember I Corinthians 1:26ff:

**Consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen, the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are, that no man should boast before God.**

This is resurrection power. This is what God has in mind for David.

It is often said that because someone is weak and perhaps having emotional problems he grasps at Christianity as a panacea. Well, those are the ones the Lord uses. One of the pastors, much used of God, at Menlo Park Presbyterian Church just put out a tape on fear. All of his life he has had a deep problem with fear. Every Sunday he is terrified. Every Friday and all day Saturday his wife reassures him about his message, but every Sunday he is terrified. The moment he begins to proclaim the Word of God, however, God honors his message. He once

said, "I guess I am going to be frightened all the rest of my life. Here I am called to be a preacher, and I am terrified of preaching." This is what I Corinthians is talking about.

The word for fear of circumstances or of people and for "fear" of God is the same word in the original. The word is phobos (fobos). We get the word "phobia" from it. It can mean a fear that totally debilitates, or it can mean a reverential awe. When I am in fear of man, I have a phobia. I am bound and cannot act. When I have a reverential awe of God, however, anything that God chooses is possible. It is my choice. Fear of man can give me a phobia and I will be "fearful" while "fearing." But if I "fear" God and am a man of God, I will be "fearless" while "fearing." Same word; two variations. Big difference!

Now in Chapter 16, verse 11, we get to David:

**And Samuel said to Jesse, "Are these all the children?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, and behold, he is tending the sheep." Then Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here."**

Let us slip in a little background here to see perhaps why David was the man he was. In I Chronicles 2 and II Samuel 17, we find that he was the son of Jesse's second wife. Jesse's first seven sons were probably by his first wife, and then, assuming she died, he married again to a woman who had previously been the wife of Nahash. She had two daughters by Nahash, Zeruiah and Abigail. David probably was much younger than his sister Zeruiah, was probably a step-brother to all the other brothers, and was quite possibly much younger than anyone else in the family, which would make him runt of the litter and earn him that kind of treatment. His brothers, particularly Eliab, did not like him [as we will see when we study David & Goliath] and probably picked on him continually.

Samuel had already offered the public sacrifice in the city of Bethlehem. Now came the private feast. He had personally invited Jesse and his sons to share the priestly portion of the sacrifice with him. A great honor! This was the special private affair that happened to a family maybe once in a lifetime, and as you see, Jesse did not even mention David until Samuel insisted. [It is possible that David's treatment by his brothers and his father was the reason he was such a poor father. He indulged his sons every whim. He never said no, and it destroyed them.] We do not want to judge David too harshly when we see the terrible things he does. If we place his actions against his background, we may be able to understand why the grace of God intervenes and why God does not judge him as we would.

God allowed much the same thing in his Son's childhood. In a small community, Jesus was known as a bastard and was sung about by drunkards. He had to support his family at an early age with hard physical labor in a crummy little caravan town like Nazareth. He was kept in humble grinding poverty until he was 30 years old. He was also probably hated by his brothers. The gospels tell us that the whole family tried to have him taken into custody because they thought he was insane. In John, Chapter 7, his brothers tried to get him killed. Knowing he could not go to Jerusalem because the Jews were out to kill him, they bait him with, "No one who does the things you do doesn't want to go down to Jerusalem." James, the brother closest in age to Jesus, had probably suffered all his life in comparison to Jesus. Then at age 30, Jesus takes on the religious authorities, violates the Sabbath and probably makes it difficult for James with the local Rabbi. I can feel for James and so could the Lord Jesus. In the list of personal appearances of Jesus Christ risen from the dead, two of them are very individual; the appearance to Peter who denied him three times after saying, "I will never desert you," and the appearance to James, his brother. As a result of that visit, James became head of the Jerusalem church, James the Just, and died for his Lord.

Chapter 16, Verse 12:

**So he [Jesse] sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, [reddish, which means he had red hair. It was highly prized in the Middle East where black hair predominated] with beautiful eyes and a handsome appearance [Chapters 17 and 18 indicate he was also very swift and very strong.] And the LORD said, "Arise, anoint him; for this is he."**

When David is finally brought in, we are told he is good looking and also strong. Out in the wilderness, God has been preparing him to be a king. All alone with the sheep, no one else to depend on, totally debased, a miserable childhood, he pours out his heart to God and fellowships with him. This is exactly the kind of person God says he uses. Everything about this young man seems to coincide with I Corinthians 1:26ff, and this is the man God chooses.

Chapter 16, Verse 13:

**Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers** [or "from among his brothers." This can also be translated "from among." I suspect they were not present. They probably passed through and out]; **and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward** [Here is the filling of the Spirit. David is now filled and empowered in a special way to do the work that God has called him to]. **And Samuel arose and went to Ramah.**

There are differences of opinion among noted Bible authorities on the enabling of the Spirit in Old Testament times. My theology, and I believe it is consistent with what Scripture teaches although there are fine theologians who disagree with me, is that the Spirit of God did not indwell believers in the Old Testament. He filled them. He empowered them, but he came and went. He does it with David. He did it with Saul.

Whenever believers were open to God and the Spirit of God filled and empowered them, however, they experienced the same depths of relationship to God that we experience. The Psalms portray that. The walk of Abraham with God portrays that. Moses portrays that, as does David. In the Old Testament there was no sacrifice for sins of willfulness. So, when David was confronted by God for murder and adultery, he should have died under the Old Testament covenant. He said, "With offerings and sacrifices you are not pleased, but a broken and contrite heart you will not despise." That is all he offered and that is what his God accepted. Which shows David had an intimate knowledge of his God. In II Samuel 12:13, Nathan the prophet told him, "The Lord...has taken away your sin, you shall not die."

In the New Testament, [with the coming of the Spirit of God, John 14 through 16], the Spirit now indwells believers. Romans 8:9b says, "But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him." This time the Paraclete, [the "one who walks alongside to help"], will be "walking alongside" in the believer. Christ said, "If I go away, I will send another one just like me." The "helper, comforter, intercessor" now lives inside the believer forever. The filling of the Spirit gives all the fruit of the Spirit whether in the Old Testament or the New Testament. The fruit of the Spirit is eternal because the Spirit is eternal.

So David is anointed and the Spirit of God comes upon him.

Chapter 16, Verse 14:

**Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit** [literally a spirit of evil] **from the LORD terrorized him. Saul's servants then said to him, "Behold now, an evil spirit from God is terrorizing you. Let our lord now command your servants who are before you. Let them seek a man who is a skillful player on the harp; and it shall come about when the evil spirit from God is on you, that he shall play the harp with his hand, and you will be well."**

God takes the Spirit of God from Saul and gives it to David, and he sends literally a "spirit of evil." I do not think this is a demon but rather an angel that God sends to trouble Saul. You could say that the spirit ["the destroyer", Exodus 12:23] that God sent to Egypt to kill all the first born was a spirit of evil as far as the Egyptians were concerned.

There is a New Testament principle at work here, again out of Corinthians. God is not trying to make Saul a manic depressive, which is what he becomes. Heights and depths! Heights and depths! God does indeed send this spirit. Even Saul's courtiers recognize this. [The word "servants" has the idea of those around him, the courtiers.] But God, in his grace, is trying to kill Saul's flesh. The flesh is Saul's problem, and God knows it. In I Corinthians,

Chapter 5 what did Paul command them to do to a Christian who was living with his father's wife, a sin that even the Gentiles would not permit themselves? [Fornication everyday but not incest.] Paul says, "Deliver his body to Satan that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." This is an Old Testament principle in that New Testament passage. God is delivering Saul over to the spirit that will drive him to despair. In order to get Saul's attention, God plans to wipe out everything he clings to. God really loves Saul. He wants him to know what is going on and to know this is not a punishment for his disobedience. God is doing this because he loves Saul and yearns to bring him back into a relationship with himself.

The same is true today. God so loves us that he will go to any length necessary, up to and including physical illness, or even death [I Corinthians 11:29-30], to woo us back, but he never leaves us in the dark when he does it. He did not in I Corinthians. He did not here. All the courtiers knew, and they told Saul, "Behold now, an evil spirit from God is terrorizing you."

Next time we will see how God brings David into the palace. In his sovereignty, he has the very man who is to be replaced bring his replacement anointed into the palace.

### **Prayer:**

Father, we thank you now for your Word. We are just thankful for the way it shows particularly your love and your grace toward us for we are all Sauls at heart, Father. We are Davids too. We have ups and downs, but none of us can perform properly without you whether we are up or down. We still have a fleshly relationship with you at times, Father, and we thank you so much that you are committed to dealing with that, to putting it to death, to hacking it to pieces that there will be no Agags in our lives. You are going to take care of the Amalekites. They are going to be exterminated. They are going to be taken out of our lives, not because we can handle them, but because you are going to do so. Thank you, Father, for your faithfulness to us and that you will never let us go. We thank you, Father, in Jesus' name. Amen

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## **Chapter 4**

### **David and Goliath - I**

#### **I Samuel 16:18-17:30**

Today we will see how the Lord, in his sovereignty, has the man who is to be replaced bring his replacement into the palace. You will recall that Samuel anointed David King of Israel, at which time the Spirit came mightily upon David and departed from Saul. God, then, sent a spirit of evil, which even Saul's courtiers recognized was from the hand of the Lord, to bring Saul to repentance. To combat the depressions brought on by this spirit, Saul's servants requested permission to seek a man who was a skillful player on the harp. It was very common to do that in those days. It was even common in the Greek world. So, in I Samuel Chapter 16, Verse 17, we see Saul requesting his servants to provide such a man.

We pick up now in I Samuel 16, Verse 18:

**Then one of the young men answered and said, "Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite who is a skillful musician, a mighty man of valor, a warrior, one prudent in speech, and a handsome man; and the LORD is with him. So Saul sent messengers to Jesse, and said, "Send me your son David who is with the flock." And Jesse took a donkey loaded with bread and a jug of wine and a young goat, and sent them to Saul by David his son. Then David came to Saul and attended him, and Saul loved him greatly; and he became his armor**

**bearer.** [This is another word for "aide-de-camp" They might have up to 10 armor bearers, as Joab, David's general, did] **And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, "Let David now stand before me; for he has found favor in my sight." So it came about whenever the evil spirit from God came to Saul, David would take the harp and play it with his hand; and Saul would be refreshed and be well, and the evil spirit would depart from him.**

It is worthy of note that, as part of David's training to be a shepherd of Israel, God has made him a shepherd of sheep. Looking at some of the results of that wilderness training, we see that David is a "skillful musician." Not only would music benefit David, but it would also quiet his sheep. Animals are calmed by the voice of a man singing, especially if it is the voice of someone they know. David would look at the stars, think of the God behind those stars and make up beautiful songs which he set to music. So, out of his loneliness and his desire to quiet his sheep came up to probably 73 Psalms, [at least he is named in 73 of the Psalms]. This affected not only his sheep and himself, but down through the ages when people are troubled most of them turn to the Psalms. When I do hospital visits, I generally read in Romans and in Ephesians, to give patients assurance about what they possess in Christ. Then I read the Psalms to calm and quiet them and to get their eyes off their circumstances [the nurses, the doctors, the tubes, the I.V.s] and onto their God. David was deeply troubled many times and expressed his thoughts and feelings in words with which God gifted him, so the patients I visit can relate to those words even though they come to them across 3,000 years. The Comforter given to David is the same Comforter that reaches into their hearts.

We also see that David was "a mighty man of valor." Out in the wilderness with his sheep, he was also faced with marauding bears and lions. Since he was alone and without help, he bore the sole responsibility for protecting those sheep. God was preparing him with a courageous heart.

He was also "a warrior." The Philistines came and went as they chose. Even though Scripture calls them "uncircumcised", they were a highly intelligent and highly civilized people. They came from Greece, the Aegean area, and had a very complex, although a very vicious, culture. They were a wicked warrior people who knew how to fight. They invaded Egypt where they remained until they were driven out. They then went into Judah, the Southern part of Palestine, where they remained. They also had control of iron smelting and did not allow any blacksmiths in Judah. So the Israelites had to go to the Philistines to have their iron plows and pruning spears sharpened and repaired. The Israelites were essentially left with wooden weapons, spears, javelins, bow and arrows and, of course, the sling shot. As a result, they became experts with the sling shot. The Book of Judges [Chap 20, Verse 16] speaks of 700 men from Benjamin who could "split a hair" with a sling shot. So, alone in the wilderness, David became an accomplished warrior using only a sling shot or a wooden javelin to protect his sheep from warriors armed with iron weapons.

We also read he was "one prudent in speech." If you are the smallest boy in a huge family, you would probably either become prudent in speech or become the most bruised boy around. He was number eight son, even possibly, as Psalm 51 hints, an illegitimate son of Jesse's marriage in his old age. In Judah in those days, in the Jewish culture, that was a real stigma. The Lord faced exactly the same stigma 900 years later when he was considered the bastard of Nazareth.

He was also "a handsome man."

But, finally, the most important thing about him, according to this Scripture, is that "the Lord is with him." His life was such that one of Saul's servants, in the court way up in Gibeah, recognized that the preincarnate Jesus Christ, the Lord God Almighty, Yahweh of the Old Testament, was with David. There was something that made this apparent. When the king suffered from a spirit of evil from Yahweh, then, who else but someone who had Yahweh with him could be of help? So, Saul himself brings David into the palace, and loves him greatly because when David plays and sings, the spirit of evil from the Lord is indeed driven off and Saul is calmed. The only problem is that Saul's love for David is fleshly and selfish. He loves David essentially for what David can do for him. Down the road he discovers what David can do to him and his love turns to hate. For fear of losing his kingdom, he then begins a planned and premeditated campaign to eliminate David. That is the tragedy of fleshly

love. It lasts only as long as it benefits the one being loved.

Ponder a moment on why a spirit of evil sent to Saul to discipline him would depart when David sang a Psalm. The Psalms of David were created by the inspiration of God, literally the "outbreathing" of God and are just as inspired by the Spirit of God as the prophecies. So when David was singing to Saul he was singing inspired Scripture. Do you see the graciousness of God here? In a compassionate attempt to reach Saul, he takes the very Scripture of the Bible, the Word of God, and has it sung to Saul. [A Psalm is just a sacred song put to music.] God really wants him to repent. We have, along with this beautiful picture of the grace of God, also a picture of the sovereignty of God. God has had Saul bring into the palace the very man God has ordained to replace him on the throne.

Chapter 17 now brings us to the confrontation with Goliath. In Chapter 14, thanks to Jonathan's bravery, the Israelites under Saul defeated the Philistines, but because of Saul's rash oath that kept the Israelites from eating all day, they did not destroy nearly as many as they should have. Now the Philistines are back again.

All through Scripture the Philistines are a picture of those things that hinder, enslave or place in bondage the people of God. Goliath of Gath, as the champion of the Philistines, pictures a particularly besetting sin, one that is entrenched. In the episode of David and Goliath, we see not only an historical event, but also a beautiful spiritual application of how a Christian can deal with the areas of life that are Philistine, invaders, alien and particularly with the Goliaths that are so entrenched in a life.

So let us look at Chapter 17, beginning with verse 1:

**Now the Philistines gathered their armies for battle; and they were gathered at Socoh which belongs to Judah [they were trespassers. They did not belong there], and they camped between Socoh and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim [just 17 miles south of Jerusalem]. And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered, and camped in the valley of Elah, and drew up in battle array to encounter the Philistines. And the Philistines stood on the mountain on one side while Israel stood on the mountain on the other side, with the valley between them.**

The valley was a dry wash with very high cliffs and a brook in the middle. It was a typical dry wash, or wadi, filled with a rushing torrent during the winter rains but dry the rest of the time, and it ran northwesterly into the Philistine strongholds of Ekron and Gath. The Philistines, having just been beaten rather badly by the Israelites, are not about to go down the hill and then have to fight the Israelites on an uphill slope. It is also possible that, in their rout of the Philistines, the Israelites picked up a lot of iron weapons. On the other hand, the Israelites have no desire to go down into the valley and fight uphill against the Philistines who are fully equipped with iron weapons. So they do what is quite common in ancient warfare, they decide on representative conflict. Instead of the two armies fighting, each army chooses a champion to fight. The outcome of their battle determines which army wins the victory, and which one takes over the territory in question.

The Philistines had what they thought was an ace in the hole, "Goliath of Gath." Goliath was an Anakim. He was of the sons of Anak, the giants. In those days there was a whole civilization of giants that went right up the Jordan Valley. [Hundreds of skeletons of giant people have been found up the Jordanian Valley.] They were called Rephaim, Zamzummim, Emim, Anakim, Nephilim. You find them both before the flood of Noah and after the flood of Noah. They were at least "six cubits and a span." [Using the 18" cubit, that is 9-1/2 ft tall; using a 21" cubit that is 10-1/2 ft tall.] It is called a megalithic civilization, mega = big, lithic = stone. They built huge stone buildings. There really was a race of giants. They really did inhabit the Jordanian Valley around the hill country of Hebron. They were driven out of the area by the Mesopotamian Chedorlaomer and his coalition in the days of Abraham. They were driven out again by the Jews under Joshua, but they were never driven out of the country. They ended up in the southwest part of Palestine where they joined forces with the Philistines. So, we have Goliath of Gath who is no Sunday School tale made up by a Sunday School teacher. He is historically accurate and comes from a whole civilization of giants.

So from the Philistines point of view, picking champions this is really the way to go, "Wait until you see our

champion."

Chapter 17, Verse 4:

**Then a champion came out from the armies of the Philistines named Goliath, from Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span** [either 9-1/2 or 10-1/2 feet tall. Men, at that time, were about 5-1/2 feet tall, so David is looking at someone about twice as big as he is]. **And he had a bronze helmet on his head, and he was clothed with scale-armor** [overlapping scales] **which weighed five thousand shekels of bronze** [that is about 160 lbs. His armor weighed more than David did soaking wet]. **He also had bronze greaves** [or shin guards] **on his legs and a bronze javelin slung between his shoulders.**

He came out morning and evening when the sun was at the right angle, a solid hunk of shining metal 10-1/2 feet tall walking like a robot down that hill, and there stood the Jews on the other hill with their slings and their wooden weapons. [Some had swords, but many did not.]

Chapter 17, Verse 7:

**And the shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and the head of his spear weighed six hundred shekels of iron** [That was 20 lbs. Just the spear head weighed 20 lbs. This fellow threw a spear that had a 20 lb. shot in the front of it shaped like a point, and he threw it easily]; **his shield-carrier also walked before him.** [He had to have someone lug his shield for him] **And he stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, and said to them, "Why do you come out to draw up in battle array? Am I not the Philistine** [hear his arrogance] **and you servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves and let him come down to me** [into the valley where he is]. **If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will become your servants; but if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall become our servants and serve us."** Again the Philistine said, **"I defy the ranks of Israel this day; give me a man that we may fight together."** When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

Goliath came out each morning and each evening when the sun was at the right angle and stood there flexing his armor and flashing it around, giving this taunt and humiliating the people of God, because their trust was in size, and their "size" was a coward.

Here is a typical contest between the flesh and the Spirit. On one side you have all the might of the flesh, Goliath of Gath. He stood head and shoulders above the Philistines, and he demanded a mighty champion like himself as an opponent. On the other side there was Saul. The Israelites chose him as king because of his physical stature. He stood head and shoulders above all of them. But what made him a mighty warrior, the Spirit of God, had now departed from him. What he had at Michmash was gone, and without the Spirit, he was a spineless coward. When the Spirit of God came mightily upon him, he took over the armies in Israel, defeated the Philistines, and rescued Jabesh-gilead. But, when the Spirit of God was withdrawn, we see him as he really was, a coward and also a murderer, ready to kill anyone who might try to usurp his throne. Since, as the leader goes so goes the nation, the fear of Saul infected the whole nation. When he ran, they ran. Their courage was all based upon what looked great rather than upon what was great. They did not realize that the courage of Saul was not based upon his stature but upon the Spirit of God.

Now we come to David and his errand here. He has already been anointed king. He is God's ruler and he knows it. Saul is a usurper, and he knows that. Look at how God trains his anointed king who is already filled with the Spirit of God.

Chapter 17, Verse 12:

**Now David was the son of the Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah, whose name was Jesse, and he had eight sons. And Jesse was old in the days of Saul, advanced in years among men** [Jesse is a very old man. David has no model for a father with whom he can identify]. **And the three older sons of Jesse had gone after Saul to the battle. And the names of his three sons who went to the**

**battle were Eliab the first-born, and the second to him Abinadab, and the third Shammah. And David was the youngest. Now the three oldest followed Saul, but David went back and forth from Saul to tend his father's flock at Bethlehem** [Whenever a mood came upon Saul, he would snap his fingers and up would come David to play his harp. When Saul was through with him, back he would go to the flock. Again he was the lowest man on the totem pole]. **And the Philistine came forward morning and evening for forty days, and took his stand**

David is nothing more than a messenger boy for Saul. He comes at the beck and call of the king he is to replace. Look at what else he is made to do.

Chapter 17, Verse 17:

**Then Jesse said to David his son, "Take now for your brothers an ephah [35 quarts] of this roasted grain and these ten loaves, and run to the camp to your brothers** [These are the brothers who do not accept him, who pick on him, who treat him like the runt of the litter]. **Bring also these ten cuts of cheese to the commander of their thousand, and look into the welfare of your brothers, and bring back news of them. For Saul and they and all the men of Israel are in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.**

David is not only a messenger boy for Saul but for Jesse also. You would think that God, having anointed David as king and having filled him mightily with the Spirit of God, would put him right in the palace. Instead here he is running errands, jumping for Jesse, jumping for Saul. What is God doing?

We talked about authority last time. God's authority is that of Lord and God. Nobody else is Lord. All other men are brothers. As we used to say in Navy boot camp, "You are not fit to command until you learn to obey." What caused Saul to be disqualified? Disobedience. He never really obeyed God. So, God is not going to put David on the throne until he has learned absolute obedience. David is not fit to command the nation of Israel until he is in absolute obedience to the God of Israel, Israel's only Ruler, Yahweh, The Preincarnate Jesus Christ. So God runs David up and down in the back woods, while all the time he is God's anointed king of Israel. Any authority David has will come from obedience.

On a personal level, where does any authority we might have come from? Same place. Obedience, the Lordship of Christ. We have no right, no right whatsoever, to talk to anyone about their soul, or about their walk with the Lord, unless our life is in obedience to Jesus Christ, insofar as we are personally able to make the right choices. We have no authority otherwise. If, however, we are obedient to Christ, as far as our will is concerned, stumbling though we may be but with a real desire to be obedient, then we have tremendous authority. We have all the authority of Jesus Christ, and people will see it and sense it.

A pagan Centurion sensed it in Jesus Christ. Jesus was coming into Capernaum, a major seaport and headquarters of his Galilean ministry, when a Centurion, who was the equivalent of anywhere from a Captain in our army to a Colonel, depending upon the importance of his command, approached him. This Centurion was a big man in the city. He had built a whole synagogue for the Jews with his own money. He had a slave he greatly loved who was sick, and he wanted Jesus to heal him. Why would he come to Jesus? He was one of the conquerors of the Jews, not in subjugation to them. What was there about Jesus that impressed this Centurion? It was his authority, and this Centurion knew about authority.

He said in Matthew 8:8b;

**"...just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I, too, am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it."**

He knew about authority. He knew authority could just say the word and things happened. Where did the Centurion get his authority? He got it from absolute obedience to his Tribune. When he was in absolute obedience to his Tribune, he could command men to be put to death for disobedience, and they had a very slow, painful way



of killing disobedient soldiers in those days. It was quite effective and quite fatal. It is said that a Roman soldier was more afraid of his commander than he was of the enemy. Here he saw Christ in absolute obedience to a higher authority, in this case His Father, so he knew he had absolute authority over others.

If Christ's authority lies in absolute obedience to the Father and the Christian's authority lies in absolute obedience to the Lordship of Christ, husbands, you whose wives are to submit to you in everything as unto the Lord, from where does your authority come? Your obedience to your Lord, of course. Your wife has no confidence or peace in submitting to you in everything as unto the Lord unless you are obedient to your Lord. She may give you grudging obedience because you are her husband, or she may give you willing obedience because of the Lordship of Christ in her life, but you, yourself, have no authority apart from your own obedience.

Parents, from where does your authority over your children come, the lash, the whip, or the most dreaded of all punishments, turning off the TV? No, they learn to obey or disobey from watching you obey or disobey. During the 60s there was a struggle with the kids at Stanford over smoking pot, trying speed, and dropping acid, among other things. And why not? Every night they would watch daddy come home from the office and load up on three double martinis before dinner. Our authority as parents comes from modeling our obedience to Jesus Christ.

So, God is putting his king through boot camp. David is not fit to command the nation of Israel until he has learned to obey absolutely Yahweh, the Lord of Israel, with no questions asked.

Christ's absolute obedience contributed to his being called "meek." Meek, however, is a very poor word in English. The actual literal meaning of the word is "strength under control." The word "gentle" is a good word for it. Scripture calls Moses the "meekest man on the face of the earth," but he had strength under control. He was anything but a push over. He led 2.5 million people through a howling wilderness. He was a gentle person, but he had authority. Why? Obedience. When Miriam and Aaron, his sister and brother, said, "Who is Moses anyway? We are all of the same family. How come he is such a hero?" God says, "Moses, Miriam, Aaron, come out here in front of the tent of meeting. I want to talk to you." Then, he looks right at Miriam and Aaron and says, "How dare you talk to Moses like that. To the prophets, I appear in visions and in dreams, but to him I talk face-to-face. He is the meekest man on the face of the earth. How dare you talk to him like that. [Numbers 12:1-8]" Immediately Miriam became a leper, and Aaron had to plead with Moses to intercede for her. God said, "O.K., I will do one thing for you. If her father had but spit in her face, would she not bear her shame for seven days? Let her be shut up for seven days outside the camp, and afterward she may be received again. [Numbers 12:14]" Seven days she stayed outside the camp, unclean, a leper. "Don't you ever talk to Moses like that again." Meekest man on the face of the earth. A lily?. Oh, no! That is power under control, and it came from obedience.

This is what we have in David. God is going to make him a powerful man, and he does it by making him absolutely obedient.

I Samuel 17, Verse 20:

**So David arose early in the morning and left the flock with a keeper and took the supplies and went as Jesse had commanded him. And he came to the circle of the camp while the army was going out in battle array shouting the war cry. And Israel and the Philistines drew up in battle array, army against army. Then David left his baggage in the care of the baggage keeper, and ran to the battle line and entered in order to greet his brothers. As he was talking with them, behold, the champion, the Philistine from Gath named Goliath, was coming up from the army of the Philistines, and he spoke these same words; and David heard them. When all the men of Israel saw the man, they fled from him and were greatly afraid. And the men of Israel said, "Have you seen this man who is coming up? Surely he is coming up to defy Israel. And it will be that the king will enrich the man who kills him with great riches and will give him his daughter and make his father's house free in Israel." Then David spoke to the men who were standing by him, saying, "What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine, and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should taunt the armies of the living God?" And the people answered him in accord**

**with this word, saying, "Thus it will be done for the man who kills him."**

When Goliath comes out and challenges the Israelites, they all flee. Why? Where is their mighty leader, the man called by God to head the nation of Israel and be its leader? Instead of dealing with this Philistine champion in the strength of the Lord, Saul is cowering somewhere devising an alluring material reward for anyone who will kill Goliath. He is offering "great riches and will give him his daughter [son-in-law-to the king] and make his household free in Israel [no taxes, no draft, no tithes]." The magnificent leader that the Israelites picked because of his great stature and kingly appearance is buying off someone to go do his job for him. This is why Israel is weak. Their king is weak.

Why do you suppose David asks this strange question? It sounds pretty selfish.

**"Then David spoke to the men who were standing by him, saying, 'What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine, [now watch these words] and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should taunt the armies of the living God?'"**

Not the armies of Israel, you will note. If you do not read carefully, it would appear David is hoping to make a deal. He has no money. He is poverty-stricken, low man on the totem pole. Here is a chance to get rich, not to mention a little prestige. But look closely to where he is focusing their attention. He focuses from Goliath, to the living God. "Who will kill this Philistine and take away the reproach from Israel?"

Two things David focuses on. The first: "For who is this uncircumcised Philistine..." Why does he use the word uncircumcised? You will remember that God made a covenant with the nation of Israel in the time of Abraham. Part of that covenant was that God would 1) bless the nations of the earth through the descendants of Abraham, and 2) that they would possess forever the land from the River of Egypt to the Euphrates and from the Mediterranean to the great desert. As a mark of his covenant, he required circumcision, and David is saying, "This man is uncircumcised. He is not part of the covenant and has no right to the land." God chose circumcision as a symbol of the removal of the flesh. But while the Israelites, including their king, may have been physically circumcised, at the moment they were looking at their circumstances from a purely fleshly standpoint. They were denying their circumcision. Israel was in such a state at this time that one of their prophets indicated the name of God was blasphemed among the Gentiles because of them.

The second thing David focuses on "...that he should taunt the armies of the living God?" Goliath is taunting the God of Israel, the armies "of the living God." He is not taunting the armies of Israel. David is trying to transfer the people's sight from the circumstances to the Person involved in those circumstances. The tragedy of the flesh is that it gives up access to God. Saul had given up the right to inquire of God. When he could do it, he would not. Now when he would do it, he cannot. Scripture warns about this; God will give you over to what you choose [Romans 1]. So, do not take advantage of God. Saul had access to God up until the time the Spirit departed from him, but he did not use it. He did his own thing. Remember the battle at Michmash [Chapter 14]. He started to inquire of God. He even got the priest up there, but as soon as he heard the yelling of the Jews and figured the battle was going their way, he said to the priest, "Withdraw your hand," and away he went. He shoved God right into the background and took off in the flesh. He made that hasty vow and lost the real victory. Now when he needs access the most, it is gone.

But then what happens when you start acting in faith, Chapter 17, Verse 28:

**Now Eliab his oldest brother heard when he spoke to the men; and Eliab's anger burned against David and he said, "Why have you come down? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your insolence and the wickedness of your heart; for you have come down in order to see the battle." But David said, "What have I done now? Was it not just a question?" Then he turned away from him to another and said the same thing; and the people answered the same thing as before.**

The moment you act in faith you can expect opposition, oftentimes from your own family. At his first coming,

Christ said in Matthew 10:34;

**Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth: I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's enemies will be the members of his household.**

Jesus said, "I am going to cut right down the center of families, and some of your greatest opposition may come from the ones closest to you." It is not any different in the Old Testament as witness Eliab's response when David steps out in faith.

Next time we will pick up in Chapter 17, Verse 31 and we will see David fight Goliath. As you read through these next verses, watch the three attitudes; the attitude of David, a spiritual man in Christ; the attitude of Saul, a carnal man in Christ, and the attitude of Goliath, an unbeliever. Then notice the effect of the attitude of the spiritual man upon the other two. There is a wonderful little picture here.

### **Prayer:**

Father, we just thank you for your Word and for the way it takes things of history and shows us how they apply to our lives today. We thank you that we truly are your covenant children and that we are born of you, that we have the right to reign as kings and not to be slaves, and yet that right, Father, is based upon full obedience to you because there is only one Lord. We are brothers, and so our authority only rests in our obedience to you. You are the only one who has true absolute authority. Help us, Father, to realize that as we serve one another in obedience to you, we are exercising your authority in the way you exercise it by going to the cross for us. Thank you, Father, for the beautiful opportunity of giving ourselves for others, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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## **Chapter 5**

### **David and Goliath - II**

#### **1 Samuel 17:31-54**

Today we will look at the duel between David and Goliath. Since the Philistines had a monopoly on iron smelting, one of the weapons the Israelites depended upon was the sling shot. They became very proficient with it. The stones they used were 2" to 3" in diameter and were placed in a leather cup on the end of two long leather cords. They would whirl this cup over their heads until momentum built up, then they would let go of one of the strings. The rock, traveling at about 200 hundred feet per second, would hit its object with a force of about 5,000 foot pounds of energy. It was designed to crush bone. They could use it against men in armor because it was designed to penetrate.

Leading up to this confrontation between David and Goliath, we have seen some principles. Number one: the Philistines are intruders in the land. The land was given to the Israelites in a covenant God made with Abraham, reaffirmed with Isaac and Jacob, and then reaffirmed again through the people he had Moses and Joshua lead to the promised land. But, even though the land was promised to them by God, they were forced to fight for it.

Canaan is not a picture of heaven. There will be no fights in heaven. It is a picture of resting in God in the middle of the battles down here. The battles we are fighting are already won. We are to fight from a position of rest,

depending on God's resources and God's schedule. Our enemies have been defeated in Christ and our job is to possess the land by faith. The Philistines are invaders in the land.

Number two: the Philistines are to be exterminated. As long as they are around, they will be a warlike, hostile, uncircumcised people. They had been a thorn in the side of Israel for years because they had never been totally exterminated. The Israelites, on the other hand, owned the land because God graciously gave it to them not because they earned it. He marked this covenant with them by the sign of circumcision. Circumcision was not only God's sign of the seed promise [in Genesis to Abraham] but also the sign of the land promise. So, every Israelite male in that army standing on the cliff across the valley from the Philistines had a mark on his body that said, "This land is mine. God gave it to me, and I have the right to it forever." Yet there they stood, marked by God, letting an enemy, who had no right to be there, immobilize them.

Scripture tells us that, through Christ, born again believers also have been "circumcised." We are marked men and women. So, even though by God's deliberate will these Goliaths are allowed in our lives, no enemy has the right there. Resting in Jesus Christ, we are to reign as kings. We are to exterminate and conquer right down here in the land God has given us.

Number three: as long as Goliath held the Israelites at bay, he was a reproach and a disgrace to them. They were the "armies of the living God," yet they were terrorized by one uncircumcised Philistine.

If we allow the Goliaths in our lives to possess us, we are disgraced in the same way. We need to realize that and to never make peace with them. Look at Joshua. He rid Canaan of all the Goliaths, all the giants, except for those in the little Southwest corner of the land. They came back to haunt him.

Number four: not only are Goliaths a reproach to us, but they also make a mockery of the living God. If we believe our God is God of the universe, that Jesus Christ maintains the universe by the word of his power, that he is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent and we do not act like he is, we make a mockery of our God.

At this juncture, the Philistines were ahead. They held much of the western seacoast and the western slope of the mountains. They controlled iron smelting, which reduced the Israelites to wooden weapons. There was no inducement for them to even consider Israel's God, "Yahweh," as a viable option.

The Goliaths in our lives are like this. If we let them win, we are saying to ourselves, and to the world, "My God is too small. He is not adequate. He can handle cigarettes, but he can not handle jealousy, or pride or ego or lust, or whatever." Yes, it is hard. No one wants to give up the rights to himself, but that is what God wants. Number one on his priority list is me.

So, now let us look at a man of faith. The Israelites are on one side of a canyon. The Philistines are on the other. Goliath is down in between defying the armies of Israel, the armies of the living God, and they are cowering in fear. David comes and asks them a question, trying to get them to focus on their God. His question in I Samuel 17, verse 26:

What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine, and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should taunt the armies of the living God?

"The armies of the living God," he says. He is trying to focus them on their God, the same God that supplied his needs when the lion and the bear attacked his sheep.

1 Samuel 17, beginning with verse 31,

**"When the words which David spoke were heard, they told them to Saul, and he sent for him. And David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail on account of him [Goliath]; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine." Then Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are but a youth while he has been a warrior from**

**his youth."**

David and Saul were both Israelites but they were focused on different things. David looked at God. Saul looked at David. God had anointed David to reign as king over Israel. He had not said, "I have anointed you king, now get killed by Goliath." So, David, looking at his God and the covenant his God had made with him, expected to kill this giant. It was not because he believed he was bigger or better or smarter than the giant, but it was because his God had made a commitment to him. David would reign. Now, it would be on God's timetable, but David would reign. God was committed to that.

Saul, on the other hand, took a look at the present resources, a youth with lovely red hair, beautiful eyes, small of stature, and it did not add up to destruction of giants. So, Saul looks at David and says, "No way!" But, David looks at God and says, "No problem!"

To continue, verse 34:

**But David said to Saul, "Your servant was tending his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and took a lamb from the flock, I went out after him and attacked him, and rescued it from his mouth; and when he rose up against me, I seized him by his beard and struck him and killed him. Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, since he has taunted the armies of the living God."**

David's victory over a bear or a lion was not due to David's ability, his strength or his size. But with Yahweh on his side, he could walk up to a bear, snatch back his lamb, grab the bear by its beard and plunge a knife into him. He was used to infighting bears, whose claws rip and tear, or lions whose jaw could crush a human skull. An African lion (I don't know how they were in Palestine) can jump over a 6 or 7 foot thorn hedge, take a bullock in its mouth and, still holding the bullock, leap back over the hedge. Of course, they first crush its skull so it doesn't fight, but they are extremely strong. I don't know if the lions in David's time were that big or not. It is possible they were more like the pumas of today, which would still be pretty mean to wrestle. David looked at God's faithfulness in the past [There was no way a small shepherd boy with only a stick and a sling could take on a lion or a bear by himself] and based upon that, realized God would be faithful in the present.

He goes on in verse 37:

**And David said, "The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."**

That is a very poor translation. The Hebrew is a beautiful play on words. You can see the contempt. The more proper translation is, "The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the paw of this Philistine." "He is just another animal like the bear and the lion, and the Lord will deliver me as he has in the past."

**And Saul said to David, "Go, and may the Lord be with you."**

Saul, being a man of the flesh, does not surprise us by his actions. Following is sincere flesh in action, verse 38:

**Then Saul clothed David with his garments and put a bronze helmet on his head, and he clothed him with armor. And David girded his sword over his armor and tried to walk, for he had not tested them.**

Saul was sincere about wanting David to win. He gave David the best he had; his own armor, his own helmet, his own sword. But Saul was head and shoulders over all of Israel, you will remember, and David was a rather small young man. Saul's armor probably came down to his feet. Not only could he not run, he probably could not even walk in it. Also, there was a difference between the battle Saul was trying to fight and the battle David knew was the real issue. There was a difference also in the weaponry of Saul and the weaponry of David. Saul saw only a

physical enemy. David saw that God was the issue. He wanted to put on the whole armor of God, which, in this battle, turned out to be only a sling shot & 5 smooth stones. When we fight a battle, our weaponry is not the whole armor of Saul. It is the whole armor of God.

So David said to Saul, "I cannot go with these, for I have not tested them." And David took them off. And he took his stick in his hand [note the armor of God was not a sword. There were not many swords around] and chose for himself five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in the shepherd's bag which he had, even in his pouch, and his sling was in his hand; and he approached the Philistine.

In this case, the armor of God was a shepherd's staff and a shepherd's sling, the very things that David had used in fighting the battles of God before. God does not strike with lightning. He does not provide supercharged weapons to wage warfare. Neither does he ask you to put your mind in neutral when you walk by faith. He wants you to take whatever he has given you, whatever you are used to using, and step out in faith expecting him to use those same things again and again. He is a faithful, systematic God, and what has worked in the past will work in the future. If you have walked in quiet obedience to your Lord in the past, and have overcome cigarettes by that quiet obedience, when lust is staring you in the face, walk in that same quiet step-by-step obedience and you will overcome the Goliath of lust.

What you and I do not have the right to do is to box God in. We do not know how long we must walk in faith before we defeat our Philistine Goliaths. Nevertheless, we should take the normal thinking man's precautions, use the weapons God has given us and step out. David went to the brook and picked up five stones. He did not say, "Listen, God, I am going to pick up one stone, and you had better make that hit the target." What if he had stumbled? Instead he took five smooth stones, just as he had many, many times before, and stepped out. Although in the Book of Judges the Benjaminites had 700 slingers that could split a hair, David did not know how many stones it would take to slay a 10 foot man. He knew God was going to defeat this man, but whether it would be number 1 or number 5 stone, he did not know. So, he took the normal, everyday number of stones and gave God the option to do what he chose.

Do not test the living God. Do not put out fleeces. It is childish. Do say, "Thank you, Lord, I have the victory. I know it is mine. How or when you will give it to me, I do not know, but I know it is mine. So I am going to do whatever is normal and natural and obvious and prepare myself for whatever you call me to do. I will use this mind you have given me, put it in low gear and head out." That is exactly what David did.

Verse 41:

**Then the Philistine came on and approached David, with the shield-bearer in front of him. When the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him; for he was but a youth, and ruddy, with a handsome appearance. And the Philistine said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks? [Not even a sword] And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. The Philistine also said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the sky and the beasts of the field."**

Note also "The Philistine cursed David by his gods." I believe that translation misses the point. "Gods" is the same Hebrew word as in Genesis 1:1 which speaks of the true God as creator. I feel it should read, "cursed David by his (David's) God" because in verse 45, David says Goliath has taunted the God of the armies of Israel. I think Goliath blasphemed Yahweh when he screamed at David, and then and there he became a dead man. David said to himself, "I have him now. He just took on Yahweh, and he is a dead man."

Goliath was about 10 feet tall, clothed in armor of bronze, with a javelin at his back, a spear in his hand, a sword at his side and a shield-bearer in front of him. On the other hand David had a stick, five stones in a pouch and a sling-shot over his shoulder. So you might say Goliath's attitude was confidently arrogant.

Now look at the actions of David in verses 45 through 47. Verse 45:

**Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name [In Hebrew the phrase, "the name," indicates all the power, authority, rank, all that the person is] of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted.**

And, after properly focusing on who is fighting whom, see the security and assurance that David has, verse 46:

This day the Lord ["Yahweh," in Hebrew the covenant God of Israel. David is claiming that covenant. By circumcision, he has the mark of that covenant, on himself. This land is his by the gift of Yahweh, and he is putting God to the test in that sense. He is saying, "You have given us the land. I am taking you up on your promise.] will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you.[That is quite a phrase considering David has no sword. But Goliath has, and he has been a dead man ever since he blasphemed Yahweh.] And I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the Lord [Yahweh] does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the Lord's [Yahweh's] and He will give you into our hands [not my hand].

David sees an issue here between the glory of God and the glory of man. He says, "God is going to deliver you into my hands, not for my sake or my glory, but for his."

Notice, David declares God has two redemptive reasons for defeating the Philistine. One: "...that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel," David is saying, "Israel is where God lives. The Israelites are God's people. If you want to know about the true God, He is in Israel." Remember Christ's answer to the Samaritan woman when she said, "Our fathers worshiped in this mountain [Gerizim] and you say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship" His response to her flippancy was, "We worship that which we know, for salvation is from the Jews." A very loose translation might be, "Even though unbelieving Sadducees are bungling it, the basic concept of sacrifice and the Old Testament law, prophets and psalms is the way of salvation, and it is from the Jewish nation. It is not found in Samaria where you will not accept any of the Bible but the Pentateuch. Your sacrifices on Mount Gerizim are a stench in the nostrils of God."

Two: "...and that all this assembly may know that the Lord [Yahweh] does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the Lord's [Yahweh's] and He will give you into our hands." Probably here he looks back at the Jews. He wants them to know that their covenant God [and that would get their attention] does not deliver by sword or by spear, [the way they tried to arm David]. He wants them to know the battle is Yahweh's, and Yahweh will give the Philistine into Israel's hands. He will not be giving him into David's hands.

In Deuteronomy 17, God indicated one of his rules for the kings of Israel was not to multiply horses unto themselves. Every other nation used horses and camels and chariots of iron, but God told the Jewish people that it was a key issue that their king not go back to Egypt to multiple horses. David noted why when he indicated "the battle is the Lord's."

A good example is King Jehoshaphat. He was a good king, but he had some problems with the flesh. During his reign "the sons of Moab and the sons of Ammon, together with some of the Meunites came to make war against him" [2 Chronicles 20]. The Lord told him, "Go to battle with the priests in front singing hymns and the people dancing," This they did. As they approached the battlefield they saw that these enemy armies, who were a variety of nations thrown together to take on the Jews, had gotten into a brawl among themselves and had completely destroyed each other. Jehoshaphat's army went forth to battle and all the enemy lay dead. His enormous standing army, supported for years by the taxes of his people, did not shoot one arrow. They just collected the spoils. The battle was the Lord's

God's idea was to have the Jewish nation always at a disadvantage so they would put no trust in human resources. God does not want our will, our integrity of character or our most valiant efforts to deal with the Goliaths, or even the little Philistines behind them, in our lives. The battle is the Lord's. He may deal with us until we bottom out, until we lie hopeless before him, before he brings us back. He wants to teach us that out of death comes resurrection power. Until we have been crucified and have put to death everything we count on outside of Jesus

Christ and his indwelling life, we cannot experience the fullness of the resurrection power of Christ. Our God is determined to put us through afflictions, persecutions, and perplexities, so the life of Jesus Christ may be made manifest in our mortal flesh.

Verse 48:

**Then it happened when the Philistine rose and came and drew near to meet David, that David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine.**

Note that David "ran quickly" to approach Goliath. He was taking on a 10 foot giant along with a javelin, a spear, a sword and a shield-bearer, yet he eagerly approached Goliath because the battle was already won, and he knew it. Goliath had challenged Yahweh, and David was just a vehicle in God's battle.

Verse 49:

**And David put his hand into his bag and took from it a stone and slung it and struck the Philistine on his forehead [Goliath was so certain of victory he did not even cover his forehead]. And the stone sank into his forehead, so that he fell on his face to the ground.**

You would think with all his paraphernalia that Goliath would be invincible, but I have never seen any Philistine helmets that had a visor covering the forehead. They did wear a kind of band, but it would not have stopped a rock the size David used. According to drawings of the time, even with their helmets, their foreheads looked to be quite exposed. That is why they used a shield.

Verse 50:

**Thus David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, and he struck the Philistine and killed him; but there was no sword in David's hand. Then David ran and stood over the Philistine and took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him, and cut off his head with it. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled.**

We need to remember that as Christians we are fighting battles already won. Colossians 2 tells us that at the cross Jesus Christ triumphed over Satan much as Roman conquerors in the days of Rome. A Roman field general who had taken vast new territory and killed great numbers of new enemies [old revolts did not count], had the right of a triumphal entry. He would chain his enemies to his chariot hubcaps and march them through town; those chained to the front hubcaps would be trained by the Romans and go back to serve Rome as local officers; those chained to the rear could not be trusted, and went to the coliseum to be slain. As the conqueror paraded through town in an open chariot, flowers were scattered before him, incense was wafted about. The incense to those in front was the sweet incense of life unto life. The incense to those behind was the incense of death unto death. The conquering general marched up to the Emperor, who crowned him with the stephanos, the crown of victory. [It was made of laurel leaves, woven together like the one given victors in the Olympic games.] It was the highest honor a conquering general could receive.

This is the exact idiom used in Colossians 2. At the cross, Christ chained Satan and all his demonic hosts to his rear hubcaps and marched them through the streets of heaven. He made "a public display of them." They are all going to hell. So, in Christ, you are seated in the chariot with the Lord, and Satan and all his hosts are chained to the rear hubcaps being dragged through town. As a child of God, you are fighting a battle already won.

Now look at what happens to all the men around when David exhibits that strong act of faith, verse 52:

**And the men of Israel and Judah arose and shouted and pursued the Philistines as far as the valley [probably entrance to the valley, probably Gath], and to the gates of Ekron [those were the two major fortified cities of the Philistines] And the slain Philistines lay along the way to Shaaraim, even to Gath and Ekron. And the sons of Israel returned from chasing the Philistines and plundered their camps. Then David took the Philistine's head and brought it to Jerusalem [this is sometime**



later], **but he put his weapons in his tent.**

With renewed faith in their Lord, the Israelites took on the Philistines and their iron weapons. Still using mainly wooden weapons, slings and very few swords or spears, they chased them down the wadi to their fortified cities, pummeling them all the way. The Philistines, laden with armor, could not run very fast, so the slingers picked them off one by one. Then on the way back, the Israelites picked up all that great iron weaponry they had not been allowed to have. God armed the Israelites with the weapons of the Philistines.

David took the head of Goliath and hung it in Jerusalem. At that time, Jerusalem was a stronghold of the Jebusites, Canaanites whom the Jews were supposed to have exterminated but never could. David eventually made Jerusalem his city, his capital, the center of the worship system. He united the tribes of Israel there, and it became known as "the city of David." I believe he nailed that head right outside the gate of the stronghold of Jerusalem as a way of saying, "Jebusites, I am going to get you. Look at Goliath and remember I will be back." And he was. He took the city. He took the stronghold. He conquered the Jebusites. Nobody beats the army of the living God.

We are the temple of the living God. Nobody mocks us or taunts us without taunting Yahweh. Any battle we fight we are fighting with Yahweh as our champion. He wants us to win because he does not like his temple [whose temple we are] to be dirtied by Philistines. David believed that and so should we.

**Prayer:**

Father, we thank you so much for this illustration of how you operate, for that fact that we are victors even now in Jesus Christ, that we are fighting battles that are already won, and how dumb it is to be tied by some Philistine or Goliath who is really fighting you, when all we have to do is step out in a normal, natural, obvious way and by faith believe that you have already won. Then we can cut off the Goliath with his own sword. Thank you, Father, so much in Jesus' name. Amen.

[TOP](#)

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## **Chapter Six**

### **Impulsive, Compulsive, Consumed**

#### **I Samuel 17:55-19:24**

Chapters 18, 19 and 20 present a striking picture of both carnality and spirituality. Today we will look at carnality.

I firmly believe Saul was a saved man. He was chosen of God, anointed by God, filled with the Spirit of God, and used of God until he allowed his ego and his personal desires to dominate him. He was a godly father. Jonathan, who was a product of Saul, was a very godly man. Saul's three sons, Jonathan, Abinadab and Malchishua, stayed with him through all his madness and deterioration and died fighting beside him on Mt. Gilboa. He did a superb job as a father.

David's sons, on the other hand, were all worthless. Even Solomon, who was given a supernatural gift of wisdom by God, became a tyrant and, before the end of his life, withdrew from the Lord. The record of the sons of David was a stench in the nostrils of God. Yet God said David was "a man after my own heart."

When Saul, the night before the battle in which he was slain, called Samuel up from the dead, Samuel said to him, "Tomorrow you and your sons shall be with me." This would seem to indicate that Saul would be in the same place as Jonathan, a godly man, and Samuel, a godly man. To me the only interpretation is that Saul was born again; born again but carnal. I believe his life was a stern warning that carnality can destroy your effectiveness, and

even you, in the life down here. But, as your eternal salvation is a gift of God based entirely on his grace, it is not affected [Ephesians 2:4-9].

Then there was David. He was a man of formidable struggles, a myriad of emotional problems, monstrous obstacles to overcome, a failure as a father, but with a heart committed to God. He was not quite sure how to properly appropriate the life of God, but he was "a man after God's own heart," because it is attitude of heart, not performance, that counts.

In these chapters, we will look at two relationships; Saul and David and Jonathan and David. We will see a vivid picture of life in the flesh and life in the spirit and also a vivid picture of two kinds of love. In chapter 16 when David and his harp comforted Saul during those attacks that were intended to drive Saul back to God, Saul loved David "greatly." Jonathan also loved David. They both began by loving David greatly, but we will see different patterns emerge from those loves.

In I Corinthians 3:15, Scripture clearly warns that some of us might stand before the Judgement Seat of Christ with all of our works burned up, "saved so as by fire." I think Saul, and also Lot, Abraham's nephew, are examples of that. I hope we will not be. We are saved by the life of Jesus Christ, but we receive rewards based on the acknowledgement of our helplessness, our appropriation of the life of Christ and our walk in obedience to that life. We can fight obedience to Jesus Christ all of our lives, and still be saved, "so as by fire." If we named the name of Jesus Christ as our Lord, and took a stand for Jesus Christ as our Lord in this age of His rejection by the world, even if our life is a shambles after that, the Lord Jesus will never forget that one day when we first said, "I belong to Jesus." Never forget, however, that I Corinthians 3:15 and II Corinthians 5:10 both promise we will all one day stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ "that we might be recompensed for the things done in the body whether they be valuable or valueless "

Chapter 18 shows the deterioration that sets in when a man chooses something God has declared a false god. Saul was told by God that because of his disobedience his line would not inherit the throne. Next, because he did not wait for Samuel, as instructed, but took over the priesthood and performed functions outside his jurisdiction, he himself was set aside as king. You will remember, he even tore a piece from Samuel's garment in an attempt to get Samuel to honor him before the Israelites. Samuel's response was, "The Lord has torn the kingdom from you and given it to your neighbor who is better than you." This is a direct word from God that: one, Saul no longer has the right to be king; two, the kingdom has already been given to someone closely associated with him, and three, in God's sight, the "neighbor" is better fit to reign as king. Saul's response was, "I will be king of Israel, and I will establish my line no matter what God says." That is rebellion, and rebellion, like a snowball, tends to gain mass and inertia [resistance to change] as it continues its journey downward.

Scripture speaks to this. Let us look at the three "giving overs" in the "snowballing" of fallen man as he continues his rebellion against God. If we continue to choose to rebel against God given light, God will give us over to increasing darkness. [Saul was a striking example.] Let us look briefly at Romans 1, verses 18-32.

Romans 1:18:

**For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth [they know better] in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse [they have had adequate light to respond to God but have rejected the light God has given them]...Professing to be wise, they became fools [it strikes me as ironic that atheists always profess to be wise in their rejection of God] and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. [The very same things God destroyed in the flood of Noah's day when mankind previously committed this same folly, Genesis 6:5-7] Therefore God gave them over [first "giving over"] to the lusts of their hearts to impurity, that their bodies might be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and**

**worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.**

First God "gives you over" to your emotions. I like the term, "impulses." [I am not using technical psychological terms here but am just describing three stages of deterioration.] First God gives you over to impulses and allows you to be driven by the winds of emotion. He gives you over to ungodly emotions, ungodly desires, not necessarily perversion yet, but impulses that grip your bodies and souls and minds.

Verse 26, the second "giving over." Now we have a condition, a compulsion, no longer just an emotion:

**For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned [literally, "burned out"] in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.**

"Degrading passions" is far more intense than "lusts of the heart." Lust is less severe than passion. You have now reached "compulsion" which involves perversion of God's norm for mankind. You are a victim. What originally was done, or not done, based upon how you felt, is now impossible to stop. Remember your first cigarette? You may have sucked a lemon to kill the smell and the taste, but you could quit any time. How about when you were smoking two packs a day? In spite of statistics which showed you were killing yourself, you could no longer quit. Somewhere along the line lust turned into passion. You went from choice to compulsion. That is what happened here. Literally the words are not "women" and "men" but "females" and "males." They have become like animals in their sexual behavior. In fact, they are behaving worse than animals. They have reached compulsion.

Verse 28, with the third "giving over" we see a depraved mind. Because it has continually rejected truth, the mind can now no longer discern truth from error. I call this "consumed:"

**And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, being filled [perfect tense in the Greek. they are in a state of permanency in this situation] with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, [Unloving is not a very clear translation. It means literally "without natural affection." The basic word is the word for the natural love of a father for his son, a brother for his sister, a husband for his wife, parents for children but with a negative prefix.] unmerciful...**

One of the marks of this last stage is the use of the closest intimacy within the family solely to benefit one's self. It is the same word used in II Timothy 3:3 of the last days when people are totally depraved. We will watch Saul reach this stage. He will wantonly use his daughter, whom he loves, and his son, whom he loves, just to accomplish his own desires.

Verse 32:

**...and, although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.**

Verse 32 indicates that at this stage they know what they are choosing is wrong. They know it is worthy of death, but they just do not care. That is a depraved mind.

There is a play on words here. In verse 28, "Just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God" means literally that they put God on trial to see if he would meet the specifications they had laid down for him, and when he did not, they rejected him. When they did that, God gave them over to a depraved mind. The word "depraved" is literally the adjective form of the verb used in "to put God on trial" and signifies a trialess mind. Loosely translated it means, if you put God on trial, he fails to meet your specifications and you choose to reject him, God, then, gives

you over to a mind that can no longer even make a trial. Since you have rejected God's truth, God says, "You want error, all right, you can have error." That is exactly what he does in II Thessalonians 2:9-12 in the last days. Because man has rejected and refused the love of the truth, God gives him over to error that he might be deceived.

This does not apply just to non-believers. If, as I Corinthians 3:15 says, I could, at the Judgment Seat of Christ, be saved "so as by fire," or, with all my works burnt up and my total Christian life worthless, then Romans 1:18-32 could happen to me. This principle of disobedience applies to both non-believers and believers. A believer is not special in the eyes of God when it comes to getting away with sin. God is willing to destroy the persistently willful sinning believer's life down here so that his lifestyle will not continually blaspheme the name of his Lord. That is what he did with Saul.

So, beginning with verse 55 of chapter 17, we will continue our look at Saul and David. Verse 55:

**Now when Saul saw David going out against the Philistine, he said to Abner the commander of the army, "Abner, whose son is this young man?"**

Saul is not interested in who this young man is. He knows it is David. He wants to know his background. Saul had promised his daughter to the man who killed Goliath, and, being a very proud man, he wants to know the lineage of this possible son-in-law.

Verse 55b:

**And Abner said, "By your life, O king, I do not know." And the king said, "You inquire whose son the youth is." So when David returned from killing the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul with the Philistine's head in his hand.**

Here stands David with his credentials. He has the right to Saul's daughter, the right to all the riches that were offered and the right to have a house in Israel that is free from taxation and conscription. His credentials are in his hand.

Verse 58:

**And Saul said to him, "Whose son are you, young man?" And David answered, "I am the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite." [Who is a nothing.]**

Not only was Jesse a nothing, but also there is a possibility David was illegitimate. Then, too, there is indication in Scripture that David's mother may have been previously married to Nahash the Ammonite, a non-Jew, which was a stigma of major proportions in those days.

It would appear there was quite a conversation between the end of Chapter 17 and the beginning of Chapter 18. Verse 1 which has not been recorded:

**Now it came about when he had finished speaking to Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as himself.**

Jonathan was probably in his 40's; David probably in his late teens or early 20's. Upon hearing this young man's story and his background, Jonathan's soul was knit to David in love and compassion. Saul, however, had no intention of letting David become his son-in-law.

**And Saul took him that day and did not let him return to his father's house.**

Saul loves David for what David can do for Saul, but, in spite of his promise, he does not love David enough to give him his daughter and make him part of the family.

Then Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. And Jonathan stripped himself of

the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his armor, including his sword and his bow and his belt.

Jonathan, as the oldest son of Saul, was heir apparent to the throne. In ancient times, what he did here was a mark of highest honor. The heir apparent, the Prince of Wales of the nation of Israel, gave up his own armor to his rival. He was not yet aware that David was his rival, but he loved this young man and honored him in front of everyone.

**So David went out wherever Saul sent him, and prospered; and Saul set him over the men of war.**

David apparently became Saul's Chief-of-Staff which probably initiated the conflict between Abner and David. Later on Abner chose to align himself against David.

**And it was pleasing in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul's servants.**

At this time Israel consisted of twelve tribes, each one with its own agenda. To mold them into a nation, they needed a unifying force. David could have been that force. They all loved him. Even Saul's courtiers, the inner circle, those striving for their own little empire, loved him. The people of Israel did not all love Saul.

Although Saul began with a love for David, here we see the first step in the downward slide, Saul's jealous suspicion of David. I Samuel 18:6:

**And it happened as they were coming, when David returned from killing the Philistine, that the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with joy and with musical instruments.**

In those days when a king returned from war, he was honored in this way. As he and his armies marched through town, the women poured out to dance in the streets and mimic various aspects of fighting the enemy. They played tambourines and triangles and put on quite a performance. Unfortunately these women have a new song which Saul does not appreciate.

Verse 7:

**And the women sang as they played, and said, "Saul has slain his thousands [Saul's head size expanded and brass buttons popped off his uniform, but then came the second stanza]. And David his ten thousands."**

To a man who was an egomaniac, those were no words to sing. This song became very popular too. We will see later that even the Philistines knew it.

**Then Saul became very angry, for this saying displeased him; and he said, "They have ascribed to David ten thousands, but to me they have ascribed thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom?" And Saul looked at David with suspicion from that day on.**

Saul knew from Samuel's prophecy that the kingdom had already been snatched from him by God and given to his "neighbor." From that same prophecy, he knew it had been given to "someone closely associated with him who was better than he." Saul was no dummy. Who was better than he by ten times, according to the voice of the people? Who was close to him, his Chief-of-Staff? Who, by the hand of the Lord, had killed Goliath? So Saul's love for David, beginning the downward plunge, changed to jealous suspicion. Saul was now being ruled by his emotions. He did not consider what David was as a person, or David's performance, or what the kingdom needed. He only knew what he felt, and, from that day on, he looked at David with suspicion. He had made a choice, a choice against God. It was God who took the kingdom and the kingship from him. It was God who said, "I give it to your neighbor." It was God who said, "He is better than you." Saul chose to take on God and to deny God's evaluation of the situation.

The next move is from suspicion to fear, verse 10:

**Now it came about on the next day [evil spreads very quickly] that an evil spirit from God came mightily upon Saul, and he raved in the midst of the house, while David was playing the harp with his hand, as usual; and a spear was in Saul's hand. And Saul hurled the spear for he thought, "I will pin David to the wall." But David escaped from his presence twice.**

The spear was a symbol of authority. It was a scepter for a warrior king. Apparently Saul threw it once, missed, got it back, and when David returned to his place, threw it again.

Now fear. Verse 12:

**Now Saul was afraid of David, for the LORD was with him but had departed from Saul.**

Do you see any pattern in this progression of sin? When the spirit of evil from God first came upon Saul to disturb and upset him enough to drive him to God for mercy, if David played the harp and sang his beautiful songs inspired of God, Saul's rages and mania subsided. This was God's mercy trying to tell Saul to repent. Now, since Saul had rebelled against God, against truth, David's playing no longer worked. Saul still raged. He still tried to murder. David's psalms, just as inspired by the Spirit of God as they were before, had lost their impact on Saul.

This can also become true of us. When we deny the truth of the Scriptures, they lose their effect on us. In the beginning they convict; they prick our consciences, and we respond. We may not respond correctly. We may not know exactly how to respond, but at least we respond. We have guilt, and it is good guilt, not false guilt. But if we deny the right of the Scriptures to be the standard in our lives, soon they will no longer prick. The same truth will no longer have any effect upon us. It will make no change in us.

So, Saul had reached step one, Romans 1:24, the first "giving over" by God. He was afraid of David. He realized the Lord was with David, and, of course, he knew the Lord had departed from him. He had lost that feeling of power that comes when the Spirit of God takes over. He knew David was now God's man, and he knew he was not. He was caught in this emotional situation.

Next he moved to Romans 1:26, the second "giving over." He understood the problem. He knew the evil spirit was from God, even his courtiers knew it, but he refused to repent. Instead he took the next step in his downward path, and God gave him over to "compulsion," the depraved condition.

Verse 13, instead of responding, he did exactly the opposite:

**Therefore Saul removed him from his presence, and appointed him as his commander of a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people.**

Apparently this was a demotion. David had been Chief-of-Staff over men of war, but now Saul sent him out as a field commander over 1,000 men. Saul wanted to get him out of the court, away from himself, away from his courtiers, away from the people, out where he would be an unknown and no longer a threat to Saul's throne. Notice, the verse has not yet said Saul sent him out to be killed. He sent him out to get rid of him. Saul had not yet taken step three.

**And David was prospering in all his ways for the LORD was with him.**

This phrase must have driven Saul wild with frustration. He put David over just 1,000 men, sent him way out in the hinterland and all the Philistines chose to go there too. So, David routed them. Then, as he moved, the Philistines moved. Wherever David went, the Philistines seemed to go, and wherever the Philistines went, David routed them. God prospered him wherever he went.

Verse 15:

**When Saul saw that he was prospering greatly, he dreaded him.**

Saul is now getting very close to the "consumed" condition. Dread comes over him.

**But all Israel and Judah loved David, and he went out and came in before them.**

In a sense, humanly speaking, David was the one person who could have made Saul's throne secure for him. But Saul forgot all about his kingdom, and turned his attention to pursuing David. As a result, the Philistines came back into the land and took over. Israel wound up a divided kingdom because of Saul.

Saul had not been able to get rid of David by sending him out into the field, so he began to deliberately plot his death. Mind you, he was deliberately plotting the death of a man he knew the Lord was "prospering in all his ways for the Lord was with him." Saul had not only lost his love for his Lord, but also the natural love a father has for his children. So, he moved into the third "giving over," into what I call the "consumed" stage, one of the marks of which is "unnatural affection" [lack of natural love for one's family].

Verse 17:

**Then Saul said to David, "Here is my older daughter [who should have given to him a long time ago] Merab; I will give her to you as a wife, only be a valiant man for me and fight the LORD's battle." For Saul thought, "My hand shall not be against him, but let the hand of the Philistines be against him"**

Saul could sanction having his own daughter's husband destroyed, but he wanted to be sure no finger was pointed at him. Knowing David would be in the forefront of any action, he said, "You may have my daughter if you valiantly fight for me," but he thought, "I don't want to look like a murderer. Let the Philistines get him." [Does this sound like another king? "If I put Uriah the Hittite in the forefront of the battle..." Uriah, Bathsheba's husband and one of the thirty great warriors of Israel, was one of David's best friends. Bathsheba's father was also one of the thirty and a good friend of David's, but David did not consider either one. When he sinned against the Lord, unnatural affection struck him, too. Where did he get the idea? Is it possible Saul was his mentor? The flesh, even in a "man after God's own heart," is always thoroughly rotten.]

Now David began to get a little suspicious.

Verse 18:

**But David said to Saul, "Who am I, [I am *persona non grata* in the courts, being stationed way out in the hinterland] and what is my life [I have no social standing. We discussed that in chapter 17] or my father's family in Israel, [I have no lineage, and you know it, Saul. You didn't give me your daughter when you should have.] that I should be the king's son-in-law?" So it came about at the time when Merab, Saul's daughter, should have been given to David, that she was given to Adriel the Meholathite for a wife.**

Saul may have been trying to provoke David into revenge, hoping he could get him for treason. We do not know. But, David did not take the bait, and Saul did not push further. Besides, Saul had an ace in the hole, his second daughter, Michal. He knew she loved David, and apparently David loved her. Saul reasoned, "I can use my daughter, who loves David, as the instrument to destroy him." He had no regrets that he would be destroying his own daughter's husband and lover. Because of David's love for Michal, he had high hopes David would respond to this plan. But, sensing David's suspicions, he arranged secret negotiations.

Verse 20:

**Now Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David.** [This probably infuriated Saul. Jonathan loved David. Michal

loved David.] **When they told Saul, the thing was agreeable to him. And Saul thought, "I will give her to him that she may become a snare to him, [He did not care what happened to his daughter] and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him." Therefore Saul said to David, "For a second time you may be my son-in-law today."** [I will give you another chance to be my son-in-law] **Then Saul commanded his servants, "Speak to David secretly [I cannot go to him openly, so you slip the word to him privately], saying, 'Behold, the king delights in you, and all his servants love you; now, therefore, become the king's son-in-law'"** So Saul's servants spoke these words to David. **But David said, "It is trivial in your sight to become the king's son-in-law, since I am a poor man [I cannot give you a dowry] and lightly esteemed?"** [I have no lineage to offset the lack of dowry. He does not seem to be suspicious of this offer as he was before] **And the servants of Saul reported to him according to these words which David spoke.**

Verse 25:

**Saul then said. "Thus you shall say to David, 'The king does not desire any dowry except a hundred foreskins of the Philistines,** [take vengeance on the king's enemies. Saul planned to have David fall at the hands of the Philistines.]

When the Ammorites came sweeping down the Fertile Crescent, the eastern Ammorites [those in Mesopotamia] did not practice circumcision. The western Ammorites [those in Palestine] did. Circumcision, as practiced by many tribes, was just a rite of puberty, but with the Israelites, it had a religious significance. In Israel on the eighth day, as part of the child's dedication to God, he was circumcised. The Philistines, who had migrated from the Aegean Sea area, were noted for being uncircumcised in the midst of the circumcised. Saul wanted David to fight Philistines, who were superb warriors, well-armed, highly trained and skilled in warfare, not Ammorites who were poor fighters. How could he be sure? Bring back 100 sets of ears? No! But foreskins! Those had to come from Philistines. He wanted proof positive that 100 Philistines were killed by David. He assumed that would take care of David. Unfortunately for him it did not.

Verse 26:

**When his servants told David these words, it pleased David to become the king's son-in-law** [Now he really wants to. He wants Michal. He loves her very much, and she loves him] **Before the days had expired David rose up and went, he and his men, and struck down two hundred men [double the dowry] among the Philistines. Then David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full number to the king, that he might become the king's son-in-law.** [Saul is now stuck. He has promised in front of all his courtiers and even used them as a go-between] **So Saul gave him Michal his daughter for a wife.**

Verse 28. Look at the tragedy here. Saul goes from suspicion, to dread, to an "enemy continually." He has reached the third "giving over," the "consumed" stage.

When Saul saw and knew that the LORD was with David, [he has full and complete knowledge, and he does not care] and that Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him, [She was very special to Saul, one of his most prized possessions for he does not kill her when she helps David escape from him, and yet he has no concern about using her], then Saul was even more afraid of David. Thus Saul was David's enemy continually.

Saul knew God had chosen David. He knew his own daughter, whom he loved dearly, loved David. He also knew as long as David was alive his throne would never be safe. So, he deliberately chose to become the "enemy continually" of the man his own God had chosen. He had a "trifling" mind. He could no longer see things clearly, for in choosing to become the "enemy continually" of God's chosen king, Saul also chose to become the "enemy continually" of God Himself.

I want to show you the deterioration that happens to a man in this position.



Verse 30:

**Then the commanders of the Philistines went out to battle, and it happened as often as they went out, that David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul. So his name was highly esteemed.**

If God is going to destroy you, my friends, he always goes first class. He was determined, now, to destroy Saul physically. As Saul had no intention of giving up the throne voluntarily, God let the Philistines remove him bodily. He increased and increased those things which contributed to Saul's wrong choices, and Saul just kept on making them.

What happened? Chapter 19, verse 1:

**Now Saul told Jonathan his son and all his servants to put David to death.**

Saul now made it an open established policy to kill David. He did not try to hide it. But Jonathan "delighted" in David and interceded for him. Based on the fact that the Lord obviously blessed David, that God greatly used him to mightily bless Israel, that Saul himself at one time rejoiced over him, and that David was innocent of any wrong doing, Jonathan pleaded with his father. [Chap. 19:2-5] Saul "repented" of his policy, but unfortunately it was only a temporary feeling of remorse and not true repentance.

Chapter 19, Verse 6:

**And Saul listened to the voice of Jonathan, and Saul vowed, "As the LORD lives, he shall not be put to death." Then Jonathan called David, and Jonathan told him all these words. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence as formerly.**

Until the first threat comes along, Chap 19:8:

**When there was war again, David went out and fought with the Philistines and defeated them with great slaughter, so that they fled before him.**

God doubles and doubles the pressure on Saul as he rebels against God.

Chapter 19:9-10:

**Now there was an evil spirit from the LORD on Saul as he was sitting in his house with his spear in his hand, and David was playing the harp with his hand. And Saul tried to pin David to the wall with the spear, but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, so that he struck the spear into the wall. And David fled and escaped that night.**

That was the last time David reported to Saul. He now knew Saul was irrevocably committed to killing him. He had only returned at Jonathan's request, but now it was impossible. Saul was so committed to the destruction of David that he made plans openly. That night he sent messengers to the house of David, intending to kill him in the morning. Meanwhile, Michal, who loved David even more than her father, spoke to him, "If you do not save your life tonight, tomorrow you will be put to death." [Somehow she must have gotten the message from her father.] She lowered David over the wall, and he fled. In his place she put her teraphim, her household god, probably a fertility idol used to insure lots of children. [Saul's family had apparently kept some of their idols.] She wrapped its head in a goat hair shawl and covered its face to keep out the night air, as they did in the ancient east. She also padded the bed. In the morning when the servants came to take David, they discovered the teraphim instead. Then when Saul confronted Michal about her treachery, she lied to him saying, "If I had not let him go, he would have killed me." [Chapter 19:11-17]

When Saul was told David had fled to Samuel at Ramah, he immediately sent messengers in pursuit. But when these messengers came upon Samuel presiding over a company of prophets who were prophesying, the Spirit of

God came upon them, and they also prophesied. Three times Saul sent messengers, and three times they prophesied. Scripture does not tell us what they prophesied. I personally believe, however, that because God sincerely wanted Saul to get a message, Saul heard out of the mouths of his own messengers that David was God's anointed. As a result, Saul would know, without a doubt, that he was defying God, as is the case in Romans 1:32. [Chapter 19:18-21]

Did Saul repent? No. He was so determined to kill David, that he himself set out after him. Along the way, though, even before he got to Ramah, the Spirit of God came upon him, and he began to prophesy.

Verse 23:

**And he proceeded there to Naioth in Ramah;** [Naioth means "dwelling." It is probably a living compound of prophets, the school of the prophets] **and the Spirit of God came upon him [Saul] also, so that he went along prophesying continually until he came to Naioth in Ramah.**

Saul was caught on the road by the Spirit of God [somewhat similar to the apostle Paul a thousand years later on his way to Damascus, Acts 9:1-9], and he prophesied all the way to Ramah. Verse 24:

**And he also stripped off his clothes** [literally; his upper garments], **and he too prophesied before Samuel and lay down naked all that day and all that night.** [In the Hebrew this is not something that happened to the messengers. It only happened to Saul. God gives him a double dose of being Spirit filled again.] **Therefore they say, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"**

Does that sound familiar? In our very first lesson, [Chapter 10: 9-12] when God first chose Saul to be king of Israel, he filled him with His Spirit, and Saul prophesied. Saul was not a son of prophets nor was he part of the school of prophets. He was an outsider. To see Saul, son of Kish, prophesying, caused quite a stir. It was proof from God to Saul and to Israel that, "You are my anointed to rule Israel." Now, after many years, the Spirit of God again filled Saul, and Saul prophesied. It re-established this saying, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

Do you see the grace of God? God had done everything humanly possible, Godly possible, to bring Saul to repentance. He had even given him a very intense experience of what he once had. But the one thing he did not do was coerce Saul's will. A true lover never coerces the will of his beloved, and God loved Saul. The prophesying went on for a day and a night. Saul was probably prophesying his own downfall, but he could not change. What was once proof that he was God's anointed was now proof that he was God's rejected. Before, when Saul chose not to obey God, his mind could still make a trial. But now he had a trialess mind, a mind that could not choose. His only thought was, "the throne for me and the lineage for my family." In spite of God's gift of some twenty-four hours of a Spirit filled life again, Saul could not change. "Because they refused the love of the truth, God gave them over to error that they might believe what was false." Saul had not lost his God-given gift of eternal life, but he had certainly destroyed his life here because of his consistent rejection of God's known will for him.

Do not trifle with God. Even if you are his anointed, do not trifle with God. I have, unfortunately, heard many stories of godly men with tremendous ministries who have destroyed their lives and their ministries. Do not ever presume on God. I do not care how he is blessing your ministry. I can name people whose books you have in your library who no longer have a ministry because they did not take God at his word. Do not ever, ever presume on God.

**Prayer:**

Father, we thank you so much that you are a God that loves us enough to really hurt us if you have to to get our attention, that you are a God who will even take us home if you have to in order that we will not destroy your work down here. But, God, all the way along the line, before that ever happens, you give us warning, after warning, after warning because you really do not want us to have to go home "before our time." You really do not want us to stand before you only, "saved as

though by fire." You want us to stand before you and hear, "Well done thou good and faithful servant." Father, we want to be mindful that Saul started out loving you, but Saul loved Saul more, more than you and eventually Saul was destroyed. You did not love Saul any less than us. You play no favorites. So, Father, let us be mindful of the high and holy calling and the tremendous responsibility of being sons of the living God. So let us walk softly before you and take heed lest we fall, and thank you so much for your love for us. In Jesus Name we pray. Amen.

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## Chapter Seven

### David Pursued by Saul

#### I Samuel 18, 19, 20

Last week we looked at the relationship between Saul and David and saw Romans 1:18-32 played out in the life of a carnal man. This week we will view the relationship between Jonathan and David and see Romans 1:18-32 played out in the life of a righteous man.

There is a progression in Romans 1:18-32 that, depending upon the choices made, leads either to the righteousness of God or the wrath of God. Last week we saw Saul progressively deteriorate as he made one choice after another in defiance of the known will of God. We saw him progress through three stages of deterioration: from an "impulsive" stage, [Romans 1:24] where he was gripped by his impulses and emotions, to a "compulsive" stage [Romans 1:26] where he made deliberate, willful, knowingly evil choices and finally to a "consumed" stage, a trialess mind, [Romans 1:28] where he could no longer tell truth from error.

How tragic! Originally Saul loved David "greatly." He even chose him as Aide-de-Camp. But, as David increased in popularity, Saul became jealous and suspicious. Then, as God continued to bless him, Saul actually came to fear David. Finally, when Saul became obsessed with maintaining his throne and passing it on, God gave him over to a trialess mind. He could no longer tell truth from error, and he openly ordered David killed. How sad! God had offered Saul the kingdom and a royal line, but Saul, by his choices, set himself, not only against David, but also against Yahweh.

II Thessalonians, Chapter 2, tells us that judgment of this kind will occur in the last days. Because the world refuses the love of the truth, God gives them over to "the delusion," the anti-Christ, that they might believe the lie because they rejected the truth. God gives us our choices if we insist on having them.

If you have ever made a snowball, you know it begins small enough to hold in your hand. But, let it roll down a hill, and it gathers more and more mass and with more and more mass comes more and more inertia, until, at the bottom of the hill, you no longer have any control of it. Well, along with the evil snowball we have just seen in Saul, there is a snowball on the other side of the hill, a good snowball. It follows the same exact pattern. Romans 6 talks about this. In verses 1-14, it looks at whether a Christian can live, settle down and make his home, in sin? [present, habitual tense] The answer is no! He has died to sin. Well then, can a Christian, just once in awhile, make a deliberate choice to have a fling at sinning because he has been good for so long? God says no! [Romans 6:15ff] Why? Because there is a process involved, and that process reacts the same whether dealing with good or bad choices. Whatever we choose to obey becomes our master. See: Romans 6:15-19.

Verse 15:

**What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be!** [This is a different tense. These are little acts of sin, deliberate, willful little choices, not a lifestyle of sin. Can we choose

to do intermittent acts of sin? He says, "May it never be." **Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, [such as to lustful thoughts] you are [it is not an issue anymore] slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, [Have you ever noticed that sin never satisfies. It only gratifies. It takes more and more to get less and less. So, as you present the members of your body to sin for lawlessness, it takes more and more lawlessness to get the same thrill you used to get.] so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification.**

Now let's look at Jonathan's relationship to David during the same time frame as we looked at Saul's relationship to David. We will see the same process, but opposite results. Jonathan begins with emotion just like Saul, and let me say there is nothing wrong with emotions if godly directed. We will look at 1 Samuel, Chapter 18, verses 1-4 but this time with Jonathan in mind.

Jonathan followed along with his father as Saul talked to this young man who had just killed Goliath. Saul had been checking David's genealogy to see if he measured up as a son-in-law. Saul had made this promise, you recall, that whoever conquered Goliath would be rich, would be given Saul's daughter in marriage, would have his house set free in Israel, would have no more taxes and no more conscription. Well, David had conquered Goliath, but he was also a shepherd boy. Saul quizzed Abner, his general, concerning David's lineage and found he was a nothing. So he failed to keep his promise and denied David his daughter. During this discussion, apparently between the last part of Chapter 17 and the first part of Chapter 18, Jonathan listened, but his reaction to David's lineage was completely contrary to Saul's. He was drawn to David. I do not believe it was just by the Spirit of God, because they both were godly men. Nor do I believe it was because they were alike, as many of the commentators do. I think they were opposites. I believe Jonathan was a very compassionate, loving man. He had all the things that David had never had, and he longed to share them with David.

1 Samuel, Chapter 18, verse 1:

**Now it came about when he [David] had finished speaking to Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as himself. And Saul took him that day and did not let him return to his father's house. Then Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his armor, including his sword and his bow and his belt [the whole ball of wax].**

I mentioned that, upon hearing David's story, Jonathan had exactly the opposite reaction from Saul. Jonathan reacted with righteous emotions; Saul with selfish emotions. It is worth noting that Saul and Jonathan had similar backgrounds. Saul was the son of Kish, a very wealthy and powerful man. He had all the security that comes with wealth. His name meant "prayed for" or "desired," so, along with the security of wealth and power, he had the love of a father who really wanted him. He also had the security of a very religious father. Saul was "gifted" by God, a "choice" man. [The word literally means "excellent."] He was gifted by God with height, the tallest in Israel, and with good looks, the most handsome in Israel. All his life he had been naturally accepted. Wherever he went he was the most handsome, the biggest, the most muscular, the richest. He was fully accepted, a natural leader. His self-worth, his self-esteem, was very secure. The calamity was that he let it turn into pride. He let it become perverted.

Jonathan, a product of Saul, had a similar background. His name meant "YHWH given," indicating Saul saw him as a gift from God. Jonathan had an undying love for his father, so Saul must have been a good father. Jonathan also had a very secure background, a very wealthy background, a godly background, and he was loved by the people. [Remember in Chapter 14 when Saul made that rash oath that no one was to eat food until the Philistines had been slain, and Saul was going to kill Jonathan because he had broken that oath, all the people refused to allow that.] Jonathan was a very well liked, gifted, natural leader, and a loving godly person, secure in his home life.

There he stood with good self-worth and good self-esteem, a man of God. He loved his neighbor as he loved himself.

As Christians we can not love our neighbor unless we have a proper godly love for ourselves. I stress "godly." We need to understand who we are in the sight of God, not in ourselves. We were chosen by God before the foundation of the world. We are His elect. We are the dwelling place of our God, the sanctuary [actually the Holy of Holies], of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. We are adult sons in the household of God, by the gift of adoption, the gift of son placing. It means taking into your home someone who is not yours by natural birth. It also means declaring them an adult son. By the declaration of God, we are adult sons in his household. During World War II I was made an officer and a gentleman by an Act of Congress, a fiat declaration of Congress. Likewise, by fiat declaration of God, we are his adult sons. By the grace of God, we have been given this self-worth. We are extraordinary! Now, we are extraordinary, by grace not merit, but we are extraordinary!

So Jonathan, a godly man, secure in self-worth and self-esteem, saw this poor shepherd boy and heard his story. Also, he had undoubtedly heard of Eliab's scathing remarks and how David was treated when he showed up in camp, "Eliab's anger burned against David and he said, 'Why have you come down? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your insolence and the wickedness of your heart.'" Mistreatment of this type had been David's lifestyle. He responded like a whipped cur, "What have I done. I only asked a question?" David knew, socially speaking, he had nothing to offer Saul. His mother had probably been previously married to Nahash, an Ammonite, a Moloch worshipper, an anathema in Israel. He was possibly illegitimate; one of the Psalms implies that. He was not even accepted by his parents; another of the Psalms implies that. He had seven half-brothers and two half-sisters; none of his brothers were friendly to him. He was all alone. He had never had anything that Jonathan had had. I think Jonathan was just drawn to this young man as an older brother would be. He wanted to help him grow up to be a man of God.

There is emotion here too, but it is godly emotion. Saul loved David for what David could do for Saul, but Jonathan loved David for what Jonathan could do for David. So right away we see contrasting loves. Saul refused to accept David into his family. But Jonathan accepted him completely. Saul dishonored David publicly. Jonathan now honored him publicly. He stripped off his regal cloak [David was probably wearing goatskin], and gave it to him, along with his armor, his sword, his bow and his belt. He identified himself completely with David. Out of his riches, Jonathan equipped David in a glorious manner so he would not have to be ashamed in the court of Saul. Saul once loaned his armor to David, too, you remember, but it was so David would fight in his stead. Jonathan gave his gear to David when it did not matter. Goliath was already defeated.

I often wondered why Jonathan himself did not fight Goliath, but, after looking at his relationship with his father, I believe he was determined to see his father carry out the duties God had called him to. Saul was the champion of Israel. Jonathan wanted him, trusting in the Spirit of God, to do what he had been called to do. He would not fight Saul's battle for him.

So, Jonathan's soul was knit to the soul of David and David's soul to the soul of Jonathan. Finally, David had total, unconditional, unqualified acceptance, an older brother, a flesh and blood somebody, who loved him. He began to get some concept of what it meant to be totally accepted. Jonathan was going to be God's instrument to build David into a man after God's own heart, and to give David some concept of how God loved him. A godly love always elicits a godly response of love, and David, now, began to love responsively to Jonathan. Up to now he had only had a love affair with God. Growing up he had had to fight for everything. He was a feisty little fellow, cruel and vicious. We will see that. But now instead of depraved emotions, as before, we begin to see godly emotions.

Saul had depraved emotions. Jonathan had godly emotions. Next, Saul made willful deliberate evil choices and ended up locked into compulsion. Jonathan made willful deliberate righteous choices and ended up more and more committed to David and more and more in a position from which he could not retreat. Saul went from the impulsive to the compulsive. Jonathan went from emotions to a commitment. He had to make a choice between his father and his friend, and he made that choice. Interesting enough, he did not in any way play down, put down,

leave or become a traitor to his father. Instead, he tried every way possible to help Saul become the man God wanted him to be.

Going on to Chapter 19, we will look at the first 7 verses. Here is the second step in the contrast between Saul's and Jonathan's relationship with David. This is one of the best examples in the whole of Scripture of what I would call godly civil disobedience.

I saw numerous instances of "civil disobedience" at Stanford. They were supposedly done in the name of society, or progress, or freedom, but were actually a purely selfish desire to shake a fist at authority. With few exceptions there was absolutely nothing godly about them. They were pure anarchy. Godly civil disobedience does have a place, however, and we will look at it here. It was done by Jonathan, and you will see two attitudes, both redemptive, that mark godly disobedience. One is an attempt to redeem the person being sinned against. The other is an attempt to redeem the person sinning. If those two marks are lacking in any civil disobedience, it is not godly civil disobedience; it is ungodly. Look at Chapter 19, verses 1-7:

**Now Saul told Jonathan his son and all his servants to put David to death.** [Literally, Saul intended to put David to death.] **But Jonathan, Saul's son, greatly delighted in David. So Jonathan told David saying, "Saul my father is seeking to put you to death. Now therefore, please be on guard in the morning, and stay in a secret place and hide yourself. And I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where you are, and I will speak with my father about you; if I find out anything, then I shall tell you." Then Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father, and said to him, "Do not let the king sin against his servant David, since he has not sinned against you, and since his deeds have been very beneficial to you. For he took his life in his hand and struck the Philistine, and the Lord [Yahweh] brought about a great deliverance for all Israel; you saw it and rejoiced. Why then will you sin against innocent blood, by putting David to death without a cause?" And Saul listened to the voice of Jonathan, and Saul vowed, "As the Lord lives, he shall not be put to death." Then Jonathan called David, and Jonathan told him all these words. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence as formerly.**

Saul's policy now was to kill David. He told Jonathan and all of his courtiers, "This is the policy from now on. This is my intention." In light of this unrighteous policy, Jonathan made a choice. He defied the policy of the powers that be, his father. But notice how he defied this ungodly policy. First, he tried to save the one who had been sinned against, David. Second, he put his own life on the line. He did not randomly put a pipe bomb in a building. Third, he tried to save Saul from committing an unrighteous act.

Romans 13 clearly teaches that the powers that be are ordained of God, and you violate them at your own risk. Romans 13 was written when Nero was on the throne in Rome. Nero was a homosexual, a mad man, a vicious killer. He was known to cover Christians with pitch and burn them to light his banquets. He tossed Christians, along with their children, to hungry lions. The tragedy of it all was that, at the beginning of his reign, there was a golden age. He had two very brilliant advisors, and, as long as he listened to them, he was an outstanding ruler. Sadly, he traveled the same path as Saul [Romans 1:18-32] and ended his days a tyrant, utterly insane. Paul pointed out, however, that the government of Rome [Nero's] was ordained of God and you disobeyed it at your own risk. Nero had expanded the cult of Emperor worship and demanded that everyone say, "Nero is Lord." He was the personification of Rome. He was called "Lord" in the same way we salute the flag of the United States. When Christians would not call him Lord, it was godly civil disobedience, but it was also treason. Thousands of Christians went to prison, or paid with their lives, for their refusal, but they were up front with their disobedience, and they paid the penalty. Christ opposed the civil authorities and paid with his life. He did not hide. He did not behave as the Zealots who hit and ran [Simeon the Canaanite, one of Jesus' disciples, was previously a Zealot. They incited the revolt that ended in the Roman siege and sacking of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.]

So we see here that Jonathan took a deliberate, willful, open stand against his father, publicly declaring his opposition, and in so doing, put his life on the line, but he did it as an appeal for his father to make a godly reversal of his policy. Jonathan wanted to save not only David but also Saul. He pointed out that Saul was sinning against

innocent blood. Also, since Yahweh had greatly blessed David, Saul was sinning against Yahweh too. Even Saul himself had rejoiced in the victories of David. There was no occasion whatsoever for Saul to adhere to his policy. We do need to remember, however, that Saul had periods of madness at this time, so that could have played a part in his conduct.

What was the result of Jonathan's godly civil disobedience? He did save Saul, be it only temporarily, but for awhile Saul did repent and did have remorse. He did see his position as wrong, and did change his mind. How about David? He went back to court, back to the palace. Jonathan was dealing with two men, one righteous and one unrighteous, trying to bring them both to a position of righteousness. He accomplished that. It was very risky, too, since Saul was in that stage where he was dreading David.

Notice, by making godly choices himself, Jonathan helped others make godly choices. By standing up to Saul, he helped Saul make the godly choice. The tragedy is that Saul soon felt threatened again and locked himself into a position from which he could no longer retreat. So in chapter 20, Jonathan was faced with a second choice. Saul began his death threats again, began trying to kill David. You remember, he tried to have him ambushed at his house, but David escaped. He sent messengers after him, but they prophesied. He was irrevocably committed to having David killed. So, Jonathan had to make a second decision. He had to make a righteous choice against his own father, to deliberately choose to, in a sense, become his father's enemy. That was what he did.

Chapter 20, verse 1:

**Then David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came [secretly] and said to Jonathan, "What have I done? What is my iniquity? And what is my sin before your father, that he is seeking my life?" And he said to him, "Far from it, you shall not die. Behold, my father does nothing either great or small without disclosing it to me. So why should my father hide this thing from me? It is not so!" Yet David vowed again, saying, "Your father knows well that I have found favor in your sight, and he has said, 'Do not let Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved.' But truly as the Lord lives and as your soul lives, there is hardly a step between me and death."**

We have been watching Jonathan make one righteous choice after another. Let us look at the results in the lives of the three men involved. First, Jonathan. What effect have these choices had on Jonathan so far? The more he chooses righteously, the more he reaches a settled condition of loving trust, rather than suspicious dread. He has a loving trust of anybody. Even with Saul he always gives him the benefit of the doubt. He really does not think Saul is capable of killing David. To the end he trusts and respects his father. Even in the midst of Saul's madness and unrighteousness, Jonathan is still loyal to him. Notice, also, how he deals with David, the one he knows has been anointed by God to replace him on the throne. He really loves him.

Jonathan is a lesson for us, too. You cannot minister to someone if you do not love them, do not trust them. They will know it. But as you allow the Lord to "snowball" you down the righteous side of the hill, he will let you love your enemies, and this is what will win them. A person, particularly an unbeliever, knows if you are truly loving. It does no good to quote platitudes and Scripture and try to be loving, if you are not. The person you are trying to minister to will spot your hypocrisy at once. Jonathan became truly loving and trusting.

Second, what effect did Jonathan and his righteousness have on David's attitude? David was dealing here with the eldest son, the heir apparent to Saul's throne. Since David had already been anointed king of Israel and was, therefore, a threat to Jonathan's throne, they should have been enemies. But when Saul was trying to kill David to whom did David flee? To the person he should have feared the most; the man whose throne he was anointed to claim. And yet he trusted him with his life and loved him like a brother.

And lastly, what about Saul's attitude toward Jonathan? Was Saul threatened by Jonathan? Even though he knew Jonathan would confer with David, he did not consider Jonathan an enemy or a traitor. He still trusted him, and he still loved him. And, to spare Jonathan grief, he even attempted to keep from him his own determination to kill David. Jonathan had an intriguing rapport with both sides---two enemies--- simply because he was an unselfish,

loving person.

How did Jonathan get the kind of attitude he had? What let him love Saul the way Saul was at this time? How can you get this loving attitude toward an enemy? Yes, it is from God, but how do you acquire it in your own life? You choose righteousness. You choose righteousness for righteousness sake no matter the cost. That is what our Lord did.

I can remember when my father, who was a Christian, was in business in Hollywood and worked with a lot of Jewish clients who were very astute businessmen. When these Jewish businessmen were dealing with each other, they did not want a Jewish broker between them because they thought a Jewish broker just might happen to keep a little something for himself, even though he was a brother. There was something about the life of Jesus Christ in my father that said, "This fellow is safe. We want him in the middle." So, for a long long time, many of dad's clients were big Jewish merchants or big chain store owners, for whom he played middleman, because his life spoke of the righteousness of God. I am sure he had lots of struggles in his Christian life. I look back and realize how imperfect he was as a Christian, as I see how imperfect I am, but, interestingly enough, there was an aroma about my father that said to those Jews, "We can trust this man." They would give him carte blanche to buy property, and they always came through with the money.

We sometimes have a nasty attitude toward Jewish businessmen. Yes, these were shrewd businessmen, but I think God gave the Jews a special gift for business so they could stay alive during the centuries of anti-semitism. My father worked with them for years in Hollywood, and he really loved them. They always had the money. They always kept their word. They always paid their debts. They never welsed. He thought the world of them. He said, "Yes, when they have money, they have greater "visibility." They have longer cars, bigger houses, flashier clothes." But think, if, in the name of Jesus Christ, you had been persecuted and hounded for 2,000 years, forced to wear funny clothes, live in ghettos and get the short end of the stick and then you made it big in Hollywood. [And make no mistake, the Jews were big in Hollywood. That was not Gentile country down there; Gentiles worked for the Jews. I grew up down there, I know.] Well, you just might buy a big Cadillac too. So would I. You do not categorize people by their race. You categorize them by their love and their actions, or sadly in the case of King Saul, by their lack of love.

### **Prayer:**

Father, we thank you so much for the fact the you love us. Because you first loved us, we respond in love, and, Father, we just thank you so much for the fact that you are committed to us, committed to make us men of God, to teach us how to love our enemies, to teach us to be righteous men and to make righteous choices, to be firm in those choices and committed to those choices and thus to snowball down the right side of the hill. And as we continue to make choices righteously before you, it becomes easier and easier to make the next choice as the momentum grows. Father, we thank you so much that in your Word you have made it so plain that that is the way you want us to fly, and as a result of that we will have a righteous life. It may be a short one, as in Jonathan's case, but it will be one that will be glorifying to you and it will reach out to people that are unloving, that are enemies and it will give them a sense of trust and rest in the person of Jesus Christ as they see him in us. Father, help us to be that kind of person. Help us to be your manifestation in an ungodly world. Thank you, Father, in Jesus Name. Amen.

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## **Chapter 8**

### **David Protected by Jonathan - I**



## 1 Samuel 20

Last week we began a look at Jonathan and David. Today we will continue to examine their relationship. Our picture of Saul and David showed us Saul, a man in the flesh, destroying himself. Although I am convinced Saul was a believer, we saw him follow the pattern of Romans 1:18-32, which is the wrath of God on those who turn to their own way in deliberate disobedience.

Saul began, first, impulsively controlled by his emotions, but then he became a victim of those emotions. This was the "impulsive" stage. Next, he began making deliberately willful, evil choices and became "compulsive." At this stage, he was driven by his emotions and could no longer really make a choice. Lastly, he reached the stage where God gave him over to a "trialless mind," one that could no longer make a trial, a reprobate mind. In direct defiance of God, he continued to reject the truth that God had torn the kingdom from him and had given it to David, so he was given over to a trialless mind.

In Romans 6:15-23, however, we see there is another side to the coin. There is also a pathway which leads to righteousness. Saul had a choice, a choice to be slave to either sin or righteousness. He chose sin. Now let us see what Jonathan chooses.

In the beginning, he also was controlled by his emotions, in a sense. He fell in love with David, but for him it was a godly love, a love of self-giving. It knit together the souls of Jonathan and David. From there he, too, progressed to the choosing stage. He chose to side with David against Saul, but he did it to preserve David's life, and also to redeem his father. He was making willful, deliberate choices and getting more and more locked into righteousness, into following God's man, David, who would replace him on the throne. Both Saul and Jonathan were losing their kingship. Saul, fought God to the last ditch to keep his. Jonathan, on the other hand, chose deliberately to give himself over to the man God had sent to replace him. So he was making a choice contrary to his temporal feelings, looking to the eternal issue.

We saw in our last lesson, Chapter 19, that Jonathan made a godly choice, using godly tactics and godly methodology, in committing civil disobedience. It was civil disobedience because Saul, who was the authority, stated to Jonathan and all his courtiers that he intended to kill David. Jonathan, however, chose to disobey his father.

Remember there are two things that mark godly civil disobedience, that always mark it, and that were not present in most of what I saw at Stanford in the 60s. First, the intent to redeem, or save, the person who is being unrighteously persecuted. Second, and just as important, the intent to redeem the persecutor. Jonathan intended not only to save David's life [save the unrighteously persecuted], but also to bring Saul back to a walk with God [redeem the persecutor]. If those two factors are not present, the disobedience is ungodly, for the law is the instrument of God to run the affairs of state, even though, as in Paul's day, a Nero, a madman, may be sitting on the throne.

So Jonathan looked very good in Chapter 19, but Chapter 20 is another matter. His civil disobedience here was ungodly. His desire to save David was godly, but his methodology was ungodly, and you can watch the deterioration of relationships. When he used godly methodology, Jonathan was open and transparent with both David and Saul; he restored the relationship of Saul, David and himself, and everything was in harmony. Admittedly, it only lasted for awhile, but Jonathan's first approach did restore harmony and peace between two opposing factors.

Now let us look at Chapter 20. To put things in context, David had fled to Samuel in Ramah, to Naioth, and Saul had tried to pursue him there, but God intervened. Every time Saul sent a messenger, or messengers, in pursuit of David, God filled them with the Spirit and they prophesied. Finally Saul went himself, but he, too, was filled with the Spirit and prophesied. Thus God prevented him from laying a hand on David. In an attempt to woo Saul back to himself, God made it plain to Saul that he was acting in direct opposition to God.

Chapter 20, Verse 1:

**Then David fled from Naioth ["dwellings" It is probably a compound of prophets in Ramah] in Ramah, and came [undoubtedly secretly] and said to Jonathan, 'What have I done? What is my iniquity? And what is my sin before your father, that he is seeking my life?' And he [Jonathan] said to him, 'Far from it, you shall not die. Behold, my father does nothing either great or small without disclosing it to me. So why should my father hide this thing from me? It is not so!'**

Jonathan has the utter love and trust of his father, and he has utter love and trust for his father. So even though Saul could see Jonathan siding with David, he still loved his son and trusted him enough that he did not want to hurt him. So, again, we see this beautiful relationship between son and father.

Verse 3:

**Yet David vowed again saying, "Your father knows well that I have found favor in your sight, and he has said, 'Do not let Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved.' But truly as the LORD lives and as your soul lives, there is hardly a step between me and death." Then Jonathan said to David, "Whatever you say, I will do for you."**

The tyranny of the urgent! David had said, "...as your soul lives, there is hardly a step between me and death." The emotions of Jonathan took over now and circumvented his reason. He made a very rash promise. "Whatever you say I will do." Because of his love for David and the urgency of the circumstances, and without waiting to see what God would do, Jonathan made this rash vow and opened the way for a little deceit by David.

Verse 5:

**So David said to Jonathan, "Behold, tomorrow is the new moon, and I ought to sit down to eat with the king. But let me go, that I may hide myself in the field until the third evening. If your father misses me at all, then say, 'David earnestly asked leave of me to run to Bethlehem his city, because it is the yearly sacrifice there for the whole family.' If he says, 'It is good,' your servant shall be safe; but if he is very angry, know that he has decided on evil."**

Notice David is totally centered on David. He is not interested in Saul nor does he think about Jonathan. No transparency here. He is only interested in escaping from Saul, and is not above deceit. He is using his friend's emotion to manipulate Saul and to save his own skin. So he deliberately asks Jonathan to lie.

[In those days there was no central location of the Ark, so no permanent place of worship. The Ark had been captured by the Philistines, but, because God visited them with tremendous afflictions, they returned it to Israel. Israel then stored it at Kirjath-jearim, which was about 7 miles west of Jerusalem, but it did not constitute a central place of worship. So, the Israelites celebrated feasts, like the new moon feast, wherever they happened to choose. It was David who finally established Jerusalem as the headquarters of the civil law and the religious worship.]

All loyal Jews were expected to attend the feast of the new moon, and Saul was expecting David to show up. David, however, was afraid to go because he knew Saul had plans for him.

Do you see anyone missing in all this? Nowhere do you hear anything of Yahweh, the God of the Covenant, the God who anointed David king. David knew, from God himself, that he had been anointed, not to be killed by Saul, but to replace Saul on the throne. God told Samuel he was going to tear the kingdom from Saul, and give it to the "neighbor," who was better than Saul. In fact, he had torn it from Saul, and Samuel had anointed David king. So David knew he was king over Israel, and that he was to replace Saul. Please note, however, this kingship was by God's appointment not by David's merit. When David was walking in the flesh, as in this instance, he was no better than Saul for he, like Saul, had taken matters into his own hands, leaving God out of the picture.

It reminds me of that funny little tale in the gospel of Mark where the Lord tells the disciples, "Let's get in the boat and go over to the other side of the Sea of Galilee." They get in the boat and are out in the middle of the water when a fierce gale comes up. The Lord is asleep on the fan-tail, at peace with the world, relaxing in his Father's love. The ship is going up and down. Waves are coming over the side. The disciples take a look at the waves. They take a look at Jesus sacked out on the fan-tail and dash back, "Lord, don't you care if we perish?" What does Jesus do? Does he give them any kind of consolation? No, indeed. He rebukes them for their lack of faith. Why? The Lord had not said, "Let's go out in the middle of the sea and drown." He had said, "Let's go across to the other side." They had taken their minds off Him. He could walk on water. He could still storms. He could stop winds. He could multiply loaves and fishes enough to feed 15,000 to 20,000 people. He was not a victim of creation. He was not a victim of circumstances. He had ordered the disciples onto the sea, but they had taken their minds off Him.

David has done the same thing here. He has forgotten all about his anointing by God. He has one thought in mind, the unholy trinity: "me, myself and I." David has one friend, Jonathan, who loves him like a brother and has made a covenant of brotherhood with him. So he throws himself on Jonathan's mercy and poor Jonathan, in his distress at David's suffering, gets his eyes off the Lord, too. David cinched it when he threw himself on Jonathan's mercy, but remember, circumstances never justify deliberate deceit. David was a man after God's own heart, but David was stepping right out of the will of God. Yes, he might be only a step away from death, but that step was God's step. It was a mile long, and David was not even aware of that.

When David threw himself on Jonathan's mercy, Jonathan became the victim of his own emotions, Chapter 20, verse 8:

**"Therefore deal kindly** [literally the word is "loyally." This is really a sharp thrust] **with your servant,** [How? By being disloyal to your father.] **for you have brought your servant into a covenant of the LORD with you.** [a covenant of brotherhood] **But if there is iniquity in me, put me to death yourself; for why then should you bring me to your father?"** [He throws himself on Jonathan's mercy and says, "If there is anything wrong with me, you kill me, my brother." Of course, this pulls at the heartstrings of Jonathan. So he, too, gets his eyes off the Lord.] **And Jonathan said, "Far be it from you! For if I should indeed learn that evil has been decided by my father to come upon you, then would I not tell you about it?"** [This is probably what sways Jonathan to agree.]

Now, maybe we can say about David, "O.K. here is a fellow who probably has always had to live by his wits. He is the runt of the litter, not accepted by his family, maybe illegitimate, always gotten the short end of the stick and had to fight for everything. So it is not be too unusual for him to fall back on his old pattern of living." But what about Jonathan, does he have to live by his wits? No! He is secure, remember? He is the beloved son, Jonathan, "Yahweh given." He has wealth, power, pomp and circumstance. He is accepted. He is the crown prince, Israel's next king. He has no need to rely on his wits. He falls into this trap because of his love for David. Yes, his love for David makes him vulnerable, but love, without control by God, causes all kinds of trouble. Jonathan, without realizing it, allows his love for David to sway his emotions. As a result, he is disloyal to his father and rationalizes his fleshly behavior, when he, of all people, should know better.

Chapter 20, verse 10:

**Then David said to Jonathan, "Who will tell me if your father answers you harshly?"** [Saul obviously knows that David and Jonathan have a pact. Then how is Jonathan ever going to tell David, if he finds out, without Saul knowing it, again forgetting about God.] **And Jonathan said to David, "Come, and let us go out into the field." So both of them went out to the field.**

Now, Jonathan begins to get a little anxious, and we see the irony of deceit. If you deliberately choose to deceive, you always end up self-deceived. So Jonathan becomes insensitive to the very Lord who will be the one to help him, while at the same time pleading with David to become sensitive to that Lord. There is an interesting little dichotomy here.

I Samuel 20, Verse 12:

**Then Jonathan said to David, "The LORD, the God of Israel, be witness! When I have sounded out my father about this time tomorrow, or the third day, behold, if there is good feeling toward David, shall I not then send to you and make it known to you? If it please my father to do you harm, may the LORD do so to Jonathan and more also, if I do not make it known to you and send you away, that you may go in safety. And may the LORD be with you as He has been with my father. And if I am still alive, will you not show me the lovingkindness of the LORD, that I may not die? And you shall not cut off your lovingkindness from my house forever, not even when the LORD cuts off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth.**

Notice how many times Jonathan has mentioned the LORD in this passage. He did not say anything about him the last time, but now he temporarily forgets David and focuses his eyes on the Lord. How many times does he mention the Lord, Yahweh, the covenant God? One, two, three, four, five times. He keeps focusing on Yahweh, the God of the covenant, while totalling forgetting the covenant that the God of the covenant made. He is trying to get David to look upon the covenant, while he, himself, is taking his eyes off it. When you begin to deceive, you begin to become self-deceived. What he is trying to accomplish for his friend, he is losing in his own life.

The first thing he points out to David is the Lord, the God of Israel, is the one in charge. "Get your eyes off your circumstances, David, and onto Him." And he points out "May the LORD be with you as He has been with my father." There was a time when Saul had the Spirit of God. He was anointed of God and filled with His Spirit. He was God's man. Now Jonathan's will for David is that he have that same exact experience, since he also has been anointed with God's Spirit.

More than that, he knows, apparently, that David has been anointed king and will in fact be king. Notice, "And if I am still alive, will you not show me the lovingkindness of the LORD, that I may not die? And you shall not cut off your lovingkindness from my house forever, not even when the LORD cuts off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth." He knows in his heart David will be king. He knows, too, that God does not require a vast army to handle Saul. He can handle by few.

Where did he get that concept? Do you remember, in their campaign to restore Israel, the first Israelite victory over the Philistines? How did that victory at Michmash begin? It was Jonathan alone with his armor-bearer, and what did he say to encourage his armor-bearer? "'The Lord is not restrained to save by many or by few.' Even though there are only two of us, let's just go up and take on the Philistines" The army of Saul was at Gibeah and across the valley were the Philistines at Michmash. Jonathan and his armor-bearer, all alone, crossed the valley, stole up a high promontory, and on the flat area up there, took on the Philistines and butchered them. Because of this act of faith, God triggered an earthquake, which terrified the Philistines, and they scattered in disarray. Sudden confusion turned into crushing defeat as the armies of Israel pursued the Philistines to their own land. You will remember, from what we have already studied, that there were only two iron swords in Israel. Saul had one, and Jonathan had the other. The rest of the Israelites fought with iron farming equipment or with wooden weapons. The Philistines discovered the secret of iron smelting and controlled it. They allowed no smiths in Israel to prevent the Israelites from making swords or spears.

Interestingly enough we have a repeat of this battle 3,000 years later. Ray Miller, who is a retired Brigadier-General, likes to study the doctrine of warfare. Here is something he discovered from the history books. This is World War I. The British are in Palestine under General Allenby who was a Bible student and may or may not have been a believer. Let me just read you a little article.

An officer of the British 60th Division serving in Palestine in 1918 tells a story.

"February 13th we took over the Dier Ibu Obeid--Ras es Suffa--Hizme line from the 53rd Division, and on the fourteenth of the same month operation orders were issued for an attack on Jericho with the object of driving the enemy back across the river Jordan. [Michmash and Gibeah are located to the west of Jericho. The British were going

to attack to the east, force the Turks out of Jericho across the Jordan River and use that as a line of defense. This was going to be expensive.] Before the main attack could take place it was necessary to strengthen the line by the capture of a small village, directly to our front, known as Mukhmas or Mickmash. [Exactly the same place] Mickmash was on a high rocky hill. The brigade outpost line was on a chain of hills, too, and between us and the enemy ran a deep valley [This is that same valley that Jonathan crossed] A frontal attack was decided upon; that is, supported by artillery and machine guns, the brigade was to advance down into the valley just before dawn, and take Michmash from the front. [With a frontal assault, there would be a lot of casualties. By the time they started down that hill, the enemy would be shooting down on them. Then they would have to go up a hill, and the enemy would be shooting down on them again. It would be a bloody battle, but they had to take the pass. They had to take this high part to stabilize their line as they crossed to Jericho] All orders were given out, and the troops were getting what rest was possible before zero hour. In his bivouac, [his temporary camp] by the light of a candle, the brigade major was reading his Bible. When the raid was first discussed the name Mickmash had seemed vaguely familiar, although he could not quite place it. Just as he was about to turn in for the night, however, he recollected and thought he would look it up. He found what he was searching for in Samuel I, Chapters 13 and 14: [which we covered awhile back, and here is a quote right out of this chapter] 'And Saul and Jonathan his son, and the people that were present with them, abode in Gibeah of Benjamin: [That is on one side of the valley, the Southern side] but the Philistines encamped in Michmash. . . [on the other side of the valley on the high place] Now it came to pass upon a day that Jonathan, the son of Saul, said unto the young man that bare his armour, 'Come and let us go over to the Philistines' garrison, that is on the other side.' But he told not his father. . .

And the people knew not that Jonathan was gone. And between the passages, by which Jonathan sought to go over unto the Philistines' garrison, there was a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other side: [There were two promontories in this valley] and the name of the one was Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh. The forefront of the one was situate northward over against Michmash, [over on their side] and the other southward over against Gibeah. And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armour, 'Come, and let us go over unto the garrison. . . It may be that the Lord will work for us: for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few.'" [That is how he encouraged the armour bearer to go with him] And the major read on how Jonathan went through the pass, or passage, of Michmash, between Bozez and Seneh, and climbed the hill dragging his armour-bearer with him until they came to a place high up, about 'an half acre of land, which a yoke of oxen might plow'; and the Philistines who were sleeping awoke, thought they were surrounded by the armies of Saul, and fled in disorder, and 'the multitude melted away.' Saul then attacked with his whole army. It was a great a victory for him; his first against the Philistines, and 'so the Lord saved Israel that day, and the battle passed over unto Beth-aven.' The brigade major thought to himself: 'This pass, these two rocky headlands and flat piece of ground are probably still here; [3,000 years later] very little has changed in Palestine throughout the centuries,' and he woke the brigadier. [The General in charge]

Together they read the story over again. Then the general sent out scouts, who came back and reported finding the pass, thinly held by Turks, [You do not expect the enemy to attack straight up a rough promontory] with rocky crags on either side, obviously Bozez and Seneh; whilst in the distance, high up in Mickmash the moonlight was shining on a flat piece of ground just about big enough for a team to plough. [Exactly as the Scriptures said] The general decided then and there to change the plan of attack, and instead of the whole brigade, one infantry company alone advanced at dead of night along the pass of Mickmash. A few Turks met were silently dealt with. We passed between Bozez and Seneh, [the two promontories] climbed the hillside, [exactly where Jonathan pulled up his armour-bearer] and just before dawn, found ourselves on the flat piece of ground.[Where Jonathan slaughtered the Philistines] The Turks who were sleeping awoke, thought they were surrounded by the armies of Allenby and fled in disorder. We killed or captured every Turk that night in Mickmash; so that, after thousands of years, [3,000 years] the tactics of Saul and Jonathan were repeated with success by a British force.

And unbelievers say the Bible is out of date!

The key thing to remember is that Jonathan, along with only one other man, was instrumental in the first victory at this place, and it was accomplished while only one of them had an iron weapon and against an army equipped with iron weapons. Of all the people who knew the ability of God to "deliver with few," Jonathan knew it. So what is his problem right now? His desire to save David is godly, but he is resorting to the flesh. He is not doing something obviously evil or dirty. It is the love he has for his "younger brother," who has never had a break, that has caused him to lose his moorings.

Can you see that "love" is not enough? It matters not how "godly" it appears to be or how self-giving. Jonathan is

deliberately being disloyal to a father whom he loves and respects [and dies for eventually] in order to save David, but he is sinning against Yahweh. Only when love fits the pattern of Scripture is it valid love. Otherwise it is strictly human emotion, no matter how noble. Paul said, even if I give my body to be burned, without the indwelling love of Christ as a motivating force, it is worthless. Here we see an accurate picture of that. It would seem Jonathan should be the last one to be caught this way, but he is. He is now going to add a little deceit of his own.

Verse 18:

**Then Jonathan said to him, "Tomorrow is the new moon, and you will be missed because your seat will be empty. When you have stayed for three days, you shall go down quickly and come to the place where you hid yourself on that eventful day, and you shall remain by the stone Ezel.**

The first time Jonathan pleaded with Saul, [Chapter 19:4-7] he was transparent. He just laid the facts before Saul without trying to manipulate him. He wanted his father to face up to the fact that David had served him properly, had won great victories for him in Yahweh's name, had in no way threatened him, and that Saul had rejoiced in David's victories for the nation of Israel. While Jonathan was confronting his father, David hid in a field waiting to see how Saul responded. When Jonathan was openly transparent and just laid out the facts before his father, Saul responded. He repented, and David went back to the court. Now David is back in the same spot as on that eventful day, probably in the same location. He is leaning by the stone Ezel, which is the sign of demarcation.

Jonathan knew his father was not above using his children to get to David. He had already used Michal, David's wife. Being a child of Saul, Jonathan now becomes a suspicious son who no longer trusts and loves his father with unqualified acceptance and unconditional love. He figures, "If Father did that to Michal and Merab [Jonathan's sisters], he might use me too, so I need to work out a plan to deceive him." That is exactly what he does here.

Verse 20:

**"And I will shoot three arrows to the side, as though I shot at a target. And behold, I will send the lad, saying, 'Go, find the arrows.' If I specifically say to the lad, 'Behold, the arrows are on this side of you, get them,' then come; for there is safety for you and no harm, as the LORD lives. But if I say to the youth, 'Behold, the arrows are beyond you,' go, for the LORD has sent you away. As for the agreement of which you and I have spoken, behold, the LORD is between you and me forever."**

"How do I make sure the little lad is not Saul's spy? I will deceive him too."

From verse 22, what does Jonathan recognize even during this deceit? If David has to go, he has to go because the LORD wants him to go. And then, verse 23, how sure is Jonathan that David will be king? Remember the agreement he made with David? "That the LORD is between you and me forever." He recognizes David will be king because God has anointed David king, and nobody can stop God. He wants that agreement to last forever, not just for himself but for his house.

Do you see what self-deception does? You can feel you are correct. You can have the best intentions in the world, and you can still be sinning. The results are always the same. No matter how godly your intentions, if you use the flesh to make those godly intentions work, you will always reap the flesh.

Verse 24:

**So David hid in the field; and when the new moon came, the king sat down to eat food. And the king sat on his seat as usual, the seat by the wall [The king sat against the wall so he could see everyone in front of him]; then Jonathan rose up and Abner sat down by Saul's side, but David's**

**place was empty.**

Jonathan, as the crown prince, was seated at the right hand of his father, who was seated as king of Israel. Saul held his spear in his hand, the scepter of a warrior king. When he slept, we will see later, the scepter was at the back of his head. This scepter marked the king. It marked his right to reign. So there he sat spear in hand. Remember, Saul was a seasoned warrior. He could throw a spear with great accuracy, and but for the hand of God, would already have speared David twice. Jonathan knew what a fighter his dad was. So what did he do? He rose from the place of honor, and gave it to Abner, the general. What do you think God was trying to tell Jonathan?

Have you ever noticed that when you begin to play little games of deceit you begin to feel uneasy, not quite right about things? Up to now Saul and Jonathan have been side-by-side, very close, and Jonathan has had total freedom and trust in his father. He faced right up to Saul about the plan to destroy David, even though Saul was given over to violent rages that he could not control. As long as Jonathan was transparent, he felt perfect peace and security with his dad. But now he feels guilty and uneasy. So he probably reasoned in his mind, "Daddy has a spear, and where I am sitting, one thrust and I've had it." So, he gets up and gives the place of honor to Abner. "If daddy gets angry let Abner get skewered," [a little more deceit], and this is a godly man. We will see shortly that Jonathan's reasoning was absolutely correct, but he overlooked one factor: God!

Do you notice the steps downward? Jonathan did not start out this way. He started out with a love affair, but now he is ready to sacrifice Abner to protect himself. See the pattern?

It is reminiscent of Abram. He started at Ur of the Chaldeans, went on to Haran and then down through the land of Canaan. As he went through Canaan, in the valley, he saw vicious tribe after vicious tribe living in fortified cities and, in the highlands, wandering Bedouin tribes who were also vicious. They were all bigger and tougher than Abram.

When he left Haran to go into Canaan, in obedience to God, Abram played a little game with his wife Sarai. Although middle-aged, she was a beautiful woman. She had had no children; she had not lost her figure; she was a Semite, and married Semite women wore no veils. Since beautiful women, who were foreigners, had no rights, Abram was afraid that as they went through Canaan someone would kill him to get his wife. There was a peculiar moral code in those days. A man could take any number of unmarried women, but he could not touch married women, so what he did was eliminate the husband. The woman became unmarried and thus fair game. Even King David followed that pattern in a slightly different manner.

**So, Abram told Sarai, "We will be going through vicious country, and since you are a very beautiful woman, they are going to want you. Because I am your husband, they will kill me to get you. So do me a favor and say you are my sister. It's only half a lie. We did have the same father, just a different mother. So, for my sake, just say that you are my sister."**

Now, he went all the way down through Canaan and never once used this deceit. He felt totally secure in this vicious land because he was where God wanted him. God met him and said, "This is the land I gave you." Abram built an altar to God and got very religious.

But then came a famine. The winds off the Mediterranean did not blow and Abram had a lot of livestock and a large household. So, instead of trusting Yahweh to take care of him in the land that Yahweh had just given him, he followed the Canaanites right down to Egypt to buy grain. As soon as he left the Negev, the south country, and got close to Egypt, he told Sarai, "Remember that little deal we made, start now. I am your brother, and you are my sister." Right there he should have been tipped off that he was not where God wanted him.

Then the very thing he feared happened. Pharaoh's courtiers saw this gorgeous Semite, and the Semite woman said, "I am his sister," and the Semite man said, "I am her brother." In Pharaoh's land Pharaoh could have all the unmarried women he wanted, so he took Sarai for his wife. Now Abram was his brother-in-law, so Pharaoh gave him cattle, sheep, oxen, camels, male and female servants, and Abram was forced to take them all, which sealed

Sarai's fate. You do not make a fool out of an oriental despot in the land in which he is the oriental despot.

This is what is happening here. Godly Jonathan is putting Abner in jeopardy to save his own skin, just as Abram did with Sarai, his wife.

Verse 26:

**Nevertheless Saul did not speak anything that day, for he thought, "It is an accident, he is not clean, [This is a religious festival, and he apparently thought David was ceremonially unclean so he could not come to eat] surely he is not clean." And it came about the next day, the second day of the new moon, that David's place was empty; so Saul said to Jonathan his son, "Why has the son of Jesse not come to the meal, either yesterday or today?" Jonathan then answered Saul, "David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Bethlehem, [notice what Saul calls David in contrast to what Jonathan calls him? The name David means, "Well beloved," but Saul now hates him. Jesse is a nothing in Israel. He has nothing in the way of possessions. He has no lineage. He is married to a woman who was probably previously married to an Ammonite. He has no money, no status, nothing! So we see the old put down, "son of Jesse." Jonathan calls him "David" because he loves him. But here comes the lie] for he said, 'Please let me go, since our family has a sacrifice in the city, and my brother has commanded me to attend. And now, if I have found favor in your sight, please let me get away that I may see my brothers.' For this reason he has not come to the king's table."**

According to Jonathan, David approached Jonathan, the Crown Prince, asked permission and got permission for this journey. Being a godly man though, Jonathan was not a very good liar, and his nervousness apparently gave him away. Saul was no fool. He might be mad, but he was shrewd in his madness. Not only that, but he could read his son like a book. The young man was his oldest son, and had been with him for 40 years. Saul spotted the deception right away. In using deceit to avoid getting killed, all Jonathan did was make his father angry.

Verse 30:

**Then Saul's anger burned against Jonathan [one of those uncontrollable rages] and he said to him, "You son of a perverse, rebellious woman! Do I not know that you are choosing the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of your mother's nakedness? [This is a gross insult. To an oriental this is worse than a slap in the face. Saul is telling Jonathan right in front of the court, "You are not acting like the son of Saul, so you are illegitimate. You are a bastard. Your mother was a perverse rebellious woman and you were not born of me, you were born of her and someone else." Of course, it was not true, but it was a vicious slap in the face. Saul's love turned into hatred here.] For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, neither you nor your kingdom will be established. Therefore now, send and bring him to me, for he must surely die."**

You can see why Saul wants to kill David. He wants to establish a line of hereditary. At this time, Israel is made up of twelve autonomous tribes held together by a very loose alliance. The only unifying force is David, and Saul is mad enough to destroy that unifying force in order to establish his line on the throne.

What had God told Saul after his first disobedience? "You won't have a line. Your line will not succeed to the throne." Saul was allowed to continue to reign, but his line was cut off. After Saul's second disobedience, God said, "Now, even the throne is torn from you." Saul knew this, but he was determined to keep the throne and establish an inherited line even if he had to kill God's anointed to do so.

Looking at Jonathan, do you see where deceit has brought him? In Chapter 20, Verse 31 Saul said to him, "Therefore now, send and bring him [David] to me, for he must surely die." We are admonished to obey the powers that be because they are ordained of God. Jonathan has placed himself in a position where he has to openly and willfully rebel against the authority of his father, against the authority of the powers ordained of God. We will see what effect this has on his father next week.

As we continue our study of Jonathan next week, you will see a beautiful redemption of him after his downward



slide.

**Prayer:**

Father, we thank you so much that even though we are foolish at times and we try to manipulate you and try to do things in our own strength and we forget all about the past experiences where you have come through every time and produced exactly what you said you would produce in your promises, we still try to play God. We still try to do things in our own strength. We still do not listen to you. We still do not seek your will. We still try to manipulate people in the name of Jesus Christ. Father, help us to realize that this is sin. I do not care what the intentions are; I do not care how godly the intentions are, it is sin to manipulate, to be deceitful. Father, teach us to be open and transparent as you yourself are. We ask this in Jesus name. Amen.

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## Chapter Nine

### David Protected by Jonathan - II

#### 1 Samuel 20 :32-42

We are looking at the contrast of the relationship between Jonathan and David and the relationship between Saul and David; Jonathan, a man after the Spirit; Saul, a man after the flesh. Last week we finished in I Samuel chapter 20, roughly about verse 32. We saw Saul run the gamut downward that you see in Romans 1:18-32. He began with a suspicion and fear of David, the "impulsive" stage. Then, as he began to make bad choices, he developed a dread of David and entered the "compulsive" stage where he was no longer in the saddle. Finally, with more bad choices, he reached what I call the "consumed" stage. He knew God had appointed David to be King and David's line to become the reigning line of Israel, but Saul did not care. He could not care. He was literally driven to oppose God and became David's enemy "continually." He had reached the stage expressed in verse 32, of Chapter 1 of Romans, "although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them." They become perniciously evil. The tragedy of Saul was that of a godly man gone wrong. He would go to be with the Lord when he died, but all the way to his death he fought God and ultimately God had him killed.

On the other hand we have seen Jonathan's handling of the same situation, the contrasting side of the "snowball rolling down the hill." Saul's loss of his kingdom and his line was also a loss for Jonathan, the crown prince. But even though he and his family would not reign in Israel, Jonathan fell in love with his rival David. Their souls were knit together. David was rejected by Saul but accepted by Jonathan, and rather than fear David or have suspicions about him, Jonathan loved him with very godly emotions. He took off his own armor, his own cloak and his own weapons and garbed his rival as a prince of Israel. He was willing to accept God's ruling. He took his rival David and made him a prince.

Next step was a righteous choice to intercede for David with Saul on a very open, honest, godly basis, and it turned Saul around. True, only temporarily, but it did turn Saul around so that Saul and Jonathan and David were all at peace with one another.

Then Jonathan made another choice. The intent was godly, but the method was not. David, with his terror of Saul and his eyes off of YHWH, cast himself on the mercy of Jonathan. The tyranny of the urgent caused Jonathan's emotions to be swayed, and he made a godly choice to preserve David's life. The problem was he used very ungodly methodology. He went along with David's deceit of his father, and he practiced a little deceit of his own. The result was disaster. Your desire does not sanctify your methodology. You may have the world's greatest

desires, but if they are not founded on Scripture, you are in trouble. Because of his choices, that is where we find Jonathan now.

Picking up from last week, Saul has seen right through Jonathan's deception and also through David's deception. He has literally called Jonathan a bastard in front of the whole court. He has greatly insulted him and caused him to "lose face," a grievous humiliation in an Oriental culture. You would think that would generate a deep resentment in Jonathan, but it does not. Jonathan is a very godly man, and he loves his father. He loves him no matter what he is or what he does. He accepts him and loves him as he is. We will see shortly that this has a tremendous effect on David.

We pick up at I Samuel 20, verse 32. Because Saul has become so enraged at the deceit, Jonathan attempts to return to the righteous method by telling Saul, "Let's face up to the facts of life." Instead of becoming angry at the painful insult delivered by Saul, he appeals to Saul's conscience, which had worked before, but Saul is so enraged now that Jonathan's godly method is too late, and it does not work.

Verse 32:

**But Jonathan answered Saul his father and said to him, "Why should he be put to death? What has he done?"** [He is appealing to Saul's conscience again] **Then Saul hurled his spear at him to strike him down; so Jonathan knew that his father had decided to put David to death. Then Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger** [He gets enraged. He has been called a bastard. He has been struck at by his father and for once he gets his eyes off of God. He gets his eyes off his love for his father and acceptance of his father, and he gets mad. The flesh is still the flesh even in Jonathan. He walks out on a holy feast and insults and dishonors his father] **and did not eat food on the second day of the new moon, for he was grieved over David because his father had dishonored him.**

Jonathan, while enraged at his own dishonor, is even more enraged at David's dishonor, which leads to his demeaning his father. Who started this dishonoring process? David! Who was next? Jonathan! David started it by deceiving Saul. Jonathan continued it by going along with David. And then he wondered why he and David were dishonored by Saul. Dishonor breeds dishonor. The moment you get your eyes off of Jesus Christ, [or YHWH of the Old Testament, the same Person] you are just as fleshly as any fleshly man. Your spirituality lasts only as long as Christ is your life. The flesh is totally unconverted.

I had a horrifying experience this week. I was privileged to see myself as I really am. It was a very healthy, but humbling, experience. I have this strange idea that my flesh is getting a little sanctified. But it is not! God drew the veil aside this week and let me have a good whiff of me, and the aroma was not pleasant. I have been a Christian for 25 years, and in 25 years my flesh has not improved one iota.

Likewise, Jonathan's flesh, even though he is a mighty man of God, is incurably evil. It "cannot please God" [Romans 8:8]. Notice! It is not an issue of the will. Many times the flesh longs to please God, to look good in His sight, but the Scriptures state it is totally incapable of pleasing Him. The flesh simply does not have the power to do so no matter how sincere and dedicated it may be.

Do you see the tragedy here? When we left Chapter 19, harmony had been restored between Saul, David and Jonathan. David was back in court and everyone was honoring everyone. Now what do we have? Saul is angry with both Jonathan and David, and he is not just angry, he is enraged. Who is Jonathan angry with? His father, and he also is enraged. How about David? He is angry with Saul and probably a little put out with Jonathan because he didn't pull off this beautiful scheme. So now how does Saul feel toward David in contrast to Chapter 19 when he welcomed him back into court? He is hardened now. He is really hardened against David. This little trick to con Saul into bringing David back into court has had exactly the opposite effect, and Saul is now irrevocably committed to slaying David.

Contrary to how it may look, Saul is not a monster. Later on in his pursuit of David, when David twice has an opportunity to kill him but does not, he responds with great remorse and guilt. He confesses his wrong attitude,

calls David righteous, tells him he will be king of Israel and then goes on home. Now, the remorse does not last because he is driven by his paranoia, but he is not a monster.

What kind of a night do you think Saul had [quoting the first phrase of verse 35], "Now it came about in the morning?" He had just called his beloved son a bastard in front of the whole court and had even tried to kill him. This was the son whose love and acceptance he desperately needed because he had rejected his God? He must have had one agonizing night of guilt and remorse and was not about to put a tail on Jonathan. All he undoubtedly wanted was to regain Jonathan's love and acceptance.

But what was Jonathan's attitude toward his father? He had just been publicly dishonored, his beloved brother of the covenant dishonored and his mother insulted with the worst of Oriental insults and all without reason? His attitude was one of rebellion, but it was also one of suspicion. Twice Saul had used his daughters to try to eliminate David. Why not his son? So Jonathan succumbs to more deceit. He persuades David to hide in the field as he shoots arrows. If he says to the lad with him, "Come here get the arrows in front of you," his signal would mean, "Come back, David. There is safety for you." But if he shoots his arrows past the lad and says, "Go get the arrows." That means, "Go, David. Get out of town." This way he planned to fool the lad with him, thinking he was Saul's informant. Since no one else would be in the field, they would not have had to go through all this to hide their plot from anyone but the little child. Jonathan's mind was so mixed up that he did not trust his father nor did he have any concern for guilt or remorse his father might be experiencing.

Verses 35-39.

**Now it came about in the morning that Jonathan went out into the field for the appointment with David, and a little lad was with him. And he said to his lad, "Run, find now the arrows which I am about to shoot." As the lad was running, he shot an arrow past him. When the lad reached the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan called after the lad, and said, "Is not the arrow beyond you?" [The sign to David "Get out of Town."] And Jonathan called after the lad, "Hurry, be quick, do not stay!" And Jonathan's lad picked up the arrow and came to his master. But the lad was not aware of anything; only Jonathan and David knew about the matter.**

Saul had not planted the lad out there. Saul was full of remorse and guilt and longed for fellowship with his son. He had not done anything tricky, but David and Jonathan [particularly Jonathan] had. Jonathan saw his father as he saw himself, at the moment, hostile, angry and embittered and imputed to his father his own feelings. He thought this young boy was his father's spy, so he wanted him absent so he and David could have a meeting.

Verse 40:

**Then Jonathan gave his weapons to his lad and said to him, "Go, bring them to the city."**

The Spirit of God makes very clear that only Jonathan and David knew anything about this whole matter.

When you are out of fellowship with your Lord, you are out of fellowship with your loved ones, and you impute to them your own hostility, suspicions and anger. This, of course, is what breeds anger and hostility. Your loved ones can feel your hostility, and pretty soon you have a dog fight on your hands, and, unfortunately, when you are out of fellowship with your Lord, you almost always impute dishonorable things.

Have you ever noticed when you get upset with someone and are bitter and resentful toward them, you actually impute that bitterness and resentment to them. Then, as you harbor it within yourself, it festers away? Eventually when the Lord takes you out to the woodshed and straightens you out, you discover the fellow you held so much resentment against was totally oblivious to it all. You had just churned yourself into an ulcer while he was out playing golf with a totally clear conscience, maybe even wondering what was wrong with you. This was exactly where Jonathan and David were.

But God is a redemptive God and he begins to move. Verse 41:

**When the lad was gone, David rose from the south side and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed three times. And they kissed each other and wept together, but David [wept] more. And Jonathan said to David, "Go in safety, inasmuch as we have sworn to each other in the name of the Lord, saying, 'The Lord will be between me and you, and between my descendants and your descendants forever.'" Then he [David] rose and departed, while Jonathan went into the city.**

Why do you think David wept so bitterly? For once in his life he had an older brother who really loved him, who was committed to him and had put him first, even before his own interests. He had clothed David in the clothes of the crown prince and had made a covenant with him acknowledging he would become king. David saw Jonathan as a man who was loyal when loyalty really counted. But he knew Jonathan would stick by his father. Saul was fighting YHWH and had trapped himself into a destructive situation from which there was no escape. Jonathan would accompany his father down the path to destruction hoping he might be able to help.

We have discussed before why Jonathan did not fight Goliath. He did not fight because he would not fight, not because he could not fight. The champion of Israel, Saul, was head and shoulders above all Israelites, just as Goliath of Gath, the champion of the Philistines, was head and shoulders above all the Philistines. Jonathan, obviously filled with the Spirit of God, could very readily have taken on Goliath. He, alone with his armor-bearer, had just taken on the whole Philistine army at Michmash. Remember what he said, "The Lord can save by many or by few," and indeed God gave them total victory over the Philistines. So, if Jonathan was not afraid of the armies of the Philistines, where he could have gotten hit from any angle, why would he be afraid of Goliath who could only throw in one direction. No, he was committed to making his father face up to the fact that he was in rebellion against God, that the Spirit of God had departed from him, and that Saul was without courage. Up to then, Saul had a magnificent record as God's king. He took care of the Ammonites, the Edomites, the Moabites and the Syrian coalition. He was an extraordinary king, a superb fighter, a wonderful general and a brilliant battlefield tactician. But now he stood trembling before one man. Jonathan knew for his father to really become a man of God, he must face the fact that he had lost the Spirit of God. So Jonathan would not pull his father's chestnuts out of the fire.

It has been suggested that possibly Jonathan did not want to hurt his father's pride by taking on Goliath and doing what Saul would not do. But, I do not think he would ever have tried to save his father's pride. Jonathan was a very godly man. I think he wanted to make his father face the fact that the Spirit of God had departed from him, and that he had better get right with his Lord. Now, I cannot quote Scripture on this, but why would a godly man like Jonathan, who was filled with the Spirit and had just had a rousing victory at Michmash, not take on the enemy? Sure the enemy was 9 feet tall, but Jonathan was a fighter, a killer, a skilled warrior. So I feel very strongly, although I cannot support it by Scripture but only by the character of Jonathan, his prior actions and his loyalty to Saul, that he wanted to make Saul face the fact that he was fighting the Lord

Saul may have been a very carnal man, but he built godly principles into Jonathan's life and Jonathan never changed. Neither did his other sons. They all died alongside Saul. They were loyal to their father to death, and even though he was destroying himself, they would not leave him.

David, on the other hand, was a terrible father, and he lost all his sons, including Solomon, his chosen successor. Although Solomon began his kingship as the wisest man in the world, he ended it as a tyrant who departed from his God. He took numerous foreign wives in direct violation of Deuteronomy and even built temples right in Jerusalem to the gods of those wives. He multiplied horses and had a multitude of chariot warriors. He taxed his people unmercifully, making silver and gold just like dust when Deuteronomy admonished against putting silver and gold into your own pockets. He violated everything God had decreed for a king and ended up estranged from the God he had once so fervently loved.

I think we can take a lesson from this. We need to begin right now building into our children. It starts right here with each one of us. It does not start with the schools. It does not start with the government. It starts with me. It

starts with you. You can be a "man after God's own heart" and still wind up in trouble if you do not practice God's truth. As we have just seen, Jonathan's beautiful intent of reuniting Saul and David wound up with them hating each other when ungodly methods were used. Intent is not enough. It is the practice that counts!

So, here we have Jonathan going back to his father, and down to destruction with him because he loves Saul, and, I think, because he loves David. How else is he going to keep David from being killed and Saul from killing him.

Why do you think God took this special relationship from David at this particular time? Do you remember what God did to Abraham when he wanted him to become a man of God? "Go forth from your country and from your relatives and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you." (Genesis 12:1). Additionally what does He say to a husband and wife about marriage? "For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall cleave to his wife and they shall become one flesh." (Genesis 2:24) There is no possibility, in the Hebrew, of having a "cleaving" relationship without a "leaving" relationship first. It does not mean to abandon, but it certainly does mean to leave behind any prior dependencies. And God is about to put David through "boot camp."

When I went through boot camp in the service, the first thing they did was take me from Southern California, where all my ties were, and ship me clear across the country. They totally isolated me from any prior dependency because they wanted me to depend entirely on them, so they could mold me into a man who would obey instantly without question. They deliberately uprooted all of us, took from us everything we could cling to, threw us into the great cauldron and began to turn up the fire-- and it worked!

What did the Assyrian and Babylonian kings do when they conquered a people? They took a whole nation, uprooted them and took them 1,000 miles away. Why? Because you do not fight for foreign soil, you fight for your own land. [When you rent a house, how well do you care for the lawn? When you own the house, how well do you care for the lawn?]

The Babylonians were very smart. The Romans were not so smart. They did not move people bodily around, and, therefore, their legionnaires were stretched very thin. Since the captive people were always on their own turf, they were always rebelling. Caesar should have moved all the Jews right out of Palestine, 1,000 miles away, but he did not. He left them there and the Jewish Zealots caused trouble year after year after year. Still Caesar did not move the Jews. Instead he stationed legions all over to keep and restore order. But the only way the Romans knew how to restore order was to butcher the people revolting, which only led to more rebellion and the eventual destruction of Jerusalem.

Do you remember when Saul sent three different sets of messengers after David and, instead of harming David, they began to prophesy? Then Saul, himself, went to find David, and he, too, began to prophesy. God was saying, "Saul cannot lay a hand on you, David, because I will take even the enemies of God and make them do my bidding." God made a prophet of Saul, in his disobedience, the same as he had when Saul was obedient. Remember the saying, "Is Saul among the prophets?" Well, that saying came from obedience, but then God took Saul in disobedience and made him do exactly the same thing, and the saying was repeated. "Is Saul among the prophets?" That should have told David, "No matter what Saul is like, he is going to do my bidding." Did David get the message? No. He ran to Jonathan and said, "My life is only one step ahead of death." David had gotten his eyes off YHWH and was depending on Jonathan. He ran to Jonathan, not to YHWH. So, God had to get Jonathan out of the picture. David was going to have to get all alone with God with no other dependencies

As an illustration of how beautifully God operates, what memory of Jonathan was David left with when he and Jonathan parted? The memory of a man returning to his father in a loving, accepting manner when his father deserved nothing except hatred, bitterness and resentment. What did David learn from Jonathan's relationship with Saul concerning the love God had for David; that it is never ending and not based on performance; that God loves the unworthy and the undeserving even in the midst of their unworthiness. He learned God had an irrevocable love for him.

While, at this point, Saul, in his madness, was trying to kill David, his friend, David himself later on, when king of Israel, actually killed his own friend. Scripture says nothing about Saul having sexual problems, but David took

and, for all intents and purposes, raped [even though it appears she did not try very hard to resist him] Bathsheba, the daughter of one of his best friends, Eliam, and the wife of another of his best friends, Uriah the Hittite, both men of the "thirty", the great warriors of the inner circle, his key bodyguard. Then, having taken her, he killed her husband to cover himself when she became pregnant. Saul, as mad as he was, never did that.

David learned God had an irrevocable love for him even when he committed murder and adultery; crimes that, according to the Law of God, were punishable only by death. David, however, when confronted by Nathan the prophet, offered [in Psalm 51] the only "sacrifice" he could, "a broken and contrite spirit and a broken heart you will not despise." I think Jonathan was the one who modeled for David this amazing grace of God. David understood that brokenness was all that God required. In God's love for David, 1000 years later He would sacrifice His Son to pay the penalty of death for David. While David, of course, did not understand all of the theology involved, he had an amazing grasp of the love and grace of God.

I think David also learned from Jonathan to "love your enemies and be good to those who spitefully use you," a requirement to be a "man after God's own heart."

I would like to skip ahead a little and take a look at God's redemption. Turn to Chapter 23, verses 16 through 18, the last meeting that David had with Jonathan. Saul is relentlessly pursuing David now. He is determined to kill him. He plans to trap and kill him, and David knows it. At this time David is delivering people from their troubles and helping them, but, in spite of that, they are betraying him for Saul's benefit, (part of David's "boot camp.") In the midst of all this, Chap. 23, verse 16, Jonathan, goes to David and encourages him in the Lord.

I Samuel, Chapter 23, Verse 16:

**And Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David at Horesh [in the wilderness], and encouraged him in God. Thus he said to him, "Do not be afraid, because the hand of Saul my father shall not find you, [YHWH won't let it happen] and you will be king over Israel [God has anointed you as king. "Get your eyes off your circumstances and onto your God, David'] and I will be next to you [I am relinquishing my rights to the throne. I will be your counselor, your Chief of Staff. I will be second to you.] and Saul my father knows that also [David, you are fighting a battle already won. Don't act like you are a loser. Jonathan draws him right back to YHWH and the faithfulness of his God.] You have been anointed king over Israel and so you shall be king over Israel]**

You will remember, the choices Saul made finally resulted in a "depraved mind," a triales mind, a mind that could not see things in proper perspective. He could only see things from the way they affected Saul. Jonathan, on the other hand, by his choices, wound up with the mind of Christ. He gave up his temporal kingship, which would have been his the moment David died. He saw things from God's perspective, not looking at the temporal things of this life but at the eternal things of God.

It is intriguing to me the repetition here, verse 18:

**So the two of them made a covenant before the LORD; and David stayed at Horesh while Jonathan went to his house.**

"Went to his house," is essentially the same phrase as was used in Chapter 20:42, the previous time Jonathan left David to return to Saul. Thus Jonathan went back to his father, and died alongside him.

I am fascinated that some of Jonathan's last words to David were, "I will be next to you." This is a real prophecy, but how could it be? In a real sense, Jonathan was next to David as his counselor, his Chief-of Staff, but in the spirit. Jonathan was a model of what a king ought to be. He was a model of a person who gave up his life for someone else. He gave it up out of love for his father. He gave it up out of love for David. I am sure one of his motivations in returning to Saul was to see that David did not get trapped, that during his father's more rational moments, he could plead the cause of David and he could be an advocate in court for his covenanted brother.

Wherever David went, "next to him" was the model of a man after whom David could pattern his life.

Jonathan is a beautiful picture of the Spirit of God, while David is a type of Christ in the Old Testament. What is the Holy Spirit's job in relation to Christ? Is it to plead the cause of the Holy Spirit? No! It is to convict the world of sin and unbelief in Jesus Christ; to convict the world of its unrighteousness because of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, which He modeled before the world during His earthly life and which He continues to manifest through His disciples by the indwelling Holy Spirit; and to convict the world of the accomplished judgement of Satan because of Jesus Christ's conquering of Satan at the cross [Col. 2:13-15]. Since the Holy Spirit is God Himself, He is the equal of the Lord Jesus Christ, and yet he puts himself in subordination to Christ and points people to Christ and away from himself.

That is exactly what Jonathan did. So because Jonathan chose the "right snowball," he ended up a spiritual man with the mind of Christ. He saw things from God's perspective. He gave his life for the love of his father and the hope that he might return Saul to a right relationship with YHWH and that he might also protect David.

As we have seen, Saul, on the other hand, because of his choices, wound up with a "depraved mind," a trialess mind. He could only see things from his own perspective. He got worse and worse. Finally he hunted down a witch at Endor, [the only one he missed when, in the name of God, he had killed all the witches in Israel] to seek counsel from the occult. He was in direct opposition to God and he knew it, and God rebuked him for it.

It was mentioned that it was interesting to see God exercise his prerogatives by removing the honorable heir to the throne and replacing him with a seemingly lesser man. Not only was Jonathan the rightful heir before God took the throne away from his father Saul, but he seemed to be a much better, more righteous man than David at this time.

That is one of the beautiful things about the Scriptures. God does not look at the outward man, the outer performance. He looks at the heart, and David's heart, he says, is equal to or better than Jonathan's. "There is a man after my own heart," God says about David; yet David did everything wrong in the book. We are going to see that. But every time he got cited by God for his sinning, he ran straight to God and confessed. He took his lumps. He did not do what Saul did and rationalize his sin. We are going to see that when he gets in real trouble and is offered three options, one of which is to fall into the hands of the living God, he says, "I want that one. Don't let me fall into the hands of my enemies. Let me fall into your hands." He had a relationship with God that was beautiful and deep. His lifestyle left much to be desired, but not his relationship with God.

This is what God is trying to tell us. It is not our lifestyle; it is not our performance; it is our relationship with Him. It is not whether we conquer sin in our lives; it is whether we want to conquer sin in our lives that counts. God is looking for a deep yearning on our part to be God's man or woman. He will take care of how far and how soon and what sin and in what order--those are God's prerogatives--but He will begin to sanctify your life, and make it righteous, the moment you get serious before Him about dealing with your sin.

In chapters 21 and 22, next time, we will see the high cost of situational ethics. If you are ever tempted to do something you know is wrong because the situation seems to demand it, and you think you can probably get away with it, Chapter 21 and 22 will tell you what it is going to cost you in the end. It is David's first real lesson in his spiritual "Boot Camp."

### **Prayer:**

Father, we thank you so much for the Word of God, for the way it speaks to our hearts, for the way it shows people as they really are, and shows us how we can be such fallible people even though we may be "a man after your own heart." Our motivation may be entirely right and totally holy and yet the moment we put ourselves in the act, we can foul it up in the most ugly way and come out totally ungodly having butchered the whole works. Father, teach us to be smart enough to realize that both the desire and the operation have to be of You. You have told us in Philippians 2:12-13 to "exploit" our salvation because you are the one who is in us both to give us the desire

and to put into action what you want us to do, that you do both things for us, Father. The godly intent and the godly power are both from you, never from us. God, help us to be that smart. Help us to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. Help us to be Christians. Thank you, Father, in Jesus' name.

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## Chapter Ten

### David and Ahimelech and Achish

#### 1 Samuel 21

Beginning today we will talk about David's wilderness experiences. There is talk about his fight with Goliath and occasionally about David and Abigail. Or we flip over to David and his trouble with his son Absalom or his adultery with Bathsheba. But very little is said about his wilderness experiences. Interestingly enough, however, the Scriptures devote probably 10 chapters to his wilderness experiences while devoting relatively few chapters to his victories.

Apparently God is very interested that we learn from what David went through in the wilderness and is not too concerned about what David went through in his victories, since the victories are the fruit of what he learned in the wilderness.

I have spent some time looking at David's wilderness experiences. God used these experiences to make David a man of God and to make him fit to rule, much as he took the nation of Israel out of Egypt and into the wilderness for 40 years to make them a nation fit to manifest God and to rule. There is an interesting parallel here.

The wilderness experiences in our lives are deliberately designed by God to form us into men or women of maturity. As C. S. Lewis says, "God whispers to us in our pleasures, but he shouts to us in our pain." Pain is God's megaphone to get our attention. So our struggles and stresses, which can be emotional, physical or spiritual, are God's way of telling us, "I'm going to make you into a man after my own heart. Don't fight it. Just allow me to mold you and shape you into the image of Christ."

So we will see David have experiences and attitudes that we have. We will see him angry with God, obeying God, making it big, plunging to the depths. We will see all the peaks and valleys that a normal person experiences. This is God's man we are watching, a "man after his own heart." It is a comforting thing.

We left David, in league with Jonathan, fleeing from Saul and heading into the wilderness. Having fled directly from his meeting with Jonathan, he had no weaponry, no food, nothing. So, he had some real needs. The tragedy was that David used what I call "situational ethics" to satisfy his needs. Our modern philosophy says the situation determines the ethics; the end justifies the means. You see it all over; in our government, in our churches, even in our own lives. Well, I have news for you, it did not start in the 20th century. It has been around ever since the fall of man, and 3,000 years ago "a man after God's own heart" used the same tactics.

Granted David's needs were legitimate. He needed food. He needed protection. The needs were real. It was how he supplied them that was wrong.

David was in Gibeah of Saul, a city in the territory of the tribe of Benjamin, about 10-15 miles north of Jerusalem. He fled from there directly to the city of Nob, the city of the priests and the tabernacle, which is probably 5 miles south of Gibeah. He was fleeing to someone with whom he had had a lot of contact. David, as the champion of the armies of Israel, in his wars for Saul's sake, would have gone many times to the high priest to have him find the mind of God, ["whether I should go out in this battle; what I should do in this battle."] David had a very good



relationship with the high priest of Israel, and what would be more natural than for him to again go to one of his best friends for advice.

The tragedy was that David fell victim to the tyranny of the urgent. He had once before failed miserably to trust God. Remember when God sent Saul and his three groups of messengers up to seize David and deliberately had them all prophesy. It should have indicated to David, "I can take care of you no matter what happens, no matter how they come after you, no matter who comes after you. Even when Saul came personally, I gave him a double treatment." Saul did twice as much prophesying. In fact he did not even get to Ramah before he began prophesying. He spent 24 hours lying on the ground prophesying. Still David did not get the message. Instead, he ran straight to Jonathan, and they came up with their deceitful scheme. It backfired, and David has now become a victim of his own plotting.

Verse 1 of Chapter 21:

**The David came to Nob to Ahimelech the [high] priest; and Ahimelech came trembling to meet David, and said to him, "Why are you alone and no one with you?" And David said to Ahimelech the priest, "The king has commissioned me with a matter, and has said to me, 'Let no one know anything about the matter on which I am sending you and with which I have commissioned you; and I have directed the young men to a certain place.'**

How does it look to Ahimelech? Here is the leader of the armies of Saul, and he is alone. It is a Sabbath. The "Law" forbids travel on the Sabbath. David never traveled alone. He traveled with an army, or at least a band of bodyguards. Ahimelech, knowing the kind of conflict going on 5 miles north, is sure to wonder what is happening. David, knowing Ahimelech probably understands the conflict in the palace and fearful that Ahimelech will not provide his needs, lies to him. He indicates he is coming from the king on a special secret mission and that his young men are in a different place. It is called "situational ethics." David has needs. The needs are real. The needs are legitimate. The process is wrong. Instead of trusting God, he uses his wits. He uses deceit. As we have noticed before, deceit always breeds deceit; the flesh always produces the flesh, and the flesh can never please God [Rom 8:7].

Then he goes on, I Samuel 21, verse 3, to compound his deceit:

**"Now therefore, [He acts as though he is truly sent from Saul and he demands that he be supplied] what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever can be found." And the priest answered David and said, "There is no ordinary bread on hand, [The city of the priests was apparently very poor at the time. It may have been that the Philistines had come by and taken the harvest away] but there is consecrated bread;**

This was the "bread of the Presence," the twelve loaves that were baked every week on the Sabbath, brought into the tabernacle, into the Holy Place, laid on the table, six loaves in each portion, each loaf representing a tribe of Israel. Each loaf was dedicated to God. They sat there the full seven days, and were sanctified to God. They indicated God was the total provider for all the needs of Israel. At the end of seven days, 12 fresh loaves were brought in to replace the twelve loaves on the table. The high priest, and the priests of the nation of Israel, could eat those loaves which were replaced. They were set apart for the use of the priests but could be eaten only in the Holy Place. So all Ahimelech had was consecrated bread, bread that had come right off the table of the Lord.

To continue, I Samuel 21, verse 4b:

**"...if only the young men have kept themselves from women."**

Under the Levitical system, any emission from the body made you ceremonially unclean, including a seminal emission. Anything coming from you, instead of from God, made you unclean. So, Ahimelech can see David is going to demand something of him, and he just hopes it will not violate too much of the ceremonial law.

Apparently, however, he is willing to give David what he needs.

So David lies again, verse 5:

**And David answered the priest and said to him, "Surely women have been kept from us as previously when I set out [David is saying that on prior trips he observed the ceremonial law. He made sure that everyone had kept themselves ceremonial clean before going out to battle] and the vessels of the young men were holy, though it was an ordinary journey; how much more then today will their vessels be holy?"**

The word "vessels" was not just the body, but anything having to do with life, including clothing, food, whatever. Whenever David went out on a mission for Saul, he went out "holy," ceremonially pure. He wanted God to bless him. So he said, "This has been my practice in the past, and you, of all people, should know that because I consulted with you each time I went out. So, how much more this time when I am on a secret mission for the king and on a Sabbath day. Surely the young men have kept themselves from women. Yes, they are sanctified. Yes, they are holy." He is going to get that bread by hook or by crook, mostly by crook.

Verse 6:

**So the priest gave him the consecrated bread; for there was no bread there but the bread of the Presence [literally the bread of the "Face", the bread that signified the presence of God] which was removed from before the LORD, [These were the old loaves to be eaten by the priests in the Holy Place] in order to put hot bread in its place when it was taken away.**

So, the priest gave David the bread which, under the ceremonial Law, was to be used by priests and eaten only in the Holy Place. But it was bread which had been given to God, sanctified by God, and given back to the priests to be used for their needs.

Now, let me ask you a question, "Was it wrong for David to eat the consecrated bread?" (Unless you know your gospels you are going to get tricked.) Answer from the audience, "According to the New Testament, it wasn't." That is right! David's actions, which were deceitful, were not condoned by Christ, but He did condone the eating of the bread because that fulfilled a legitimate need. Had David been straightforward and honest, Ahimelech could have given him the bread without violating anything in God's Law. God says, in chapter 12 of Matthew, that the ceremonial Law was never to interfere with real human need. God designed the Sabbath for man's benefit, not demanding man to conform to the Sabbath [i.e., also in Mark 2:27, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."].

In Chapter 12 of Matthew starting at verse 1:

**At that time Jesus went on the Sabbath through the grainfields, and His disciples became hungry and began to pick the heads of grain and eat.**

It was a common practice in those days. All the grain fields had paths through them. Spreading out like spokes from the little villages were these paths which crisscrossed the various fields. Under the Mosaic Law, since everything belonged to God anyway, you could walk along the path, and, anything you could reach with your hands, you could take and eat. That was food for the traveler, for the poor, for the hungry, for the necessity of life, for a legitimate need. You could not take a scythe with you and chop someone else's grain down, but you could reach out and take a person's grain to assuage your hunger. It had to be a legitimate need, though. So, since the crop belonged to God anyway, as the hungry disciples were walking along on the Sabbath, they took some grain, rubbed it in their hands to get the husks off and popped it in their mouths. Well, the Pharisees had so written the Law that that was illegal.

Matthew 12, verse 2:

**But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to Him, "Behold, Your disciples do what is not**

**lawful to do on a Sabbath." But He said to them, "Have you not read what David did, when he became hungry, he and his companions; how he entered the house of God, and they ate the consecrated bread, which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those with him, but for the priests alone? Or have you not read in the Law, that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple break the Sabbath, and are innocent?"**

When no one was supposed to be working, the priests were in the tabernacle tending to the vessels of the Sabbath, replenishing the incense, replenishing the oil, baking and replenishing the loaves. Their work on the Sabbath was part of their ministry to God.

It is interesting to me to hear people talk about not working on the Sabbath. That is the preacher's busiest day. All preachers take Monday off. Our work is on the Sabbath, if you count Sunday as the Sabbath. Some churches have rules for keeping the Sabbath, and the biggest violator of those rules is the minister of the church that has those rules. He is the one who gets up early in the morning and bones up on what he is to preach; the one who rushes to church to get everything organized. He is busy, busy, busy all day long, marrying, burying, baptizing, while the church's set of rules says, "Thou shall not work on the Sabbath." Who is doing all the work? The minister who wrote the rules.

So the Lord says here, "Have you not read in the Law, that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple break the Sabbath, and are innocent?" They work on the Sabbath. They bake bread on the Sabbath. They replenish loaves on the Sabbath. In fact, they circumcise on the Sabbath. According to the Law, a male child had to be circumcised on the eighth day. So they circumcised regularly on the Sabbath in order not to break the circumcision Law. They had to break one Law to keep the other. Circumcision was the mark of a man with the flesh cut off, the old life cut away. God considered this dedication of infants to Himself to be more important than the observance of the minutia of the Law. So the Sabbath was regularly broken by the priests.

Matthew 12, verse 6:

**"But I say to you, that something greater than the temple is here? But if you had known what this means, 'I desire compassion, and not a sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the innocent. For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath"**

Christ said, "The bottom line on the whole ceremonial law is that God desires compassion, not sacrifice. He desires that man's needs be met and not that the meticulous rules of the Law be kept if they interfere with the needs of men." That was the bottom line of the Levitical system which had been forgotten by the time of the Pharisees.

So it was not wrong for David to eat the consecrated bread. He had a legitimate need. What was wrong was he did not come in an open and honest way. He cheated. In deceiving the high priest, he was actually cheating on God. Legitimate need; wrong methodology. According to Christ's own word, David could have gotten the same consecrated bread from Ahimelech; he could have eaten it with no sin attached and been totally free before the Lord, "For the Lord desires compassion not sacrifice." Instead, he blew it.

The tragedy with the flesh, when it starts snowballing, is that it always gets worse. God gave David a warning though. God is a wonderfully patient and faithful God. You do not have to get up every morning saying, "Lord, I don't want to break the Law. I don't want to do things that are wrong. I am going to get out my check list and consult it all day long being sure I do everything I am supposed to do and abstain from things I am not supposed to do."

The Lord is not like that. You are not under Law you are under Grace. That does not mean you should be sloppy. It means you should so open your mind, your heart and your will to the Holy Spirit of God that He can actually be your mind, your thoughts and your will. Then, as you walk through your day, doing your normal, natural things, you will be sensitive to the Spirit of God, and He will tell you, "Slow down there, or take a left here, or stop that, or watch it." God is the one responsible for my walk each day, not me. My only responsibility is to choose His

way. Then He becomes responsible.

Now, I can choose the rules of PBC, go through my little check list, be meticulously "righteous" and be a stench in the nostrils of God. That is self-righteousness. Or I can give my life to Jesus Christ, step out in obedience and do whatever is in front of me, thanking the Lord that when I begin veering in the wrong direction, the Spirit of God will alert me. He is the Holy Spirit of God. His first name is Holy. He will direct my paths. He will even pray through me "with groanings too deep to be uttered." I just have to be the Lord's vessel, and He will warn me when I am veering away. He will also assure me when I am walking with Him by the quiet witness of the Spirit. There is no stress in the authentic Christian life. There will be struggle, but not stress.

Right after David pulls his deceit, God thrusts something in Verse 7 which says, "Hey, wake up." I Samuel 21, verse 7:

**Now one of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the LORD;** [some reason for purification] **and his name was Doeg the Edomite, the chief of Saul's shepherds.**

Why do you suppose God put this little bit of information in here right after David had done his deceitful deed? Why did He suddenly make David see Doeg, the fearful, the cringing, the compromiser, the man who left the Edomites, apparently because Saul had beaten them, to join up with Saul, "Whichever side is winning, that is the side I am on." You know he is going to ingratiate himself by tattling to Saul. [He had become a proselyte to the Jewish faith, even though, as we will see, he did not believe a word of it.] He is a nothing.

Why does God give David a view of Doeg the Edomite, the compromiser, the fellow who lives by his wits, by his deceit, by expediency, chief of Saul's shepherds, "big man on campus" back at Gibeath of Saul? Why right here? David knows Doeg will go back and tell Saul. What position did David put Ahimelech in? Saul is a mad man, remember. He is going to keep the reins of government no matter what YHWH wants, and should YHWH's anointed king, David, get in his way, David dies. Saul is about to embark upon a campaign that destroys Israel in order to destroy David, and David knows that. What do you think goes through David's mind about the chances of Ahimelech coming out of this unscathed? He is assuredly going to get hurt. How much does David care about that? David has now focused totally on himself, "Nobody has it as bad as I do. These are legitimate needs." God deliberately, at this point in time when David first starts his deceit, brings him Doeg, and he has a chance, therefore, to come clean so the right report gets back to Saul. [David admits later on that he knew Doeg would go and tell Saul.] But what does he do? Well, he is too focused on self and cares little about Ahimelech. When you are focused on self, you do not care about anybody else. It is just "My needs. My problems."

So, I Samuel 21, Verse 8:

**And David said to Ahimelech, "Now is there not a spear or a sword on hand? For I brought neither my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's matter was urgent."**

There is a bald-faced lie again. David is a good liar, and this is a "man after God's own heart." This is the flesh of a "man after God's own heart." But the flesh of a believer is no more acceptable to God than the flesh of an unbeliever; in fact it is probably more repugnant as the believer does not have to live dominated by the flesh while the unbeliever has no other choice.

Verse 9:

**Then the priest said, "The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the valley of Elah, behold, it is wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod..."**

[The ephod was the sacred garment of the priest. It was similar to a fancily embroidered shortie nightgown and ran from the shoulder straps to about the thighs. It was used when uttering oracles to reveal the will of God.] So, in a place of holiness in the sanctuary, wrapped in a cloth, dedicated to God, behind the very ephod of the High Priest was the sword of Goliath. David, you remember, in Chapter 17 had taken the weaponry of Goliath into his

tent. So later he apparently took the sword, the weapon with which he actually killed Goliath, and, as a symbol that God had given him victory, dedicated it to God. [The stone knocked Goliath on his back. It crushed his frontal plate, but he was still alive. It was the sword with which David cut off his head that killed him.] Goliath's sword was now in the sanctuary and was no longer David's. It was not Ahimelech's either. It belonged to God alone. As the "bread of the Presence" belonged to God for as long as he wanted it, so the sword belonged to God for as long as he wanted it. God gave back the "bread of the Presence" for human use, but the sword was still behind the ephod, so it still belonged to God alone.

Verse 9b:

**"if you would take it for yourself, take it. For there is no other except it here." And David said, "There is none like it, give it to me."**

There certainly was none like it. The sword had belonged to a man well over 9' tall. David would have had to use it as a two-handed sword and it would really work in a melee. It would cut in both directions, and you could use a two handed sword like a double bladed axe. It was a beautiful weapon for killing. But what would wearing it say to everyone? David might as well have worn a banner saying, "I killed Goliath of Gath." Nobody in the whole of that area had any sword that looked like Goliath's. This would get David in trouble later on.

Was David wrong to take the sword of Goliath? He had killed Goliath. In the rights of warfare you took your enemy's uniform, his goods, his weapons. They were yours by right of conquest. The only problem was David had given Goliath's sword to God. Was David right, now, to take the sword of Goliath? He was right to take the consecrated bread. [if he had not lied about it] The Lord implies this clearly in the context of Matthew 12:3-4.

No, he was not right because he had dedicated it to the Lord. What had the Lord done with the bread that he had not done with the sword? He had given the bread back for man's use in time of need. He had not done that with Goliath's sword!

Do you see the principle here? There are areas in our lives where we have conflicts, or struggles, or weaknesses, or hang-ups and when we come to Christ, God says, "These must be mine," and he takes them. Now, as we mature in Christ, he will give some of them back, because, as we grow, we can handle them. But have you ever noticed, there are other areas that you can never ever fool with? There are certain areas in your life where you have a weakness that God will never let you fool with again. Do not ever mess with those! When we start our Christian walk, we make rules and regulations, dos and don'ts. We change our whole lifestyle. Then, as we grow in Christ, we begin to get more and more freedom, and some of the things we thought we could not do, God allows us to enjoy again. There are other areas, however, that he never lets us enjoy again because they only gratify and enslave. They do not ever satisfy. And God help you if you take those back. Christ told the man at the pool at Bethesda, "Go and sin no more lest a worse thing befall you." In my own experience, I have taken some of those areas back, and, I have news for you, a worse thing does befall you. God means exactly what he says, and what God has not given back, you do not take. But David took the sword.

I Samuel 21:10

**Then David arose and fled that day from Saul, and went to Achish king of Gath**

Is David worried when he flees from Saul and walks into Gath carrying Goliath's sword? Not in the least! He was thinking, "The Philistines are enemies of Saul. I am the enemy of Saul. I am a great warrior. They will welcome me as a mercenary." But he carried this great sword which signified that he had wiped out their champion, who, by the way, had many relatives in Gath. Goliath had at least three or four brothers, we will find out later. Admittedly the closest town was Gath, but David was wearing an advertisement that said, "I am the fellow who wiped out your champion, who humiliated you, who sent you fleeing from the Valley of Elah where we chopped you to pieces. Remember me?" He also had red hair when there were very few red haired fellows carrying huge swords wandering around. Even the Philistines could put two & two together.

When you start messing with deceit, you end up being what? Self-deceived! You cease to think straight. Of all the dumb places for David to go, that was the dumbest, but, of course, it was closest to Nob and all David wanted to do was get away from Saul. So, he walked into a buzz-saw.

I Samuel 21, verse 11:

**But the servants of Achish said to him, "Is this not David the king of the land? [Don't forget that he is wearing Goliath of Gath's sword] Did they not sing of this one as they danced, saying, "Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands?" And David took these words to heart, and greatly feared Achish king of Gath [This is where Psalm 56 comes in].**

Do you remember the first time all the Israelite women sang that song [I Samuel 18:6-7]? It became very popular. In fact, it became Number 1 on the Israelite's "Hit Parade." Who were the thousands that Saul slew and who were the tens of thousands that David slew? Philistines! They do not think too much of David. In fact, they hate him! Now he is in their hands.

There is a comment from the audience here that, according to this last verse, the Philistines already acknowledged David as king, "the king of the land."

"King of the Land" is probably just a popular expression. The Philistines probably do not know David has been anointed by YHWH as king of Israel. But they do know there is a rivalry going on because they are getting possession of a lot of land as a result of Saul's chasing David instead of them. So, I wouldn't press that expression as far as to say they knew David had been anointed King of Israel, but he sure was an up and coming contender to the throne and was gaining in popularity.

David had slain ten thousands, and now the Philistines had him in their hands. Psalm 56 would indicate they seized him and dragged him into Achish's presence. Poor David. Now he is trapped and in real trouble. He is out of the frying pan into the fire.

So, David, being a sharp young man, does a very tricky thing. In the Orient in those days, a person who was mad was thought to be "seized by spirits." Therefore, everyone was so terrified of them, that they would neither touch them nor harm them. Nebuchadnezzar, when he was King of Babylon, went through a period of madness, and they let him roam around like an animal. They never tried to kill him. His rivals had a golden opportunity to kill him and take over his kingdom, but nobody touched him. We know from ancient Babylonian archaeology that they considered a mad man "seized of a god." If you read Daniel, chapter 4, very carefully, you know that is exactly what God did to Nebuchadnezzar. He was boasting about his vast works and the Babylon he had built when God struck him with madness, fulfilling a prophecy of Daniel's. Nebuchadnezzar became like an animal. He wandered about eating grass, with fingernails like claws and hair like fur, and no one killed him. The ancient Orientals were scared to death of mad men. The gods had seized Nebuchadnezzar. The gods had seized David. Achish did not want any part of him. David knew this, so he played on this superstition.

Verse 13:

**So he disguised his sanity before them, and acted insanelly in their hands [they have taken him and have dragged him into Achish's presence] and scribbled on the doors of the gate, and let his saliva run down into his beard.**

This was the future King of Israel drooling all over his face. This was a "man after God's own heart." He made a complete ass of himself. But he was afraid for his life, and he had left his God behind. He was living by his own wits, now, and he was willing to do anything, no matter how humiliating, to save his skin. All the courage and the beauty of David had disappeared. All that was left was David in the ugliness of his flesh, and all he wanted to do was get out of this predicament alive. Well, it worked!

Verse 14:

**Then Achish said to his servants, "Behold, you see the man behaving as a madman. Why do you bring him to me? Do I lack madmen, that you have brought this one to act the madman in my presence?"** [more literally "to rave against me." He is afraid of this man. Madmen have a tendency to injure people and do violent things of that nature. Achish wants no part of this man.] **Shall this one come into my house?**

So Achish sent David away. If you read Psalm 34, when David flees to the cave in Adullam, you will see that God straightens out David's thinking. David finally realizes he did not get away from Achish by his wits. He got away because God took care of him, that God was the faithful one, and that He would have been faithful the whole time. It brings David to repentance.

There are eight Psalms written about this period in the wilderness, and all eight of those Psalms express David's deep trust in and commitment to his God. Yet there is also this strange feeling of undeserved persecution. He struggles between deep trust in God and a feeling of unfair persecution. God is taking him through this wilderness experience to teach him absolute faith. This is one of the places that he learns it; this place where he makes an ass of himself in order to escape death.

There is a question from the audience here as to why the Lord gives us wits and a brain if we are not to handle things on our own.

The answer is, we need to reverse the procedure. God has given us a brain to handle things, but the first thing he wants us to do with that brain is to give it back to Him. The first thing I do is give my life to the Lord, my mind to the Lord, and allow him to think through my mind, for whatever needs to be done according to His processes. We should not start out on our own working hard and then handing the results to the Lord, with a "Lord, please bless this mess." We should start by saying, "Lord, here is my mind, here are my emotions, here is my will, here is my body, here's my person, and here is the day. Think your thoughts through me. Feel your emotions through me. Love your love through me. Empower me to do any of these things." Then away we go! "I am going to do the first thing in front of me, and thank you that you will be doing it through me." The thinking process is exactly the same, but it is controlled by God, and the power to do the process is God's. He tells us we are "to work out our own salvation (Philippians 2:12 which is literally to use something you already have, not to gain it) with fear and trembling, (with the desire to please God, not cringing fear) for it is God who is at work within you ("energeo" in the Greek; God energizing you for this work almost always means supernatural power in the Scriptures) both to will and to do (that is "energeo" again) of his good pleasure." God will supernaturally energize you to choose what he wants you to do, and then he will empower you to do it. But it is up to you to make the choice, to let him be the power. You will still be using your brain, but it will be used of God. Don't get the cart before the horse.

Chapter 22 next time.

### **Prayer:**

Father, we thank you so much for your Word, for the fact that we see a man after your own heart just falling flat on his face, and you still are faithful when he is unfaithful, that you still pick him up and get him out of town, in spite of his nonsense, the ridiculous things he does to try to save his own skin. And yet, Father, as we read this next chapter, we see that when we live in the flesh, there are consequences that occur that you do not stop. These are inevitable consequences of sin, Father, that you allow in your wisdom to work out to their own natural end, and we see the tragedy and the horror of them in Chapter 22, so, Father, let us not get smart and play around with flesh and play around with sin, thinking, as long as we confess it and put it away, that we are home free, when there are these consequences, the natural fallout, which inevitably occurs. Somebody always gets hurts. so help us to be mindful that there is a Chapter 22 after Chapter 21. We thank you, Father, in Jesus' name. Amen

## Chapter Eleven

### David at Adullam, Saul slays Ahimelech

#### 1 Samuel 22

We are in I Samuel, chapter 22 studying David's life in the wilderness. With God's training, he is beginning to learn the high cost of situational ethics. In Nob, which is just below Saul's headquarters in Gibeah of Saul, he deceived Ahimelech, the high priest of God, into giving him food and also the sword of Goliath. Apparently he also had Ahimelech inquire of the Lord for him. Then, to get away from Saul, he raced over to Gath just across the border of Judah. There he again used deceit to escape from Achish, the king of Gath, and head for the cave of Adullam. We will now pick him up, having lived by his wits, forgetting to talk to the Lord, and not doing very well.

Chapter 22, verse 1:

**So David departed from there** [Gath, the nearest major city in Philistine country where he ran from Saul] **and escaped to the cave of Adullam, and when his brothers and all his father's household heard of it, they went down there to him. And everyone who was in distress, and everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented, gathered to him; and he became captain over them. Now there were about four hundred men with him.**

The cave of Adullam is about 10 miles back toward Bethlehem up the Valley of Elah which is pock-marked with caves. It is an ideal hiding place and is very close to the border of the Philistines, where David can again flee if he has to get across the border in a hurry. It is also reasonably close to Bethlehem, his home town. So, from his perspective, he is pretty centrally located.

Have you ever noticed it is a principle of life that God takes away something only to give back something better? Remember in Chapter 18 how by a covenant with Jonathan David gained a brother. But then God deliberately moved Jonathan out of David's life, and he lost his brother. Now here at the cave of Adullam God gives him back his real brothers.

David's whole life he had been the runt of the litter. He had been the object of ridicule by his brothers, particularly his oldest brother. In Chapter 17, remember, Eliab, his oldest brother, really cut him down when he came up to the battle line to eventually face Goliath. But it should also be remembered that Eliab and the next two older brothers at this point are still soldiers of Saul. So they have committed treason by throwing in their lot with David. They are now traitors and would be killed if they were caught. His father and mother also go down to David. Probably, partly to escape reprisal from Saul, but God deliberately brings the whole family together and finally gives David what he has never really had before, a family, all united down in Adullam. But God does not stop there. David is not only going to be head of his family, he is also going to be king of Israel.

Let us consider for a moment Israel and the people who make up this nation. What kind of people are they? What are they noted for all through the wilderness? They walked out of Egypt with all its wealth, and the first thing they did was what? Rebel. They griped. They groused. They were discontent, and there were how many tribes? 12, [actually 13, but the Levites were not counted as they were assigned to service the tabernacle], They all had their own petty jealousies, their own prejudices, and David is going to be king of these people. So, he is going to have to learn how to bring together all kinds of diverse units, all kinds of viewpoints, all kinds of prejudices, all kinds of nasty people and still be God's man. David is about to enroll in "The School of Hard Knocks."

Most of David's life, up to now, he has been a shepherd, a shepherd of sheep! And sheep obey, don't they? If they



do not, the shepherd gives them a whack with his staff, or he puts the crook of the staff around their neck or leg and gives them a meaningful jerk. David has been "king" of his sheep and his "subjects" have obeyed him. They may have been helpless and stupid, but they were obedient and did not talk back. Up to now he has had a pretty soft life as far as getting along with others except, of course, for his family.

In the midst of his extremities, what kind of people does God deliberately send to David at the cave of Adullam? All the malcontents in Israel. Notice that? This is going to be a "boot camp" to end all "boot camps" for David in learning how to rule over the twelve separate tribes of Israel. First, "Everyone who is in distress" All of these had problems, probably with Saul and also in just making it in their daily lives. Secondly, "Everyone who is in debt" Fellows who had too many credit cards. [By the way this may imply that Saul allowed interest to be charged when lending money. It was illegal for a Jew to charge another Jew interest, but it may have been to ensure his supporters continued loyalty that Saul had allowed some "loan sharks" to ply their trade. [We know this happened under some of the later kings of Israel.] But anyway these were people who could not handle their monies and took the easy way out by skipping out on their debts. Lastly, "Those who are discontented." The word is stronger than that; literally it means "bitter of soul." People who were deeply resentful, bitter and hostile. Where are these three types of people going to live? In a cave. 400 discontented, nasty people crowded together in one tight little unit. David is going to have to learn to deal with this situation if he is going to survive as their leader.. God is beginning to prepare him for his future. What, on the surface, looks like flight from Achish and from Saul and growing up as the runt of the litter is actually the preparation of a king who is going to reign as "a man after God's own heart."

Then something interesting happens. David now has his family back and apparently has established a real love relationship with them. So, since he is living on the run, he becomes concerned about his elderly father and mother. By now, the cave of Adullam is well known by much of Israel. It is only 10 miles from Gath, and David may have to make a hurried departure again.

Look what happens in verse 3:

**And David went from there to Mizpah [the fortress] of Moab; and he said to the king of Moab, "Please let my father and my mother come and stay with you until I know what God will do for me." Then he left them with the king of Moab; and they stayed with him all the time that David was in the stronghold. And the prophet Gad said to David, "Do not stay in the stronghold; depart, and go into the land of Judah." So David departed and went into the forest of Hereth [which is to the west of the Dead Sea].**

David takes his father and mother down to Moab and asks the king of Moab to please care for them while he is being pursued by Saul. How is it that David has such close ties with Moab when he knows Moab considers the nations of Israel, and Saul in particular, as its enemy? Well, remember that David's great-grandmother was Ruth the Moabitess. He has Moabite blood in his veins. Beyond that, Saul roundly defeated Moab [I Samuel 14:47] before David became a great warrior for Saul, and thus the Moabites hatred is focused on Saul rather than on David. Thirdly, all of David's great victories, up to this time, were apparently against the Philistines, so the Moabites have no compelling reason to hate David as they do Saul. Lastly, Saul, their enemy, is trying to slay David [who is part Moabite] just as Saul had slain many of them in the past. Any enemy of Saul's is a friend of Moab.

By the way, remember David's great-great-grandmother was Rahab the Canaanite harlot. If you want to take a purely objective view of this whole issue, David had the worst possible bloodline for a Jewish king. Jewish exclusiveness was totally wiped out in David. He had a Moabite great-grandmother, and a Canaanite great-great-grandmother. Also, before his mother married Jesse, she was apparently married to Nahash the Ammonite. This young man is not only the runt of the litter, he is a mongrel. In an exclusive society where the Israelites greatly value genealogy and purity of the Jewish line, this is God's man, "a man after God's own heart." God deliberately chose a mongrel to be king of Israel. He is telling Israel loud and clear that it is the desire of a man's heart-- not is heredity -- that counts with God

Let me just toss in here, at absolutely no extra charge, another interesting note along this line. Moses, the founder, under God, of the nation of Israel, had essentially three main periods of 40 years each in his life. The first 40 year period was Moses "the son of Pharaoh's daughter." Moses, as an Egyptian nobleman, would have been married by his mother to a daughter of the Egyptian nobility or priesthood befitting his rank as "the son of Pharaoh's Daughter", just as some 400 plus years earlier, Joseph, the son of Jacob, was married by Pharaoh, on becoming his Viceroy of Egypt, to a daughter of one of the highest ranking priests of Egypt. Thus Moses' first wife was an Egyptian.

The second 40-year period Moses spent in Midian as a fugitive from Pharaoh, tending the flocks of Jethro, the priest of Midian. The Midianites were descendants of Abraham's concubine, Keturah, who, after the death of Sarah, became his wife. Thus while they were a Semite people, they were not direct descendants of Jacob and the 12 tribes of Israel, and so were not Israelites.

The last 40-year period of Moses' life was spent leading the nation of Israel out of Egypt, through the wilderness, and up to the border of the Promised Land. Early in this period Moses married a Cushite woman. The Cushites were Ethiopian or Nubian, a Hamitic people like the Egyptians rather than Semitic.

Thus, Moses, the founder of the nation of Israel, never did marry "A Nice Jewish Girl."

Let me ask you another question. Who else was God's chosen "mongrel?" The Lord Jesus Christ! Have you ever read the genealogy of Jesus in the first chapter of Matthew? There is a very fascinating study there about the woman in Jesus' bloodline. Five women are mentioned in the total genealogy of Jesus. All five are "tainted" women from the perspective of the Jews and of the world: four of them "tainted" rightfully; one of them "tainted" not rightfully but still as far as the Jews were concerned, "tainted" all the same.

Matthew, chapter 1, verse 1:

**The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David** [the descendant of three of these "tainted" women and the husband of another of them], **the son of Abraham** [who, as a resident of Ur, was involved in some of the most grossly sensual idolatry of his day until God called him. Abraham was able to break free from the grip of the perverted sensuality, but his beloved nephew, Lot, was never able to even though he, too, became a true believer in Abraham's God]

verse 3:

**...to Judah was born Perez and Zerah by Tamar...**

The first "tainted" woman's story is a little difficult to explain. Her name was Tamar and she was the daughter-in-law of Judah, one of the patriarchs of the twelve tribes of Israel. Her husband, Er, was the first born of Judah by his Canaanite wife. But Er was such a wicked man that God slew him. So, Judah gave Tamar Onan, his second born son, to raise up children for his slain first born. The Mosaic Law said if a man died without issue, his brother was to take this widow and raise up children to carry on the dead brother's name [and in this case the dead brother's first born rights]. Unfortunately for Tamar, the second son of Judah was also very wicked, and "whenever he went in to his brother's wife, he wasted his seed on the ground, in order not to give offspring to his brother" [Genesis 38:9]. In direct defiance of God's Law, Onan wanted to get the first born rights for himself, not for the dead brother's son. So, God slew him also. Finally Judah promised Tamar his youngest son when he matured, but Judah, through his marriage, had become so immersed in the superstitious Canaanite culture that he apparently thought Tamar was cursed and he did not give Tamar his youngest son.,

So Tamar took matters into her own hand and, putting a veil over her face, sat by the side of the road appearing to be a cult prostitute knowing that Judah would be coming by. Judah, now thoroughly steeped in Canaanite sexual practices as well, went into her thinking she was a cult prostitute. Since he did not have with him the usual payment of a kid of a goat for a cult prostitute, he left as a pledge his ring and his staff. As soon as Judah left, Tamar unveiled herself and went home to the compound of Judah. Eventually it was discovered that she was

pregnant. As soon as Judah heard of his daughter-in-law's pregnancy, he became very self-righteous and demanded, "Bring her out and burn her." She responded, "The one by whom I am pregnant is the owner of this ring and this staff", which, of course, were Judah's. She had an incestuous relationship with her father-in-law in order to raise up children to her dead husband's name. Judah publicly confessed that Tamar was "more righteous than I" since he had broken his promise to give her his youngest son. Thus Tamar's first born son, Perez, of the twin sons that she bore Judah, became directly in the line of Jesus.

Then down in verse 4 we read:

**...and to Ram was born Amminadab; and to Amminadab, Nahshon; and to Nahshon, Salmon;**

Salmon is the son of Nahshon, who was a prince of the tribe of Judah.

**...and to Salmon was born Boaz by Rahab;**

The second "tainted" woman was Rahab, a Canaanite prostitute. The Hebrew indicates she was just a common prostitute of the streets, selling her body to make a living. But because of her belief in the Israel's God and her act of faith in saving some Israelite spies because of this belief, she was allowed to join Israel and she eventually married a prince of the tribe of Judah.

**...and to Boaz was born Obed by Ruth;**

They had a son named Boaz, and Boaz married Ruth, the Moabitess, the third "tainted" woman. [Moabites worshipped Baal with all the filthy sexual practices involved.] By the time of her marriage to Boaz, Ruth was a convert to Judaism, having married into a Jewish family who migrated to Moab during a famine in Israel. All the male members of the family died in Moab during the famine. When it was over, Ruth's mother-in-law decided to return to Israel and Ruth chose to return to Israel with her. She abandoned her Moabite culture and gods and adopted Israel's in their place.

Verse 6;

**...and to Jesse was born David the king. And to David was born Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah;**

Here is our fourth "tainted" woman. Notice, God does not call her Bathsheba. Why "the wife of Uriah?" God had made provision in Scripture for a married woman or a betrothed virgin about to be raped. If she was out in the field, where crying out for rescue would do her no good, she was considered innocent. However, in town where she could have been heard, if she did not cry out, she was considered to be adulterous and was stoned along with the man who had the adulterous relationship with her. There is no record Bathsheba ever cried out; she apparently went along with King David in their adulterous affair. So God called her, "the wife of Uriah the Hittite." She was an adulterous woman in the eyes of God even though David later, after having her husband murdered, legally married her.

Then in verse 16, there is the betrothed virgin Mary, who was innocent of any wrong doing but was considered adulterous by the people of her day. She was impregnated by the Holy Spirit of God, but according to a Jewish tradition it was thought she was impregnated out of wedlock by a Roman soldier. While she was not stoned, she was certainly the object of scorn as was Joseph for going ahead with their marriage.

In the genealogical line of His Son, God deliberately names five women, and only five, who from the world's perspective, were all "tainted". From that same line He picked a man after his own heart who would become the greatest king in the history of Israel. What do you think He is trying to tell us by that? He does not care who our ancestors are, what our lifestyle is, who we are, as far as our activities go. All he wants is us. His Son's act of redemption covers all sin -- and in the case of King David this involved both adultery and murder.

All the women named had social stigmas attached to them, but God in deliberately publishing that fact, is saying, "I know they had problems, but I made provision for that, and I want you to know that I have made provision for you too."

So David left his parents there in Moab because of his blood ties to the Moabites, and he returned to his stronghold in the cave of Adullam.

Then God sent Gad, the Prophet, to David to tell him to leave the safety of his stronghold and go back into the wilderness of Judea. [Gad, has a long career as a prophet (II Samuel 24:1) with David. In fact, he and two other prophets, Samuel and Nathan, write David's biography which we are studying in these chapters (I Chronicles 29:29)] Why would God call a prophet, probably away from Samuel up in Ramah, to come all the way down to David to tell him to get out of the safety of his stronghold and go back over into the land of Judah where Saul is waiting? Yes, that is exactly what God is calling on David to do. This is what is known as "tough love."

How will David ever learn to trust God with all his heart, to be a man after God's own heart, if he is safe in his stronghold at Adullam where his safety is tied to a physical relationship of hiding in a cave with his 400 men instead of a spiritual one of simply trusting God in time of danger? So, God deliberately sends him back into Judah where there is risk. The Christian life is a life of risk taking. It is called "faith." Faith is when you step out and act like you believe that what God says is true, even when you do not see how it is ever going to work out. So, David is called to go back into Judah and become a man of faith.

Now, he is back in the land in obedience to God, but the fact remains that he did deceive Ahimelech. He did lie and cheat, and while he is now back in the land in obedience to God and his fellowship with God is restored, that does not stop the natural consequences of his sin. There is a law of God in Galatians that says, "Whatever a man sows, that he shall also reap. [starting in this life down here]. He that sows to the flesh shall reap of the flesh corruption [starting down here]. He that sows to the Spirit shall reap of the Spirit life everlasting." And remember that Galatians was written to Christians.!

David sowed to the flesh and the corruption process goes right on in spite of the fact that David is now back in the land in obedience to God. Here begins the corruption. I Samuel 22, verse 6:

**Then Saul heard that David and the men who were with him had been discovered.** [Now that David is back in Judah with a force of over four hundred men] **Now Saul was sitting in Gibeah, under the tamarisk tree on the height with his spear in his hand,** [that acts as his scepter since Saul is a warrior king] **and all his servants were standing around him. And Saul said to his servants who stood around him, "Hear now, O Benjamites!** [Apparently only his own tribe constitutes Saul's standing army at this time.] **Will the son of Jesse [David was of Judah a rival tribe] also give to all of you fields and vineyards? Will he make you all commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds? For all of you have conspired against me so that there is no one who discloses to me when my son [Jonathan] makes a covenant with the son of Jesse, and there is none of you who is sorry for me or discloses to me that my son has stirred up my servant against me to lie in ambush, as it is this day."**

Did you pick up the implication as to how Saul guaranteed the loyalty of his own tribe despite his increasing madness?. He bought their loyalty, didn't he? [Apparently the government "pork barrel" was not invented by the United States Congress after all.] In chapter 8 of I Samuel, what did God warn the Jews would happen when they got a king? He told them that their sons would be conscripted as soldiers and would have commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds placed over them. He said the king would take their vineyards and their fields and give them to his followers. That is exactly what Saul did. He bought himself followers by treating them royally with other people's property. He told them quite frankly, "You are not going to get out of the tribe of Judah what I have given you." Saul projected his own greed, his own desire, onto his own people. Interestingly enough, they are the one tribe that should be loyal to him since he is a Benjamite. Also he projected onto the two most loyal people in his realm his own bitterness and hostility against God and his blindness and greed and desire for power. He considered both Jonathan and David traitors: the two people who really love him and were willing to die for

him.

What does that say happens to you when you allow bitterness, hostility, rebellion to reside in your life? Blindness! And what do you do when you allow those things to live in your life? What do you do with those feelings, those emotions, those attitudes? You project them onto everyone around you, don't you. You see them through your eyes, not through the eyes of God. They do not become objects of your love, of your grace, of your compassion. They become threats. They are just like you, and you do not like you. You know what you are like. So, you look at them and you see them as being like you. You cannot trust them, and you cannot love them, and you cannot have compassion for them. Everybody is your enemy. Because who is your worst enemy? Yourself, and you project yourself onto them. This is what Saul has done. This is the wage of his sin.

I Samuel 22, Verse 9:

**Then Doeg the Edomite**, [the man who was in the presence of Ahimelech back at the tabernacle. He was going through the rites of purification for some reason and therefore, he was a proselyte to Judaism, although he was an Edomite,] **who was standing by the servants of Saul, answered and said, "I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub And he inquired of the Lord for him, gave him provisions, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine."**

This is exactly what Saul has been waiting to hear.

**Then the king sent someone to summon Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's household**, [the whole high priestly family] **the priests who were in Nob; and all of them came to the king. And Saul said, "Listen now, son of Ahitub."** [When Saul started calling you "the son" of something, watch out. First it was "the son of Jesse" and now it is "the son of Ahitub"] **And he answered, "Here I am, my lord." Saul then said to him, "Why have you and the son of Jesse conspired against me, in that you have given him bread and a sword and have inquired of God for him, that he should rise up against me by lying in ambush as it is this day?"**

Why does Saul leap on this thing so desperately? Who is Saul really angry at? God. Who rejected Saul? God. Who chose David? God. Who sent a spirit of evil to harass Saul? God. Who won't answer Saul when he inquires of Him? God. Saul is really angry at God. But, how can you strike against someone who is invisible? You can't! So, how do you get even with God? By picking on someone who is the visibility of God, the priests of God, and one other person. What is David? God's anointed. What does the word "anointed" mean in Hebrew? Messiah! Saul is after God's Messiah and Saul is after God's believing priests. He is going to wipe out both, if he can. Who is Satan after? Who are his two primary targets? 2,000 years ago he tried to get one of them, the Messiah, Jesus Christ, God's anointed. And who has he been trying to destroy for the last 2,000 years? God's priests, you and I, the believers. See who has taken possession of Saul's thinking processes now. This is not a physical battle. This is only the playing out of an action that has been going on in the spiritual realm. Saul is playing the role of Satan's tool down here, and he does not even know it. Saul has become spiritually blind.

Now, who does Satan really want to be? [Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28.] God! He wants to be God. He thinks he is equal to God. He is called the "Prince of the power of the air" in the New Testament. We'll see how Saul fits into this same picture.

Verse 14:

**Then Ahimelech answered the king and said**, [Essentially the high priest's response follows this pattern: Why wouldn't I have shown favor to David when he stood in this relationship to you Saul?] **"And who among all your servants is as faithful as David,"** [He is your most faithful servant] **"even the king's son-in-law,"** [you gave him your daughter in marriage.] **"who is captain over your guard,"** [You made him head of your picked troops.] **"and is honored in your house?"** [Who sits in a place of honor in your court] **"Did I just begin to inquire of God for him today?"** [I've done this many times before with your knowledge.]

Apparently David, as he went out to fight for Saul, always inquired of God, through Ahimelech, whether or not to go. Ahimelech did inquire of God for David back at the tabernacle of Nob. It was not recorded at that time, but it is recorded here, and what did David do right after he left Nob? He fled to Gath. And what did he have to do at Gath to save his skin? Deceive. What would this seem to indicate about whether God answered David or not? He undoubtedly did not get an answer. God did not answer David when David was deceitful. So David, living by his wits, fled to Gath where he almost got killed. What should God's refusal to answer David back at Nob have told David? "David there is sin in your life. Deal with it. You do not have access to God in your present state," but he ignored it. He lived by his wits, went down to Gath and only avoided getting killed by being deceitful. God was trying to stop this process, but David would not behave himself.

Now, here goes Saul, verse 16:

**But the king said, "You shall surely die, Ahimelech, you and all your father's household!" And the king said to the guards who were attending him, "Turn around and put the priests of the Lord [the priests of YHWH whom Saul now considered his enemies] to death, because their hand also is with David and because they knew that he was fleeing and did not reveal it to me." But the servants of the king were not willing to put forth their hands to attack the priests of the Lord. [Even his own tribe were afraid to touch the priests of YHWH] Then the king said to Doeg, "You turn around and attack the priests." And Doeg the Edomite turned around and attacked the priests, and he killed that day eighty-five men who wore the linen ephod. [The ephod was the sacred garment, the mark of office of God's priests. He wiped out 85 of the 86 priests that were in the high priest's family] And he struck Nob the city of the priests with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and infants; also oxen, donkeys, and sheep, he struck with the edge of the sword.**

Saul put the city under the ban. Do you remember the provision made in Deuteronomy why cities were to be put under the ban, in other words, were to be totally destroyed? Deuteronomy 13 gives us a concept of where Saul's mind is now, and who is Saul's god now. In Deuteronomy 13 God gives some commandments on how to deal with false prophets, the people who lure His people away from the true God himself.

Deuteronomy 13, verse 12:

**"If you hear in one of your cities, which the Lord your God is giving you to live in, [this is talking about Jews in Jewish cities] anyone saying that some worthless men have gone out from among you and have seduced the inhabitants of their city, saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods (whom you have not known), then you shall investigate and search out and inquire thoroughly. And if it is true and the matter established that this abomination has been done among you, you shall surely strike the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, [now these are Jews killing Jews for idolatry] utterly destroying it and all that is in it and its cattle with the edge of the sword. [the city is to be obliterated] Then you shall gather all its booty into the middle of its open square and burn the city and all its booty with fire as a whole burnt offering to the Lord your God; and it shall be a ruin forever. It shall never be rebuilt. And nothing from that which is put under the ban shall cling to your hand [you cannot take any booty out of there], in order that the Lord may turn from His burning anger and show mercy to you, and have compassion on you and make you increase, just as He has sworn to your fathers, if you will listen to the voice of the Lord your God, keeping all His commandments."**

Saul orders the city of the priests of YHWH put under the ban. Who is Saul's god now? Himself! [He doesn't recognize that it is Satan.] He sees idolatry against himself as idolatry against his god, namely himself. Saul is an Old Testament man. He knows the punishment of God for idolatry. He executes on the city of Nob, the priests of YHWH, the very ban that God says is to be exercised on those who go against God.

A city is to be put under the ban because of what? Idolatry! False gods! What does Saul consider YHWH right now? A false god. What do you think Satan offered Saul? What did he offer Eve? What was the key offer to Eve? "Be like God." What do you think he has offered to Saul? "Be like God." Saul has been suckered into being his

own god. This same sales talk worked on Eve who was deceived into disobeying the known commandment of God, and, with Adam's willful deliberate disobedience, plunged the whole human race into the fall. Satan has not changed his approach one iota in thousands of years. Why should he when it has been working so well on those who are not focussed on the true God.

What does this say that you and I should be particularly careful about? Any approach to us by Satan will have as the key appeal "pride," the exaltation of "self," the putting of "self" in the place of God. Wondering, "Is God really fair?" That is what Satan told Eve, "Is God really fair? Is he really what He claims to be: holy, righteous, just and good?" And Eve doubted God and left herself wide open to Satan's influence in her thinking, and the fall of man followed.

We would never ask that ourselves, would we? Would we? Would you like a little gauge of whether you would or not? Saul just had killed 85 priests of YHWH, plus women, children, infants, cattle, sheep, and oxen all of them free from involvement in any wrong doing in this situation, and God let him do it. On the other hand, God kept alive, protected and will make king of Israel David who caused it all, and caused it all by his own deceit and wrongdoing. Now, how fair do you think God is? Don't pick on Saul if you are wondering in your heart, was God fair? Does God have the right to allow innocent people to be killed while He saves the life of the wicked sinner who caused their destruction? Can He assert that right and still remain fair? How you answer that will determine your theology, my friends. I am asking you, what was the first reaction deep in your own heart when I put that question to you? Wasn't it, "He was not fair!" Thus you see that we are still open to the same deception that Saul and Eve were. Do not kid yourself; the moment you begin to question God's sovereignty is the moment you open the door to Satanic assault. Satan always comes in by picking on the character of God, the character of Christ. The cults do exactly this in their perversions of true theology. They always involve the character of Christ, making him something less than the Lord God Almighty. It works for them so why should they change Satan's sales pitch. So if any of you had a feeling that God was not quite fair, be careful. Don't let Satan sucker you.

If you had the feeling, "What a rotten deal that David is alive, the one who caused the problem and even infants were killed by the sword," then let me ask you another question, "Where did the infants go when they died?" To be with God. "Where did the children go when they died?" To be with God. "Where did the believing priests and their families go when they died?" To be with God. Now, if you really believe what the apostle Paul states in Philippians when he says, "I would rather depart and be with Christ which is very much better," [The future life in heaven is so much better than this present earthly one, that if I had a vote, Paul says in Philippians, I would vote to go home.] then you can see God gave these that were slain a gift. Instead of continuing on through the struggle and the suffering of "boot camp" down here, he promoted them from their earthly life to live in His presence forever more. But we are so "this world" oriented, however, that our first thought is, "God is not fair." We must remember always to keep an eternal perspective when we read the Word of God.

Someone from the audience just asked "What do you mean when you say 'God just allowed this to happen,' that God had no responsibility in that?" No, God takes full responsibility for whatever happens to his own. He never evades his responsibilities, and I make no excuses for my God. God could have stopped this whole episode with the snap of a finger. All he had to do was give Saul a massive heart attack, and that would have been the end of that. There was no Stanford University Medical Center in those days. However, he did not. He chose to make David king of Israel, and David would be Israel's greatest king. God was going to make David into what God Himself calls him "a man after my own hear," and when God finished working on David, David would be exactly that. Two of the advantages that go with being God is that you are always right and that you always win; and the sooner we learn this and bow to its implications in our lives, the sooner we will really enjoy being God's children.

God's apparent "extravagance" with the lives of believers is classically illustrated in the martyrdom of the early Christians. They, together with their families, were thrown into arenas as food for lions. They were put on stakes, covered with tar and lit as torches for banquets. Actually the word "martyr" in the Greek simply means "witness." But because in those days so many times witnessing cost you your life, the term became consistently used as a witness by death. "Martyr" today means to die for your witness. Those early Christians died by the hundreds and God could have stopped that, but he did not. But, again, take your eyes off this life a moment and think, "Where

did those believers go when they died and with Whom were they after death?" Additionally, early accounts show that numbers of pagans became Christians by watching the way Christians died. Again, if God chooses to evangelize the lost in this manner, it is His right. "The blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church."

Next God is going to deal with David. God is going to teach David a lesson in unjust suffering. He does discipline his own. While He does protect them, He also disciplines them. Next week Chapter 23.

### **Prayer:**

Father, we thank you so much for the way you expose the fallacy that goes around that this earth is so important, that this life is where it is, that we can be like gods and have our own little empires and our own little ego trips and do all our own little things and it does not really matter. Thank you, Father, for making us realize that when we begin to question you and your actions and your attitudes, we begin to put ourselves in the place of God, and we open the door wide to the god of this world, and he moves right on in and reinforces our stupidity. Help us, Father, to be mindful that that is exactly what occurs just as night must follow day. Make us wise as serpents and harmless as doves. Thank you, Father, in Jesus' name.

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## **Chapter Twelve**

### **David in Wilderness of Maon**

1 Samuel 23

[Teaching on the first 12 verses of I Samuel 23 is missing. They are quoted here for continuity.]

I Samuel 23, verses 1-2:

**Then they told David, saying, "Behold, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah, and are plundering the threshing floors." So David inquired of the Lord, saying, "Shall I go and attack these Philistines?" And the Lord said to David, "Go and attack the Philistines, and deliver Keilah."**

Verse 3:

**But David's men said to him, "Behold, we are afraid here in Judah. How much more then if we go to Keilah against the ranks of the Philistines?"**

Verses 4-5:

**Then David inquired of the Lord once more. And the Lord answered him and said, "Arise, go down to Keilah, for I will give the Philistines into your hand." So David and his men went to Keilah and fought with the Philistines; and he led away their livestock and struck them with a great slaughter. Thus David delivered the inhabitants of Keilah.**

Verses 6-8:

**Now it came about, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David at Keilah, that he came down with an ephod in his hand. When it was told Saul that David had come to Keilah, Saul said, "God has delivered him into my hand, for he shut himself in by entering a city with double gates and bars." So Saul summoned all the people for war, to go down to Keilah to**



**besiege David and his men.**

Verses 9-11:

**Now David knew that Saul was plotting evil against him; so he said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring the ephod here." Then David said, "O Lord God of Israel, Thy servant has heard for certain that Saul is seeking to come to Keilah to destroy the city on my account. Will the men of Keilah surrender me into his hand? Will Saul come down just as Thy servant has heard?" And the Lord said, "He will come down."**

Verse 12:

**Then David said, "Will the men of Keilah surrender me and my men into the hand of Saul?" And the Lord said, "They will surrender you."**

[The teaching continues.]

I Samuel 23, verse 13:

**Then David and his men, about six hundred, arose and departed from Keilah, and they went wherever they could go. When it was told Saul that David had escaped from Keilah, he gave up the pursuit.**

Suppose you are a people with very little loyalty to anyone but yourself and your own little tribal situation, and suppose you, too, dream of fields and vineyards and power and delightfully attractive things which Saul has been doling out to his own people, the Benjamites, the least of the Judahites and not to the Judahites. How can you [the men of Keilah] get your share of the spoils of Israel? Deliver David into Saul's hands and then you will get fields and vineyards and power over thousands and hundreds.

Besides, David isn't even a real Jew. His great-grandmother was a Moabitess and his great-great-grandmother was a Canaanitess.

You can see the thoughts going through the minds of the Judahites. David would be Social Security for whoever gave him up, an annuity plan, stock options with a capital S. And David; he has nowhere to go except to God. Look what God does to him.

I Samuel 23, verse 14:

**And David stayed in the wilderness in the strongholds, and remained in the hill country in the wilderness of Ziph [which is to the west of the middle of the Dead Sea in an exceedingly barren area]. And Saul sought him every day, but God did not deliver him into his hand.**

Day after day after day Saul tried to trap David. Day after day after day YHWH protected him. David has six hundred men now, armed with weapons of iron and well provisioned. He has very skillfully avoided Saul day after day. It is almost inevitable that he would think, "I am a pretty good general. We are living off the land, not a very friendly land either, and we are making it. We are beating Saul at his own game." And, of course, the longer David keeps his men safe, the more their loyalty to him grows. So David is going to get a second little testing to teach him about his own resources.

But God is a very faithful God. Before he ever puts you through a test, he adheres to his promise in I Corinthians 10: 13 where he says he will never test you beyond that which you are able to bear but will, with every testing, provide a way of escape that you might be able to go through it. He will in some way strengthen you before the testing, so, when it comes, you will be walking in righteousness with him and will be able to handle the test and not collapse. In this case he does a beautiful thing.

I Samuel 23, verse 15:

**Now David became aware that Saul had come out to seek his life while David was in the wilderness of Ziph at Horesh. And Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David at Horesh, [Remember Jonathan was at home. He would not take part in hunting David, and when he finds out his father is going to go down to Horesh, he goes down first] and encouraged him in God. Thus he said to him, "Do not be afraid, because the hand of Saul my father shall not find you, and you will be king over Israel and I will be next to you; and Saul my father knows that also." So the two of them made a covenant before the Lord [before YHWH, the God of the Covenant] and David stayed at Horesh while Jonathan went to his house. [He went back home. He would not participate.]**

To strengthen David before the next test, which is really going to be tough, God sends him Jonathan, the one man who has the most to lose if David lives. He would not only lose his vineyards, his fields, and his command of thousands but also the kingship. With David dead, Jonathan would be king of Israel and Saul's dynasty would continue. But God deliberately sends Jonathan, who makes a covenant with David, [before the Lord, YHWH, the God of the covenant who anointed David and covenanted to make him king of Israel] that he will be second to David and that David will be king. So of all the people who stood to gain by David's death, the one with the most to gain is the one sent by God to make a covenant with David regarding the kingdom. Jonathan gives up everything when, with just a single knife thrust to the stomach, he could have had it all. Jonathan is committed to David becoming king.

Now, having strengthened David, God puts him to the second test. The Keilahites, you remember, were planning to betray David, but they were not going to initiate the betrayal. They would let Saul do that. He was going to surround their city and destroy it in order to be sure he got David and all his men. The Keilahites would just hand David over. But now we have the Ziphites. The Ziphites live to the west of the Dead Sea, right in the heart of Judah. They are members of the same tribe as David. You would think they would be on his side, but all the fields and vineyards and command of thousands and hundreds are going to the Benjamites. Like the Keilahites, the Ziphites want a share of the spoil, and God has delivered into their hands David, the very thing they need to gain all they want the most.

I Samuel 23, verse 19:

**Then Ziphites came up to Saul at Gibeah, [They go all the way up to Benjamin territory, to Saul's headquarters. They initiate the betrayal] saying, "Is David not hiding with us in the strongholds at Horesh, on the hill of Hachilah, which is on the south of Jeshimon? [the desert] Now then, O king, come down according to all the desire of your soul to do so; and our part shall be to surrender him into the king's hand." And Saul said, "May you be blessed of the Lord [YHWH]; for you have had compassion on me. [It is interesting how religious the flesh gets, and not just blessed of God, but blessed of the God of the covenant, their God, for a little betrayal. But Saul is no fool] Go now, make more sure, and investigate and see his place where his haunt is, and who has seen him there; [get your intelligence really down solid] for I am told that he is very cunning. [This is probably true. This is probably the thing that God is now going to deal with in David] So look, and learn about all the hiding places where he hides himself, and return to me with certainty, and I will go with you; and it shall come about if he is in the land that I will search him out among all the thousands of Judah."**

I believe by now David is really convinced he is very cunning. He now has a reputation for being very cunning. He has a pretty good track record for being very cunning, and I think he believes he is actually becoming very cunning. Somewhere along the line YHWH is being displaced by David when in reality it is YHWH taking care of David.

This is very easy to do. I find it true here. I have had people come up and tell me how much this study has blessed them. Do you know my first thought? "What a great Bible teacher you are, Bob. Isn't the Lord lucky to have you on his side instead of some everyday run-of-the-mill kind of guy?" Do you know how I start studying every Monday morning? In sheer panic. Have you ever read I Samuel through? Take chapter 23, for instance. I read the

passage and say to myself, "What on earth is in there? It is just nothing but a Travelogue, and I am not allowed to use slides." David goes from Adullam to Keilah and back to Adullam and runs around the country a little bit. That is it! Big deal! I say to the Lord, "Lord, down the road on Sunday, I have to teach this passage and there is nothing here!". Now cold clammy sweat begins to possess me, and all of a sudden I don't think I am the world's greatest Bible teacher or that God is all that lucky to have me on his side. I am extremely fortunate that God even consents to deal with me, and, if He doesn't start talking through his Scripture, I am one dead teacher come Sunday morning. It is a very healthy, but a very unpleasant experience, and it occurs every Monday morning.

So that is what God is teaching David here. David thinks he is very cunning, and he is going to be "out-cunned" by some people who are smarter than he is. These Ziphites are brilliant in their deceit.

I Samuel 23, verse 24:

**Then they** [the Ziphites] **arose and went to Ziph before Saul. Now David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon** [which is just south of Ziph] **in the Arabah** [the great Rift Valley that runs from the Sea of Galilee all the way down the Jordanian Valley to the Gulf of Akabah] **to the south of Jeshimon** [the wilderness. They are out in a desert area]. **When Saul and his men went to seek him, they** [the Ziphites] **told David,** [Saul comes looking after David, and the Ziphites go to David and say, "Hey, you know who is coming, Saul.] **and he came down to the rock**

There is a mountainous range in this wilderness of desert. "The rock" is probably a conelike mountain or mound sitting out in the desert all alone. It would be a beautiful hiding place as long as no one knew you were there, but the Ziphites have told Saul all of the hiding places of David. Everyone of them! Trying to capture a guerrilla band like David's is like hitting a body of mercury. It goes in all directions! Saul needs to get David holed up somewhere, like he had in Keilah, so he can surround him. The Ziphites tell David, "Saul is coming after you," so he heads for this cone where he can hide. No one is going to look for him in the middle of the desert on a barren mountain with very little water, in fact, there is very possibly no water there at all. No pasture either, and 600 men needing food and drink. Ordinarily no one would look there but the Ziphites tell Saul exactly where David is. So there is David holed up, and Saul's got him.

And when Saul heard it, he pursued David in the wilderness of Maon [Where did Saul hear of it? From David's dear friends the Ziphites. They had already counted the vineyards and fields, and they were putting on their armor and putting on their braid] And Saul went on one side of the mountain, and David and his men on the other side of the mountain; and David was hurrying to get away from Saul, for Saul and his men were surrounding David and his men to seize them.

Saul knows exactly how to trap David on a conical mountain. He goes around one side and David goes around the other, just like a merry-go-round. Somewhere along the line one of them is going to have to break loose and head out into the desert where they will very easily be spotted. Once they are spotted, they are dead. Saul has David just where he wants him now. Saul knows it, and so does David. All of a sudden David is going to get that Monday morning panic feeling. He will be reading a travelogue with no slides, and he has to produce, or he is one dead pigeon. This is exactly where God wants him. He wants dead pigeons, for generals, for kings, for Bible teachers. All God wants from us is a hunk of dead meat, and the deader the better. That way he can take that hunk of dead meat and make it alive with his life. So whatever comes from it is Jesus Christ, the Lord God Almighty, and not the flesh doing its best to help God run his kingdom. He wants David as a hunk of dead meat, so he can take that dead meat and make it a king "after his own heart." If he has to, God will run David around that mountain until he is ragged. And God does, but remember, he will with "every temptation, provide a way of escape," and here is David's escape.

I Samuel 23, verse 27:

**But a messenger came to Saul, saying, "Hurry and come, for the Philistines have made a raid on the land."** [Philistines are not so dumb either. If Saul is going to be down in the south of Judah with all his armies, it leaves the northern part of Israel wide open, and it is threshing time. So the Philistines are having

themselves a ball with all the wheat harvest while Saul is busy down south chasing one guy.] **So Saul returned from pursuing David, and went to meet the Philistines; therefore they [David and his men] called that place the Rock of Escape**

They commemorated it. That says something about David and his men's view of their own resources as adequate. They memorialized that place as a worship act to their God, as an altar like Abraham. As Abraham trekked through the land, wherever God appeared to him, he erected an altar. David and his men knew who got them out of that mess, YHWH, and they called it the Rock of Escape, literally "the Rock of Slipperies." They slipped away from Saul.

I Samuel 23, verse 29:

**And David went up from there and stayed in the strongholds of Engedi.**

Engedi is way up, in the middle, on the western side of the Dead Sea. It is full of limestone cliffs and pock-marked with limestone caves, honeycombed with little valleys, the kind of place David ought to be. He is not going to be trapped again. He is no longer quite so smart, and now he realizes but for YHWH he would be dead. By the way, there is a tremendous water supply up there. It is called "The Fountain of the Young Goats" So everything David needs to supply him is there.

How did God provide a way of escape that David might be able to get through the desert? Who were the real agents? The Philistines, the enemy. One thing God likes to do in your life and my life is to take the very enemies that have you petrified and use them to provide a way of escape. Have you ever noticed that? That is what he does here. He takes the very people David feared to make his enemies, but which God made him make his enemies, and uses them to rescue David. With great reverence I say, God loves to throw his sovereignty around to show us what kind of a God he really is, totally adequate for any of our needs. He loves to deliberately take the thing you fear the most and use it to deliver you from that fear, just as he has done here with David.

Next time we will look at Chapter 24.

### **Prayer:**

Father, we just thank you so much for your Word and what it says to our hearts. It brings up these wonderful principles of your faithfulness, Father, not our ability, and how you are committed to making us men and women of God, men and women after your own heart, men and women totally dependent upon you as our Lord as we walk this earth. Father, we just pray that we might remember that this is your purpose and that nothing happens apart from this purpose to make us totally your availability, totally your visibility, totally yours. Father, teach us to look upon everything that happens in our lives as having this purpose behind it, having the sovereignty of a God who can take our enemies, our fears, our greatest horrors and use them as instruments to allow us to go through the suffering, through the testings and make us glorious creatures in the end. Thank you, Father, in Jesus' name. Amen.

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## **Chapter Thirteen**

**At Engedi, David spares Saul**

**1 Samuel 24**

You recall last week in Chapter 23, God taught David not to leave back doors open as a means of escape instead

of wholly trusting God. He was giving David, what we call in the Navy, our standard cold salt water bath. He was teaching him how to become a man of God, and it was a pretty rough process. Remember David left a back door to the Philistines open in case he needed to flee there, but God instructed him go up and recapture Keilah from the Philistines which made him odious in their eyes; therefore, that back door was slammed shut. Neither could he go back into the land of Israel without being pursued by Saul. Last week we saw him caught on that somewhat conical hill in the wilderness of Maon with Saul surrounding him. He could not flee into the desert because he would be very visible. At this time, the Philistines, taking advantage of Saul's absence, mounted an attack, which drove Saul away from David to them. So, at this time, the very enemy that David was afraid of making was used of God to save him salvation from Saul.

Now God is going to deal some more with David. Saul has fled back to fight the Philistines and to save Israel, while David has fled to the wilderness of Engedi, which is about half way up the Dead Sea and west of it. It is a very wild area, but that particular location has a water supply and is pockmarked with limestone caves, which are ideal for hiding. David has 600 men, possibly families too. However, tradition tells us that one cave is big enough that 30,000 people hid in it during a violent storm. So we are talking about mammoth caves even if that number has been exaggerated over time.

Here in Chapter 24, we have David safe in Engedi, away from Saul and everything under control. You might think, "Now God will leave him alone." Well, look what happens.

I Samuel, Chapter 24, verse 1:

**Now it came about when Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, saying, "Behold, David is in the wilderness of Engedi." Then Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel, and went to seek David and his men in front of the Rocks of the Wild Goats.**

This time Saul is going to get David for sure. He does not just send down troops. He gets together, what we call in the Navy, a special task force: 3,000 hand picked men. His fighting men outnumber David's 5 to 1, and this time he means to wipe him out. If Saul does not get David fairly soon, he will lose his kingdom to the Philistines. They are infesting the area. So he comes right back to pursue David and to relentlessly hunt him down.

Why is God so relentless? You would think David had had enough. What is God after? What has been the experience in your life when God, in his relentlessness, will not let you go? Have you every thought what God is preparing you for? Why is he doing this? What is His perspective compared with our perspective? How do we view this time, this life? This life is only a temporary thing, and God is determined down here in "Boot Camp," or if you are an Army veteran, "Basic Training," to perfect us, to bring us to completion for the goal he has for us for all eternity. A true lover never lets his beloved fall short of what the true lover wants for her. That is true in a marriage. It is true in the parent and child relationship. If you are a proper parent you will not let up in teaching your children right from wrong. You will hang in there and hang in there and discipline them as often as you have to so they will learn the things you do not want them to forget. You love your children relentlessly, as God loves us and by this very relentlessness with which he pursues us, God is preparing for us an "eternal weight of glory," and he will pursue us right to the grave. The Apostle Paul says, "I am confident of this very thing that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus." [Philippians 1:6]

There is a second reason God relentlessly pursues us. When you successfully handle something difficult, it not only makes you stronger but also a good counselor. Why? Because you now have experience in that area of life. If you are having struggles in your marriage, what can a Catholic priest do for you? He has never been married. If you are having a struggle with your kids, what can he do for you if he has never had children? To whom do you want to go when you are hurting? If you are an alcoholic, you want to go to an alcoholic who has made it back to sobriety. If you are on drugs, you want a former addict who has been there and come out of it and is now clean. If you are having emotional struggles, you want somebody who has been in the pits. You need someone who has been where you are. So God will do to us exactly what He did to his Son, Jesus Christ, whom he loved with all the infinite love of his heart. What was that? Ultimately He crucified Him, but before that look at the life He gave Him. Right off, He was probably considered an illegitimate child in Nazareth because his mother conceived him

out of wedlock. He was born into a poor family. In His teaching He would have been considered an upstart by the rabbis of his day because he had no background, no education other than some synagogue schooling. Additionally He spoke with that peculiar Galilean accent rather than a pure Judean one. His father apparently died quite early, and he became the carpenter of Nazareth. In Nazareth the soil conditions were such that it was necessary many times to dig down many feet to build a house on bed rock. [Remember the parable about building your house on a rock and not on sand?] Jesus must have sweat through many hours of hard manual labor and become darkened by the sun to reach that bed rock and to build houses that would stand firm. Then his public ministry of healing the sick, raising the dead, always, doing good, teaching truth, exhibiting a sinless life while befriending sinners, from prostitutes to greedy tax collectors, produced for Him what? Hatred, relentless persecution by the Jewish religious authorities, eventual desertion by his disciples, and finally the worst kind of death the Romans could inflict. As the Scriptures point out, the Son of God learned obedience from the things which He suffered.

But what about now? What does Hebrews 4:14-16 say about the high priesthood of Jesus Christ with reference to us? How is it we can run to our High Priest with a sense that he will understand us? Because he has been where we are. We do not have a High Priest who cannot be reached by the feelings of our weaknesses since He is "One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin." Therefore, we are to draw near to Him with confidence [literally the word has the idea of "with freedom of speech"] to the throne of grace, [undeserved favor] that we might receive mercy [even if we have already fallen flat on our faces in the gutter] and may find grace to help in time of need [Just when we are about to give in to temptation]. How is this possible? Because He knows our feelings; He knows what we are going through; He knows all our struggles. Thus He wants us to come to Him with confidence. Don't play games with him; He has been there. In the same way, God is determined to make David a "priest," as well as a king; Someone who can reach out and empathize with sinners.

From a human standpoint, if you had to pick the worst situation you could think of in your Christian ministry, who of all the people in your life would you think would be the worst person to minister to? Your enemy, of course. Here is David being relentlessly pursued by Saul who has now become a usurper on the throne, who is someone who hates him, who is trying to kill him, who has drafted a special task force to do the job. David meanwhile is righteous and has been anointed by God as rightful king of Israel. Here he is a hot-headed Jew, runt of the litter, obliged to fight his brothers and sisters all his early life to get his fair share, but now anointed king of Israel and what does he get; Saul on his tail everywhere he goes. He is undoubtedly thinking, "How come God is letting this happen to me? What did I do to deserve this?" The red hair starts standing on end, and he needs another cold salt water bath because God wants to use him to minister to his enemy Saul. God loves Saul with all his heart and wants him to repent. He does not want him to founder as he is now doing. And God wants to use David as His instrument to bring Saul back to Himself.

So let us see what happens.

First let me read this poem which appears in Chapter 2 of Ray Stedman's book "The Servant Who Rules," Mark 1-8. It is anonymous:

When God wants to drill a man,  
And thrill a man,  
And skill a man;  
When God wants to mold a man  
To play the noblest part,  
When he yearns with all his heart  
To create so great and bold a man  
That all the world shall be amazed,  
Watch his methods, watch his ways--

How he ruthlessly perfects  
Whom he royally elects.  
How he hammers him and hurts him,

And with mighty blows, converts him  
Into trial shapes of clay

Which only God understands,  
While his tortured heart is crying,  
And he lifts beseeching hands.  
How he bends but never breaks  
When his good he undertakes.  
How he uses  
Whom he chooses,

And with every purpose, fuses him,  
By every act, induces him  
To try his splendor out.  
God knows what he's about.  
This is exactly what God is doing with David now.

I Samuel, Chapter 24, verse 3:

**And he [Saul] came to the sheepfolds on the way, where there was a cave; and Saul went in to relieve himself. Now David and his men were sitting in the inner recesses of the cave. And the men of David said to him, "Behold, this is the day of which the Lord said to you, 'Behold; I am about to give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it seems good to you.'" Then David arose and cut off the edge of Saul's robe secretly. And it came about afterward that David's conscience bothered him because he had cut off the edge of Saul's robe.**

As Saul comes out of bright sunlight, which reflects off the limestone cave, into a dark cavern, David is sitting in the back of the cave with his 600 men, or at least a good number of them. Saul sits down, facing out, minding his own business. To the oriental mind, this is a God given opportunity. Saul who has been pursuing David and his men, making their life a living hell, is sitting in the light at the front of the cave while they, who outnumber him maybe 100 to 1, are in the dark at the back of the cave. Saul is theirs! So David's men put the pressure on. Don't bother to check with God. "Look at the circumstances! They must be from God. God has delivered Saul into your hands." Unfortunately David listens to them. "Then David arose and cut off the edge of Saul's robe secretly."

Why did he do that? Have you ever done this? You can't do what you really want to do so you do a symbolic act, in this case a token slaying. Have you ever had the boss chew you up one side and down the other, while you sit and say, "Yes, Sir" and "No, Sir" in the proper order? You have to because you have a mortgage, kids with teeth being straightened or kids in college, and you need the job. So you suffer unjustly as he chews on you all day long. By day's end, you are really angry. You can't talk back to your boss or you will lose your job, but you have a wife at home, and since you are both Christians, she has to stay with you. So, you go home and snarl at her. Who are you really snarling at? Your boss! You are symbolically saying, "Stick it in your ear, boss."

Well, Saul has been trying to kill David for sometime, and David would love to kill Saul to get even, but Saul is the Lord's anointed, so David's hands are tied. But he can't resist sneaking up and symbolically killing Saul by cutting off the edge of his robe. Boy, it feels good! But who is David really cutting off? God! Who has allowed that nasty boss to unjustly chew you up one side and down the other? God! So who are you really angry at? God!

David is no more given to resisting temptation than we are. Here is his opportunity to kill Saul, and he cannot resist. In his heart he indeed killed Saul. Remember what the Lord said about adultery in Matthew 5:27? He says, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery'; but I say to you, that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart." If you savor the lust in your mind, you have already committed adultery or fornication, and you need to confess it before God, repent and put it away. You do not congratulate yourself that you refrained from the physical act.

This is where David is. David wanted to kill Saul, and in his own mind, he did kill Saul, and it tasted delicious. That is why verse 5 says, "...it came about afterward [after he had cut off the edge of Saul's garment] that David's conscience bothered him because he had cut off the edge of Saul's robe."

I Samuel 24, verse 6:

**So he said to his men,** [David now realizes he has sinned against God. He knows in his heart that Saul is God's anointed, and that God has allowed him to stay on the throne this long because God chose to do so.] **"Far be it from me because of the Lord that I should do this thing to my lord, the Lord's anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, since he is the Lord's anointed."**

He is convicted about "stretching out his hand" against Saul.

I Samuel 24, verse 7:

**And David persuaded his men** [literally "tore apart" his men. These men really want to kill Saul. Remember they were people "in distress," literally "bitter of soul," people who were being hounded by Saul now and previously people who were misfits in Saul's kingdom. They were not nice people, and they all had something against Saul.] **with these words** [It must have taken quite a bit of persuasion and it must have been done in very whispered tones] **and did not allow them to rise up against Saul. And Saul arose, left the cave, and went on his way.**

What did David do here? By cutting off Saul's robe he did kill Saul in his mind. Then, when conscience smote him, he did what? "For the Lord's sake," he essentially said, "I can't do this," and he took a positive step of repentance. Mind you it was not just a little confession, "Sorry, Lord." It was a positive step of repentance. Do not ever kid yourself that when I John 1:9 says, "Confess your sins," that it means just a little, "Sorry, Lord," and then it's O.K. to repeat the offense. "Confess" literally means "To say with God;" to see it exactly as God sees it and to call it what God calls it. Then God forgives you and you are cleansed. As we saw, the process may possibly involve a salt water bath, but it requires true repentance, a change of mind. David made a positive step of repentance here.

Now, when you have confessed your sin and have truly repented of it, and have claimed the forgiveness and cleansing of God, how useable are you of God? Well, Romans 8:28 says, "All things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to his purpose?" Having sinned, which has eternal consequences, since you have lost some reward at the judgement seat of Christ, what does a redemptive God do with that act of sin? He makes it work for good. He takes the very person who did the sinning and makes him available to be used with other people with the same problem. That is exactly what he does here with David. The sin was wrong. God does not condone it and there is an eternal loss of reward on David's part, but God does open up a ministry.

Now, why would David's ministry to Saul be so effective in Saul's life? If I have been through what the people I am ministering to are going through, I do not have to play games with them. I have been where they are, and this gives me a freedom and authority in talking to them which I would not otherwise have. I have been there. I have been freed. I know what works. I know that if they will face up to the same thing that I faced up to, if they will call it what it is and take a true step of positive repentance, it will be freeing for them too.

So look at what God does with David now that he has been through the steps. What was David's sin? Murder! What is Saul's sin? Murder! They are both murderers. They both want to kill each other. But now that David has mastered that desire, he is the ideal person to use in the life of Saul. Watch how God uses him.

I Samuel 24, verse 8:

**Now afterward** [After this process of committing the sin, of repenting when he saw it was actually against God and of taking a positive step of repentance] **David arose and went out of the cave and called after Saul, saying,** [Apparently there is now some distance between David and Saul] **"My lord the king!" And when**



**Saul looked behind him, David bowed with his face to the ground and prostrated himself.**

What is the first step in dealing with a person who has the same sin you have, particularly if they are older? As Paul tells Timothy, in I Timothy 5, "Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but appeal to him as a father." The fact that you have become victorious over this particular sin does not make you superior. You were saved by the grace of God and but for the grace of God you would still be a Saul. It was only by the grace of God that you were able to appropriate the life of Christ and become victor. You are not better than the victim, and, therefore, you are to treat that person as an equal or in the case of an older man, as a father. It should not give you a judgmental perspective but a brother's perspective. You are both victims of the same problem. "One of us happens to have been able to appropriate the life of Christ, and I would like to tell you how you can do it also and have the same freedom I have." David does not denigrate Saul, he bows to the earth and calls him, "My lord, the king."

I Samuel 24, verse 9:

**And David said to Saul, "Why do you listen to the words of men, saying, 'Behold, David seeks to harm you'? Behold, this day your eyes have seen that the Lord had given you today into my hand in the cave, and some said to kill you, but my eye had pity on you; and I said, 'I will not stretch out my hand against my lord, for he is the Lord's anointed.'**

What does David recognize about Saul and his position as king? David has been anointed king of Israel by God, but Saul is still on the throne? Saul is determined to stay there by his own might, but he is still there because God has allowed it. He is still God's anointed king of Israel. David is not yet ready. David now, having repented, gets God's perspective on the situation; he no longer sees it from his own perspective that says, "I was anointed king years ago, but Saul is still sitting on that throne." No, he is a kid yet compared to Saul, and God has a whole training program for him. Saul is on the throne by God's permission not by Saul's wisdom or purity. So David now sees Saul from God's perspective.

I Samuel, verse 11:

**"Now, my father, [that is exactly what I Timothy says to call him, your father] see!"**

What does the word "my father" say about David's attitude toward Saul? What has happened to David now that he looks at Saul from God's perspective? He feels love for him even though Saul still wants to kill him. God loves Saul, and he loves him right where he is, as a murderer and usurper. David, now, seeing him from God's perspective, can look upon Saul, his enemy, and see him as a man who needs help, and he loves him. He comes out with, "My father," not with "My king," but "My father."

I Samuel 24, verse 11b:

**"Indeed, see the edge of your robe in my hand! For in that I cut off the edge of your robe and did not kill you, know and perceive that there is no evil or rebellion in my hands, and I have not sinned against you, though you are lying in wait for my life to take it."**

This is a glorious passage. When David repents and agrees with God, God takes that very piece of robe David had sinfully cut off and sanctifies it! He takes the very thing used for sin and uses it for righteousness. This is the redemption of God; Romans 8:28 in full bloom. Cutting off that robe was cutting Saul's throat in David's mind. It symbolized murder. However, in the hands of God and a repentant man it becomes an instrument of redemption. Since David has dealt with his own sin and understands that it was against God, he is now used of God as a mediator for Saul. He begins to focus Saul on the real issue in Saul's life which is God's will because he has finally realized God's will was the real issue in his life too.

I Samuel 24, verse 12:

**"May the Lord judge between you and me, and may the Lord avenge me on you; but my hand**

**shall not be against you. As the proverb of the ancients says, 'Out of the wicked comes forth wickedness;' but my hand shall not be against you. After whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom are you pursuing? A dead dog, a single flea? The Lord therefore be judge and decide between you and me; and may He see and plead my cause, and deliver me from your hand."**

David is trying to get Saul to focus on YHWH, the God of Israel, the God of the covenant; the God who anointed Saul king; the God who allows Saul to stay king. Saul is not fighting David, he is fighting God. God would like Saul to repent too, and he uses David who can now focus Saul on God because he himself has seen his need to focus on God.

There is an interesting simile here. In that day a dead dog was a cur, a mangy cur. According to David, who is the king of Israel pursuing? "A dead dog." What is he implying there about his ability to wrest the throne from Saul? Does David feel in his heart that he has any ability to get that throne on his own? No, he sees himself as "a dead dog." Dead dogs can not bite. "I have no ability to take this throne away from you, oh King of Israel!" What else does he feel like, "a single flea." On the carcass of this dead dog, Saul is after this one flea from all the infestation of this whole carcass. That is pretty stupid, isn't it? Well, what is Israel being infested with right now while Saul spends his time chasing one young man?. The Philistines! They are infesting the country. There are fleas everywhere in Israel, and Saul is giving away the kingdom piece-by-piece while chasing "one single flea" on the carcass of "a dead dog." David not only points Saul toward God, he also appeals to his reason in an attempt to get him to focus. David also asks that the Lord plead his cause, which God does beautifully. But what does it say about how much the Lord really wants Saul to repent, this man who is violently opposed to God? How far will God go to redeem a sinner? All the way! Saul deserves nothing but the condemnation of God, and God still loves him and wants him to repent.

Now at least Saul feels remorse if not true repentance yet.

I Samuel 24, verse 16:

**Now it came about when David had finished speaking these words to Saul, that Saul said, "Is this your voice, my son David?"**

What has Saul been calling David up to now? "Son of Jesse," son of that family with Moabitesses and Canaanites in it, [even one marriage to an Ammonite], a nothing kid, that runt of the litter who comes from a mixed bag of a background, not even a pure Jew. What happens when David shows compassion and mercy to Saul and calls him, "My father," shows him respect which Saul does not deserve, prostrates himself and calls him, "My lord, my king." What does it do to the heart of the enemy? It melts it, doesn't it? "David, my beloved," is what Saul really means when he calls him "my son, David."

I Samuel 24, verse 16b:

**Then Saul lifted up his voice and wept.**

Has it ever struck you that the tragedy of Saul's life is that it is lived in a constant state of tension? He really does love David. There really is a father-son relationship there. Saul is not a degenerate maniac. He is an outstanding man, although admittedly living in his own strength instead of God's, but he really is an outstanding man. He is a far better father than David. He was a great king while he was walking with the Lord. He is a superb general. His own sons love him. His son, godly Jonathan, goes to his death with him. His other sons also stay with him and are killed alongside their father Saul in his last battle. In the midst of his madness, Saul's sons die with their father. What do the sons of David do? They fight among themselves and one son even tries to kill David and take over his throne. Humanly speaking Saul is really an extraordinary man. Tragically though, Saul lives much of his life dominated by the flesh even though he has a godly background. "Saul" means "prayed for." Since his father named him "prayed for," he probably was an answer to prayer. And Saul, in the depths of his soul, really wants to do good, but he is in bondage to the flesh which says, "I come first." "Me, myself and I," the unholy trinity. Have

you ever thought about the horrendous tension Saul must have undergone? Let me read you about another Saul 1,000 years later.

Even though 1,000 years apart the two Sauls have essentially the same experience. In Chapter 7 of Romans, the Apostle Paul [Saul of Tarsus before his conversion] a Benjamite, from the tribe of Saul, named for Saul the king, starting in verse 14 writes to the Roman church:

Romans 7, verse 14:

**For we know that the Law is spiritual [God given]; but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin [I am a victim not a victor]. For that which I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate. But if I do the very thing I do not wish to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that it is good. So now, no longer am I the one going it, but sin which indwells me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the wishing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. For the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish. But if I am doing the very thing I do not wish, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin [the flesh] which dwells in me. I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wishes to do good. For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other with my flesh the law of sin.**

That is a perfect description of what Saul of Tarsus and a thousand years earlier Saul of Benjamin went through. The life of Saul of Benjamin was just an agony of tension. A man who really wanted to do good but who was driven by the flesh. You can see it here. He just breaks down and weeps when he is confronted with the love action of David his son.

In I Samuel 24, verse 17 he says:

**And he said to David, "You are more righteous than I; for you have dealt well with me, while I have dealt wickedly with you. And you have declared today that you have done good to me, that the Lord delivered me into your hand and yet you did not kill me. For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him go away safely? May the Lord therefore reward you with good in return for what you have done to me this day."**

He makes a public confession and fully acknowledges that David is doing right. He is a broken man, but do you notice one thing about his blessing? It is the same kind of blessing that he voiced before. Remember in Chapter 23 he blessed the Ziphites for betraying David into his hands. "May you be blessed of the Lord for your compassion on me." What does his blessing here emphasize again? "May the Lord therefore reward you with good in return for what you have done to me this day." The flesh is incurably self-centered. Even when it blesses, the blessing is self-centered. Even when it is religious, it is self-centered. It demands something for itself.

We see it in our worship systems. It is apparent in these beautiful cathedrals. Their stained glass windows, gorgeous wooden carvings, great high altars are designed to make you feel in the presence of God. The beautiful music they play is designed to give you a sense of worship, but instead of supplementing the teaching of the Word as it should, in many places it has taken over as the main event because it makes you feel religious. The pastor will follow with at most a twenty minute message on how good you really are deep down inside your being, encourage you to try harder, to do the best you can, and declare God will reward you. That is right out of the pit! The message of the gospel is that we are hopeless and helpless and cannot do anything that is acceptable to God in and of ourselves. The flesh cannot please God. Therefore God has taken steps to do in us and through us what we cannot, and even many times will not, do ourselves. Don't try harder. Trust! Walk in obedience to your Lord and while you are doing it, have an attitude of thanksgiving that He is doing continually in you and through you what

you cannot and will not do yourself. You can go to hell in the most beautiful cathedrals in all the world.

When I was a youth, I attended for awhile a church down south with a new million dollar [in those days a lot of money] "sanctuary," which is what they called it and which is not Scriptural. [You are the sanctuary of God if you are indwelt by Him]. It was actually just a building with a mortgage. I admit that it was beautiful. But at the same time they redid the hymnal and removed any reference to the blood of Jesus Christ when the Scriptures teach in both the Old and New Testaments that without the shedding of His blood there is no forgiveness of sin. They previously had had a godly old Scotch preacher who taught right on line with the Word of God. When he retired they brought in a young man from one of the liberal seminaries and in one generation that church lost its way. It is now one of the most beautiful places I know of in Southern California to go to hell.

Now on to verse 20. God pleads David's cause and he pleads it from the lips of David's enemy:

I Samuel 24, verse 20:

**"And now, behold, I know that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand. So now swear to me by the Lord that you will not cut off my descendants after me, and that you will not destroy my name from my father's household." And David swore to Saul. And Saul went to his home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.**

The very lips of his enemy are what God uses to plead David's cause. And Saul himself confirms that he knows David will one day be king. The very man David wanted to kill is the very man God uses to strengthen David's faith.

But there is an conspicuous flaw in David's character that shows itself here. It was very common in the ancient east for a new dynasty to eliminate man, woman and child, particularly male children, of the old dynasty. And it was also very common for a new dynasty to eliminate all brothers, flesh and blood brothers, of the old dynasty. They wanted to eliminate all chance of opposition. In fact, when we get into the book of Kings, the wicked kings of the northern ten tribes do this again and again.

What did Jonathan ask David to do when he covenanted with David and acknowledged David would be king some day? Remember? "Do not cut off my relatives. If I am alive, be good to me and if I am dead, be good to my relatives." Saul asks the same thing here. What is the flaw in David's character that these two people who love him and know him very intimately are aware of? It is something God will deal with in the very next chapter. Something David just demonstrated in this chapter. He is a great warrior, but he is more than that. He is a vindictive warrior. David likes to get even. We are going to see it again and again. God is going to make David a man after God's own heart. How will he do it? What did God do about your sins? Get even? God is a holy God whose holiness must be satisfied. How can that holiness be satisfied? By God giving himself. He paid for your sins and my sins. He did not "get even" with us. Instead He went to the cross himself for us and died in our place. David has to learn this, and God is going to teach him this principle.

Next time in chapter 25 we have David and Abigail and you will see how God begins to deal with David's vindictiveness. In Chapter 26 we will see David's vindictiveness put to the test. God is a very faithful God in correcting the flaws in our character.

### **Prayer:**

Father, we thank you so much for your Word, for how it shows us what we really are and what you really are and how you love us with an everlasting love whether we receive you into our lives or not, whether we obey you or not. You love us because we belong to you. We are your creatures and those of us who belong to you, Lord, are your children. Whether we accept you or reject you, you love us until the day we die, and you even love us in eternity even though you may have to condemn those of us who will not receive Christ as Savior and Lord. Father, we do not understand

that kind of love, that loves its enemies that loves them intimately and that loves them for all eternity; a God that loves Satan so much that you even describe yourself as beating your breast in anguish when Satan fell even though You hate everything he stands for and have condemned him to hell for all eternity. We can't understand that infinite degree of love, but we thank you for it and rest in it. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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## Chapter Fourteen

### David and Abigail - I

#### 1 Samuel 25:1-22

This morning we will be looking at 1 Samuel 25. As we closed last week we were talking about the streak of vindictiveness in David. He had a very strong and violent temper and a revengeful spirit. As king he could not reign over Israel if he could not reign over his own passions. This spirit was so obvious that Jonathan, his dearest friend, made him swear that as king he would neither deal out nor destroy Jonathan's family [Chapter 20]. In chapter 24 Saul made David promise that when he became king he would not destroy Saul's family either. Later on in this chapter we will see that even one of the shepherds, just from living with David, understood his vindictiveness. Both the Old and New Testaments indicate God must deal with this. God laid down a principle for Christians which is seen all through the Bible. In Romans 12:17ff, Paul quotes that principle right out of the Old Testament. Writing by the inspiration of the Spirit of God, he says this:

Romans 12:17ff:

**Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God for it is written, [Here he quotes right out of Deuteronomy 32, which is available to both Abigail and David] "Vengeance [or retribution] is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. "But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.**

So David, being a man of the Word, knew this principle was one of the requirements for a King of Israel [Deut. 17:18-20]. Obviously Abigail also knew this commandment, so both of them knew that retribution, or vengeance, was the work of the Lord. When a man steps in to seek vengeance, he is usurping God's prerogative, and God is very jealous of his prerogatives. Only He is able to judge rightly.

So, beginning in I Samuel 25, watch how God deals with David's vindictiveness and, interestingly enough, how he deals with it through a woman. If you ladies want to know how to deal with your helpmates who may have problems with anger, temper, violence, etc. see the beautiful way it happens here.

Let me caution you not to judge Abigail by the New Testament truths found in I Peter 3. She lived 1,000 years before they were written. Instead look at what she really desired for her husband and David. Remember God did not expect her to understand Ephesians 5:33 or I Peter 3:1-7.

I Samuel 25:1:

**Then Samuel died; and all Israel gathered together and mourned for him, and buried him at his house in Ramah. And David arose and went down to the wilderness of Paran.**

Samuel, of course, was David's champion. He was the one friend in court who had the stature to do something about Saul, and he had tremendous power in Israel. The king, the priests and the prophets all had equal standing, so Samuel was not subservient to Saul. He reigned as God's man, as God's mouthpiece. He anointed David as king. So, in a sense, there was a prophet, and a whole school of prophets, praying for David and, to some degree, keeping restraint on the works of Saul. When Samuel died, David figured everything was lost. [Ramah is just north of Gibeah where Saul had his headquarters.] So David left Engedi [which is on the western side of the middle of the Dead Sea], and headed down to the wilderness of Paran on the Sinai peninsula [the wilderness where the Israelites wandered for 38 years because they disobeyed God] David, fleeing from Saul, left Judea, where the Lord wanted him to be, and scurried to the wilderness of Paran which is a howling wilderness. There is nothing there, and David had 600 hungry men who needed "man-handler" soup not gruel and broth.

God, using circumstances, is going to bring David back to Judea where he will be harassed by Saul and will have to trust in the work of the Lord and not his own wisdom or force of men.

Let us see how the Lord brings him back.

I Samuel 25:2:

**Now there was a man in Maon** [Remember that is the wilderness where in Chapter 24 Saul almost trapped David until the Philistines invaded Israel and Saul had to go back] **whose business was in Carmel;** [which is about half an hour's journey north of Maon in another wilderness area, the wilderness of Ziph where the Ziphites previously betrayed David. It is all dangerous enemy territory where nobody is loyal to David, but this fellow Nabal should be.] **and the man was very rich, and he had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats. And it came about while he was shearing his sheep in Carmel (now the man's name was Nabal, and his wife's name was Abigail. And the woman was intelligent and beautiful in appearance, but the man was harsh and evil in his dealings, and he was a Calebite), that David heard in the wilderness that Nabal was shearing his sheep.**

Here we have a very rich man in Carmel, which is between two wildernesses and which to David is enemy territory. When Nabal's shepherds tended his huge flocks, they had to go great distances into the wildernesses and were wide open to marauding bands of bedouins who could sweep up out of the Paran wilderness, grab animals from the flock and race back to cover. Because David and his crew stayed with these shepherds and provided a wall around them and protected them from the marauding enemy while never touching a sheep or giving the shepherds any trouble, naturally he expected some kind of recompense. Unfortunately Nabal's name meant "fool," and he was said to be "a harsh man and evil in his dealings." Harsh has the idea of hard, unbending, unyielding, unteachable, irascible. He was also evil and a wicked business man. However, he was not stupid. The biblical definition of "fool" is not stupidity. According to the Bible, "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God'"; in other words, "I shall be my own God. I shall set up my own laws. There is no future only the present, so I am going to make it big and enjoy it now." That is a fool. He can be a brilliant fool, and Nabal was. He had made it big. Like the rich man in Luke 12 whose barn overflowed with grain and who said, "I'll tear down my barn and build bigger ones. With them full I can sit back, take it easy, rest and relax. I've got it made" (Free translation). But what did God say? "You, fool, this night your soul shall be required of you, then whose shall all these things be?" The answer to God's question is, of course, "The IRS and your heirs." That is a fool.

How do you think an intelligent, beautiful woman like Abigail, whose name meant "joy of her father," ever got paired with a fellow like Nabal? The daughter of a Hebrew did not choose a husband for herself. She was placed by her father. So, her father, to get the best possible deal for her, chose a man who materially had it all. Apparently her father did not consult the Lord about these things. He took the "joy of his heart" and married her to Nabal, the fool. Sure, she lived in a rambling ranch-style tent with "four-on-the-floor" camels parked outside, but look at what she had for a husband. Remember, she was an intelligent woman

What does "intelligent" in Scripture mean? If a "fool" is one who says there is no God, what denotes an intelligent person? What is "wisdom" according to Scripture? "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom"[Psalm 111:10]. Wisdom is belief in God, belief that he is in charge, that there is a day of reckoning. A wise man orders

his life by God's standards, by God's revelation, by the Word of God. Abigail knew Deuteronomy 32:35, "Vengeance is mine. I will repay says YHWH." That was written about 1400 B.C., 500 years before Abigail. It had been around a long time, and she undoubtedly knew it well.

A good question was just asked: "Might it also be that Nabal thought everything had to be good because he was of the house of Caleb?" That might well be right. Caleb was a giant of a Hebrew. He and Joshua were the only two men of the twelve who spied out the land of Canaan who did not go against the Lord. When God turned the nation loose in the wilderness he said, "I am going to destroy every single male that is over the age of 20, [mustered males, the army that could vote with their weapons and who refused to go in and take the land God had given them]; only Joshua and Caleb will I allow in the land because they believed me." Nabal is a Calebite. The word can mean "capable" or it can also mean "dog." I think it means both in the case of Nabal. He is a capable dog. The word "dog," is Hebrew for the cur that roams the streets and eats garbage; a vicious, ugly, mangy beast. Nabal is a capable mangy beast. He has acted like it. He has proven it.

Getting back to the text, David expected something. "He [Nabal] was shearing his sheep in the wilderness." That was harvest time for a shepherd, a time of great festivity and a great harvest festival. Everybody pitched in. The traveling professional shearers came and there was a tremendous banquet. Half the tally was the law of the bedouin, and they were to give freely and liberally because God had given freely and liberally. Nabal had a tremendous harvest because David had been protecting Nabal's flocks. Therefore, David naturally believed Nabal should respond generously.

I Samuel 25: 5:

**So David sent ten young men** [He expected to bring a lot back], **and David said to the young men, "Go up to Carmel. visit Nabal and greet him in my name;** [David was the hero of Israel, even though he was in flight at this time, and it was his men who had guarded Nabal's flocks, so David said, 'I want you to tell him it is David who sends you.' That will open the door. We'll get so much I'll need to send ten of you.] **and thus you shall say, "Have a long life, peace be to you, and peace be to your house, and peace be to all that you have.** [Interesting how wonderfully David can bless you when he is feeling good about you. Very shortly though, he will be planning not only a short life for Nabal, and all the males in his household, but also to abscond with a number of Nabal's sheep. When you behave yourself with David, you get this wonderful blessing. When you cross David you get just the opposite] **And now I have heard that you have shearers** [It is harvest time, in other words, festive time]; **now your shepherds have been with us and we have not insulted them, nor have they missed anything all the days they were in Carmel.** [While we were there nothing happened to them, neither in the wilderness of Ziph nor the wilderness of Maon] **Ask your young men** [your shepherds] **and they will tell you. Therefore let my young men find favor in your eyes, for we have come on a festive day.** [A harvest festival where you are to be hospitable and generous] **Please give whatever you find at hand to your servants and to your son David. [He puts his request on a personal relationship basis]**

Now, let's see what happens when we go on to verse 9:

**When David's young men came, they spoke to Nabal according to all these words in David's name; then they waited.** [To see if the doors would open because of David's name] **But Nabal answered David's servants, and said, "Who is David? And who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants today who are each breaking away from his master. Shall I then take my bread and my water and my meat that I have slaughtered for my shearers, and give it to men whose origin I do not know?" So David's young men retraced their way and went back; and they came and told him according to all these words.**

Nabal is no fool, humanly speaking. He knows the winning side. He lives in Carmel which is only 30 miles south of Gibeah where Saul has his headquarters. Saul has been going back and forth through the wilderness of Maon and the wilderness of Ziph looking for David. If Nabal crosses Saul, he is in big trouble. With Nabal friendship ceases when it costs something, and if you want to insult a Mideasterner just question his heritage, his parentage. Nabal not only turns David down saying, "Who is David?" (a national hero a few years back), but also "Who is

this son of Jesse?', this poor family with no background? He is just a slave running away from his master, and there are a bunch of those all over the place." In fact, a lot of David's men may well be exactly that. If you remember, his force is made up of "discontents," men in debt, those who are "bitter of soul." So Nabal may even be making an allusion to the kind of people David is running around with. Nabal deliberately is going out of his way to insult David. Why? Because it will ingratiate him with Saul. He chooses sides. He takes the expedient way, but unfortunately he runs into a redheaded Jew. You just don't do that to redheads.

I Samuel 25: 13:

**And David said to his men, "Each of you gird on his sword." So each man girded on his sword. And David also girded on his sword, and about four hundred men went up behind David while two hundred stayed with the baggage.**

David now gets ready to go up into enemy territory with four hundred men where he is going to run into trouble. He knows this. He is not taking just a few men; he is taking an army just to kill one family, all the males in one family. What has he not done here that he has almost always done before when undertaking such a large expedition? He has not inquired of the Lord. Why? What is David's problem? His name has been questioned. His parentage has been questioned. He has been humiliated in front of his men and in front of all the Nabalites. You just do not do that to David. Now he is angry. He is hostile. He has one thing in mind and that is to save face, and he fails completely to inquire of the Lord. This is typical of David. Interestingly enough, he will not touch Saul who is trying to kill him. He twice lets Saul go. Why? Because Saul is God's anointed. But Nabal is a nobody. David is what the Epistle of James calls "One who holds his faith in the Lord with an attitude of personal favoritism" at this point in time. Human life only has value to him in reference to how it relates to YHWH and his own future. See where David is now? He is on the same level as Nabal. Since David is running and Saul is not only in the ascendancy but also closer, Nabal sticks with Saul. He plays the expedient card. David does the same. If he kills Saul, God's anointed, he is in trouble with YHWH, but if he kills the fool Nabal and all his males, he figures that won't have much of an impact on YHWH. So he also judges by the circumstances. He has now reduced himself to the same level as the man he plans to kill.

This is a basic principle. Have you ever noticed it? If you return evil for evil, it puts you on the same level as the person who did you evil. I am supposed to be a representative of Jesus Christ, and He says I am to love mankind because He loves mankind. I am to have a totally different standard of conduct from the world around me. Besides, only God understands the motivation of the one who "did me evil." I have no idea of the circumstances leading to what he did to me. Only God is able to judge and to give adequate retribution if necessary. Judgement is the work of God.

So, we have David heading right back up into Ziph where he almost got killed. It is the worst possible tactical error for him, but sin always blinds reason. When we are angry and hostile and want to get even, we do not think about consequences of our act. God says in the Psalms he takes the wrath of man and uses it to do His will. What can He possibly accomplish with David's wrath here? Well, where does God want David? Does He want him in the wilderness of Paran with no threat from anyone except wandering bedouins? Why did He kick David out of Moab and where did David return? Why did He kick David out of Gath, and where did David return? He wants David right back in Judea where the danger is greatest, right where David will have to trust Him. And He is going to get him back there.

I Samuel 25: 14:

**But one of the young men [of Nabal] told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, "Behold, David sent messengers from the wilderness to greet our master, and he scorned them. Yet the men were very good to us, and we were not insulted, nor did we miss anything as long as we went about with them, while we were in the fields. They were a wall to us both by night and by day, all the time we were with them tending the sheep. Now therefore, know and consider what you should do, for evil is plotted against our master and against all his household; and he [Nabal]**



**is such a worthless [also means "lawless"] man that no one can speak to him."**

Here is an interesting commentary on the character of David. This shepherd way up in Carmel, did not know anything about what David had said to his men down in Paran about putting on swords and getting revenge, but he had been living in the wilderness with David for some months, and he had observed the character of David. When Nabal insulted David's messengers and questioned David's heritage and parentage, this shepherd was sure what David would do. He knew David's temper, and said, "I know this guy. I lived with him, and I have seen him in action, and he is going to come up here and not only kill Nabal but also Nabal's whole household." Do you see why God wants to deal with this particular problem in David? How can David reign over Israel if David cannot reign over David? He has to learn to be God's man. Here is where Abigail makes her move.

Remember, there is a huge feast now with all kind of goodies, but Nabal does not want any of those goodies given away. In fact he said he wouldn't even give David meat, bread or water much less roast lamb or fig cakes. But, with the large supply of food available, Abigail moves. Don't judge her actions by Ephesians 5 and I Peter 3. She is disobeying those principles. She is moving behind her husband's back and knowingly disobeying him. Judge her on her motives in the light of her knowledge of God back then, nearly 3000 years ago.

I Samuel 25: 18:

**Then Abigail hurried and took two hundred loaves of bread and two jugs of wine** [literally "skins of wine" a whole animal full of wine] **and five sheep already prepared** [they had probably already been butchered, dressed and roasted on the spit, ready to eat, smelling delicious, just what young men would love to have] **and five measures** [60 quarts] **of roasted grain and a hundred clusters of raisins** [They used to pack them together, so this is a huge amount of raisins] **and two hundred cakes of figs** [packed the same way], **and loaded them on donkeys. And she said to her young men, "Go on before me; behold, I am coming after you." But she did not tell her husband Nabal.**

Remember, Abigail is a woman of the Word. Remember also a man named Jacob who stole both his brother's blessing and his brother's birthright. As a result, his brother Esau said, "When our father Isaac dies, I am going to kill Jacob," and Jacob fled. He was away for many years and, by the hand of the Lord, became very wealthy. When he came back into the land, he had to get on good terms with Esau, and Esau was a violent man. Remember what Jacob did? He took a group of sheep and put them in one drove, a group of goats in another drove, a group of camels in another drove, a group of cattle in another drove and a group of donkeys in another drove. Then he said, "Now, each drove go ahead of me by itself [Jacob had sent word to Esau that he was coming back, and had received notice that Esau was coming to meet him with four hundred men. This news undoubtedly made Jacob feel like, "I'm a dead man."] As each drove arrived, Esau said, "Whose are these?" And Jacob's messengers said, "They are from Jacob, and they are a present for you." Then here came another drove, and another present, and another drove and another present. Five enormous presents before Esau could get near Jacob. Well, Esau had four hundred men who had made a very long, and probably a very fast, journey. Thus they were probably short on rations and very hungry. They were husky young men with no Campbell's Manhandler soup around. How do you get yourself a hearing on the best terms you can find? You just send a feast. With the smell of roast lamb on the minds of Esau's men and the availability of all that food, Jacob undoubtedly figured he had the battle half won. After all, some years before when Esau was very hungry, he sold his birthright to Jacob for a big helping of lentil stew. Abigail, being a woman of the Word, knew Genesis 32 like the back of her hand. She was a wise, intelligent woman. What worked for Jacob was going to work for her.

I Samuel 25: 20:

**And it came about as she was riding on her donkey and coming down by the hidden part of the mountain** [down some narrow pass in the mountains which was very hidden], **that behold, David and his men were coming down toward her; so she met them. Now David had said, "Surely in vain I have guarded all that this man has in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that belonged to him; and he has returned me evil for good. May God do so to the enemies of David, and more also, if by morning I leave as much as one male of any who belong to him**

[This is what David had been mumbling all these many miles].

Do you see David's problem in this passage? Let me read it again with slight emphasis. "David had said, 'Surely in vain I have guarded all that this man has in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that belonged to him, and he has return ME evil for good. May God do so to the enemies of DAVID, and more also, if by morning I leave as much as one male of any who belong to him.'"

What is David's problem? Ego. His pride has been injured. It is not the welfare of his men that bothers him, although he is undoubtedly going to take care of them by taking a number of Nabal's sheep. The trouble is David's ego has been crushed, and you just do not shaft David especially in front of others. All his life he has been the runt of the litter. All his life people have stepped on him. All his life he has had this resentment, this hostility, building up in him. Someday he is going to get even, and here he has four hundred skilled guerilla warriors armed with iron weapons which they have taken from the Philistines at Keilah. Nabal only has a household with a few weapons and relatively few servants. It is going to be a total slaughter. David is going to get even for all the things that have happened to him down through the years. All the way up toward Nabal's home he has been turning revenge over and over in his mind, fueling the flames of his passion. How on earth can you deal with somebody like that? But God has an instrument. In this particular story, who also acts like David is presently acting; who always looks after number one; who is a hard, unteachable, unreasonable, perverse person? Nabal. Who has learned the skill of dealing with a hard, unreasonable, unteachable male in his anger? Abigail. She has had years of experience as Nabal's wife. Do you see how God takes his chosen instruments and, over the years, trains them for a ministry. Her father thought he was doing Abigail a big favor. He married her to a wealthy man who turned out to be impossible to live with. Yet, through all those years, she hung in there as God's woman and served that impossible man. I'll bet she even loved him, as far as she could. She learned how to deal with him for the time when God's king, David, who also needed dealing with, would come into her life. God does not mind spending years to train a person for a single, short ministry. As far as we can tell, dealing with David was all the ministry Abigail ever had, but it lasted a lifetime.

We'll pick up here next week. I won't tell you how it ends. We've got God's man, God's woman and a poor fool who is going to learn about God the hard way. Next week we will find out what happens.

### **Prayer:**

Father, thank you so much for your Word and for the way it makes us see ourselves as we really are and opens us up to the truth; how it shows us how gracious and loving and kind you are, how long suffering. Father, you will spend years to train a woman to minister to the man of your own heart, to make him finally want to behave like a man after your own heart. Thank you, Father, for faithful women who quietly serve by hanging in there, while they trust you to turn their husbands around. Thank you for my wife who led me to Christ and helped me to grow up in Him. Thank you, Father in Jesus' name. Amen

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## **Chapter Fifteen**

### **David and Abigail - II**

#### **1 Samuel 25:23-42**

You will remember last week we left David just about to encounter Abigail Nabal's wife. It was sheep shearing time at Nabal's, a time of great banquets and lavish hospitality. David had sent a delegation up to Nabal in his own name requesting food for his men. They reminded Nabal that the harvest was great because of David's

watchfulness over Nabal's flocks. But instead of food Nabal deliberately insulted David. Nabal may be a "fool" because he believes there is no God, but he is no fool from a worldly standpoint. He knows that Saul, who is only 30 miles north of him, is winning, and David, way down in the wilderness, is losing. He not only refuses David's request, but he also deliberately insults him on a personal level when David makes a personal request. Word gets back to David, and he is enraged. Without consulting God, he has 400 of his 600 men strap on their swords, and he heads north to kill Nabal. He is not only going to kill Nabal but also every male in Nabal's household. He intends to wipe the name of Nabal from the face of the earth leaving no offspring to carry on his name. David is a very angry young man.

Fortunately one of the shepherds who has lived with David in the wilderness is a very discerning young man. He has observed this vindictiveness in David and, although he does not know exactly what David is planning to do, he is aware of David's character. He knows exactly how David will respond to a personal insult like this. So he warns Abigail that, since her husband is a fool and cannot even be spoken too, she had better do something. The word "fool" here has the concept of a hard, unbending, unteachable, unreasonable person who will not listen to people. Abigail quickly gathers together a great feast and takes off through a hidden part of the mountains where she thinks David will come. We left her last week having run into this mountain pass and having sent her servants before her with roasted lamb, roasted grain, wine, cakes of figs and clusters of raisins, a feast fit for a king. She has deliberately defied her husband and done what she knows he would not want her to do. This is where we get the "Abigail syndrome" sometimes encountered in counseling. I want to look at that syndrome later on.

Here we have a woman who by God's definition is intelligent, which means she is godly. "The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord," the Scriptures say. And we have a husband who is a fool. The Scriptures say, "The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.'" As defined by Scripture a fool or a wise man is determined by his attitude toward God. So we have a godly woman and an ungodly husband. The godly woman has defied her husband, but with his best interests at heart, and gone out to stop David.

Now in I Samuel 25:23, Abigail comes upon David. As we saw in verses 21 & 22, David has been mumbling in his beard all during his northward trek about how he is going to annihilate Nabal because of what Nabal has done to him, [notice the personal pronoun in verses 21 and 22].

Let us look at 1 Samuel 25:23 and following. This is a beautiful example of how to argue with an angry man.

I Samuel 25:23:

**When Abigail saw David, she hurried and dismounted from her donkey, and fell on her face before David, and bowed herself to the ground. [That is the first step in dealing with an angry man.] And she fell at his feet and said, "On me alone, my lord, be the blame. And please let your maidservant speak to you, and listen to the words of your maidservant. Please do not let my lord pay attention to this worthless man Nabal, for as his name is, so is he. Nabal is his name and folly is with him [He is a fool]; but I your maidservant did not see the young men of my lord whom you sent.**

Let's look at this little portion first. First Abigail approaches an angry man by humbling herself. She does not approach David whining for her rights, and believe me, she has rights. David is up there on an ego trip. He does not have any kind of legal or moral right to kill off all the males of Nabal's family. However, Abigail has lived all her married life with an angry man, a fool, a man who is ungodly, and David right now is very ungodly. She knows that ungodly angry men do not respond to reason. You cannot argue your "rights" and expect an angry man to listen. Angry ungodly men will not respect even God's rights, how could you expect them to respect yours? So, she starts out with the approach of I Peter 3, "Wives be submissive to your own husbands so if any of them are disobedient to the word [the condition in the Greek is "and they are"], they may be won without a word by the behavior of they wives as they observe your pure and respectful behavior." In other words, if you have a husband who is non-persuasive to the Word of God, then you win him without a word. [It is a play on words here.] You keep your mouth shut and live a life before him that is both pure and respectful when he deserves neither the purity nor the respect. That is exactly what Abigail does here. She comes to an angry man, who is on

an ego trip, who has no right to be where he is, and the first thing she does is show him respect. She falls on her face before David, which was the way of showing respect in that ancient East culture. She is, by-the-way, the wife of a very wealthy man. She has servants. She has flocks and herds. She is a "big woman on campus." She is not just some little peasant girl.

Secondly, she puts the blame on herself which is very wise to do. In those days, unlike today when women have "equality," they did not take revenge on women. So Abigail knew she was safe if she put the blame on herself, "On me alone, my lord, be the blame." She tries to take the blame off her husband, even though he does not deserve it, and put it on herself. Even David, as angry as he is, is not going to slaughter women.

Thirdly, she then begs him to listen because she is used to a man not listening to her. "Please let your maidservant speak to you, and listen to the words of your maidservant." Just give me a hearing. That's all I ask.

Then she begins to move. First of all she agrees with David that he is right, and Nabal is a fool. "Please do not let my lord pay attention to this worthless man, Nabal, for as his name is, so is he." Nabal was a fool. He did act ungodly and there was no excuse for his actions, but she does not try to cover. "Nabal is his name and folly is with him;" however there is another side to the coin. "but I your maidservant did not see the young men of my lord whom you sent." There are a lot of innocent people, David, who did not hear what you ask for and would have responded had they known. Therefore, it is not right to annihilate them when they did not even have a chance to hear.

Then she begins an interesting argument which relates David to his Lord.

I Samuel 25:26:

**Now therefore, my lord, as the Lord lives, [she begins to immediately focus David's mind and his thoughts on YHWH, not on the issue, not on Nabal or her rights, but on YHWH himself] and as your soul lives, since the Lord has restrained you from shedding blood and from avenging yourself by your own hand...**

I love this argument. This is typically female. She assumes what is to be argued as being already settled. I have never yet understood the female mind, but some how when you get into a discussion with them, you have lost before you even start discussing. It happened to the Lord with his own mother. At Cana of Galilee the Lord begins his public ministry. He goes down to Cana, which is not too far from Nazareth, and Mary his mother is part of the wedding party. Obviously she is in charge of getting things done. They run out of wine. That is a terrible insult and loss of face to an Easterner, an Oriental. The bridegroom is to supply the needs of the whole family for probably up to seven days. Guests come from long distances, and to run out of wine in the middle of the celebration shows a lack of concern for your in-laws. So, the poor host is going to be greatly humiliated. Now, here comes the Lord and his disciples as guests at the feast. Mary, as part of the wedding party, looks at her son and says, "They have run out of wine." She knows what she means, and he knows what she means, "Do something!" She knows that he is the Son of God. Don't forget the angel told her that before he was conceived, and she has seen a sinless life for 30 years. The Lord tells her, "Woman, [which is impersonal but not an insulting term. He is saying "There is a new relationship established now, Mary. I am no longer under your motherhood."] what have I to do with you. My time has not yet come." This is telling her "No" very nicely and very quietly but very firmly. What does she do? She turns to the servants and says, "Do whatever he tells you," and walks away. There stands the Lord with egg on his face. Every time I read that I think the Lord must have had kind of a wry smile on his face, "Of all the people who ought to know better than to argue with women, I who made them ought to know." Of course the Lord, in order not to embarrass his mother and to keep the bridegroom from being humiliated, does his first miracle and, "humanly" speaking, does it against his own will. She won. Abigail, has come from a long line of "Marys" and assumes as true what is about to be argued.

I Samuel 25:26b:

**Now then let your enemies and those who seek evil against my lord, be as Nabal.**

In essence Abigail says, "God, will deal with the ungodly. A fool is an ungodly person, David, and God will deal with the ungodly. You don't have to do that. He is a Nabal. He is a fool. He is ungodly. He will get his. You have no right to move in where God has sovereignty."

I Samuel 25:27:

**And now let this gift which your maidservant has brought to my lord be given to the young men who accompany my lord.**

There are four hundred hungry, thirsty young men there, and in one bold move she just wins four hundred votes. The odds are now 401 against David. And she does it very beautifully. She says, "If this gift is not good enough to give to you, just give it to your young men." So far she has done a beautiful job of bringing David to the point where she wants him.

Now she has to move in and insert somewhere that sin against YHWH would have been involved in what David had planned to do. She does that beautifully too.

I Samuel 25:28:

**Please forgive the transgression of your maidservant; [She brings in the word "transgression" here, a deliberate and willful rebellion] for the Lord will certainly make for my lord an enduring house, because my lord is fighting the battles of the Lord, and evil shall not be found in you all your days.**

She now begins to relate David to his Lord. Having pointed him toward the Lord, she begins to show the relationship between the two. First the Lord is going to make an enduring house for David because David represents YHWH. He is not a free man to do his own will. He fights the Lord's battles. Therefore, he is under the sovereignty of the Lord. He does not have the right to "rule" on his own. Even when he becomes king and even though he has already been anointed king, he still reigns under YHWH.

Secondly, in the midst of a feast, he cannot do evil in the name of YHWH by using four hundred armed guerrilla warriors to butcher a helpless family, including small male children. She really begins to move in on him.

I Samuel 25:29:

**And should anyone rise up to pursue you and to seek your life, then the life of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of the living with the Lord your God; but the lives of your enemies He will sling out as from the hollow of a sling [or from the cup of a sling].**

In the customs of those days, if you had something very precious, you bound it up in something and wrapped it around with something so it would not get hurt. She is saying, "You are the anointed of God. God has taken your life and bound it up in the bundle of his life. Your life is in the center of the Lord's. His life protects your life. You do not have to fight your battles, David. God has you packaged with himself. Nor do you have to go after your enemies, David, for God will take your enemies and put them in the cup of a sling and fling them away. You don't even have to fight your enemies, David. God will take care of you and them."

Why do you suppose she used the word "sling?" What did David do when he was a young lad? He slew a giant fighting for whose honor? YHWH's! He told Goliath, "I am going to kill you because you are defying the armies, not of David or of Israel, but of the living God." It was God's honor that was at stake when he won with that sling shot. It was not David's honor or David's rights, and God honored that. As a lad David, dressed in a shepherd's jacket and with only a little sling shot and five smooth pebbles, slew that giant who stood 9 feet tall and was fully armed and armored. She points him back to what made him famous; being a godly man and fighting God's battles

for God's honor. She points him right back to the past.

Then she points him to the future, I Samuel 25:30:

**And it shall come about when the Lord shall do for my lord according to all the good that He has spoken concerning you, and shall appoint you ruler over Israel, [Here she goes for the jugular vein] that this will not cause grief or a troubled heart to my lord, both by having shed blood without cause ["David, you have no right to do what you are going to do and you know it," and she was a woman against 401 men] and by my lord having avenged himself. [Taking the prerogatives of God into his own hands, and this really hits home] When the Lord shall deal well with my lord, then remember your maidservant.**

She is an amazingly discerning woman. She senses in David, because of the way God has been acting in the lives of David and Saul, that David is going to be king, that he has been the hero of Israel and that, before he was chased into the wilderness by Saul, he was the unifying force in Israel. Yet she has seen in the actions of Saul and David the deterioration of Saul and his empire and the exaltation of David even though he is still a fugitive. She can see the hand of God in this. She is a godly woman.

She also can see something else. Why do you think she says, "And when the Lord shall deal well with my lord, then remember your maidservant?" What does she also see? She sees David's future. As a godly woman, who else's future does she see? Hers, yes, but how would hers suddenly be available to David? How can a married woman talk about David "remembering me?" What does she also see? Just as surely as David shall be king because he is acting righteously so she is also certain something else will happen because someone else is acting unrighteously? Nabal is going to get it. The same God who rewards the righteous by making him king is going to deal with the ungodly. Just as surely as one is true, so is the other. She knows her husband, somewhere along the line, is going to get taken care of by God, and when David is king and her husband is removed by God, she wants David to remember her. This is really a godly woman.

So, a godly woman's godly response gets a godly repentance. The Spirit of God takes her words like a two-edged sword and carves David right in the heart. Look at his response, and it is a beautiful order of progression.

I Samuel 25:32:

**Then David said to Abigail, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me..."**

The first thing he does is see that the hand of YHWH is in this. By focusing entirely on YHWH, Abigail has brought this out. He sees that now. He does not change his mind about Nabal, or his rights, or fight with Abigail and argue against her and try to win the argument. He realizes the issue is between himself and YHWH. That just removes any vestige he might have of his own rights.

Secondly, I Samuel 25:33:

**...and blessed be your discernment,**

Now, she was both intelligent and beautiful. David likes beautiful women. He gets in a lot of trouble in chapter 11 & 12 of II Samuel because of a beautiful woman. As king, David will probably have up to ten wives and concubines. He violates the law of Deuteronomy 17 by multiplying wives. But what strikes him most of all here is not her beauty, it is her discernment. It strikes him to the heart. The beauty probably got her a hearing. That Chanel #5 wafting about as she bowed herself before him undoubtedly got a look, but it did not win the argument. It did not get his eyes on YHWH. It was her discernment that accomplished that.

Then the third thing he sees is in her person.

I Samuel 25:33b:

**...and blessed be you, who have kept me this day from bloodshed, and from avenging myself by my own hand. Nevertheless, as the Lord God of Israel lives, who has restrained me from harming you, unless you had come quickly to meet me, surely there would not have been left to Nabal until the morning light as much as one male."**

He fully confesses his intentions. "But for you, Abigail, I would have killed everybody in your house that was masculine." He confesses and repents of his actions and acknowledges fully that she was the one God used to turn him around.

See how you win an argument with a willful, rebellious, unrepentant, angry man? You point him to the Lord and take the humble place. You get yourself out of the argument and get it between him and his God, instead of you and him with God somewhere around the periphery. That is all she did. She got him focused on her and then got out of the way and got him looking at YHWH. Pretty soon David began to realize, "Hey, I'm not fighting Nabal or my honor. I'm dealing with the living God." That is what broke him.

I Samuel 25:35. I just love verse 35. I chuckle when I read it.

**So David received from her hand what she had brought him, and he said to her, "Go up to your house in peace. See, I have listened to you and granted your request."**

He acted like he had been running everything himself while the whole time he had been led around by the nose by the Holy Spirit through this beautiful woman.

Now, notice what Abigail does not do. She does not desert her husband. She does not deceive her husband. She goes right back to her old abusive, hard, unteachable, irascible, evil Nabal, instead of running off with David.

I Samuel 25:36:

**Then Abigail came to Nabal, and behold, he was holding a feast in his house, like the feast of a king. And Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunk: so she did not tell him anything at all until the morning light. But it came about in the morning, when the wine had gone out of Nabal,** [He's got a splitting headache, and he is depressed and nauseated.] **that his wife told him these things,** [Now, he has just had his life saved by her actions.] **and his heart died within him so that he became as a stone.** [He has a massive stroke. He is still alive but he is paralyzed, probably both by fury and by fright. Nabal was undoubtedly enraged by what his wife had done. She had deliberately taken food and given it to David after he had told David no. And yet he is also frightened to death because he realizes he came that close to having his head lopped off.]

Now look at the next verse.

I Samuel 25:38:

**And about ten days later, it happened that the Lord struck Nabal, and he died.**

Let me ask you a question. Let your sanctified imagination wander a little. If I were God I would have snuffed Nabal's life out just like that with a massive coronary, "You mess with Me and that is what you get, Nabal." It would have had a lot more impact. Why did God allow Nabal to live 10 helpless days, without any ability to manipulate people, where his wealth could do him no good, where he could do nothing except lie and look up? God loved Nabal. He loves fools. Have you ever heard of what I call "The Noah forty day principle?" God demonstrated this same principle before. Way back in Noah's day, God had one person who was righteous. He said to Noah, "Noah, I am going to give mankind 120 years more and that is it. You start building a great big wooden box up on the mountainside because there's going to be a flood." [As far as we can tell there had never been any rain on the earth yet] "What's a flood, God?" "Don't worry about it. Build the box 450' long, 75' wide,

and 50' high." [This is using the 18" cubit.] It took him 120 years to build that huge box with stories in it, a roof on it, windows all the way around. While Noah was pounding those pegs in and while his sons were working for him, he was preaching righteousness. Noah warned about a coming judgment of God against the life on earth. Of course, people would nod and say, "Hey, there goes old crazy Noah lugging another timber up there. Hey, what are you building, Noah? Where's the water, Noah? What's a flood, Noah?" You can see they would be having a big ball. Noah sat there and took that guff for 120 years until he put the animals in the ark, and he entered with his family.

Then Scripture says, "God shut the door."

Then the fountains of the deep opened up and the heavens opened up. [Apparently there was some kind of heavy cloud canopy around the earth in those days that came pouring down.] The intriguing thing is God did not send a gigantic flood that swept everyone away just like that. He had the water slowly rise for 40 days and 40 nights until it finally covered the top of the highest hill. Why? Why did God deliberately do this in an unhurried way? What were the people doing while the water was slowly, inexorably rising, pushing them to the top of the hills before covering them? What is God giving them? Time to repent. [What did God give the Jews at Kadesh-Barnea? Forty days to go in and see if the promised land was exactly the way he had said it was, but even though it was, they still refused to go in. So they spent a total of 40 years in the wilderness until that generation died off. [During that time, though, many did repent.] God loved those wicked people of Noah's day. God gave them 120 years of Noah's preaching righteousness, and then he gave them 40 days of inexorable approaching death to repent. He really wanted them to repent. In II Peter 3:9, Peter argues that God is long suffering. "God is not slow concerning promise as some men count slowness," he says, "but he is long suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance (change their mind)" I think God honored the I Peter 3:1-6 principle for Abigail's sake. My personal feeling is that those 10 days in which Nabal had to lie helpless looking up while Abigail loved him and ministered to him were deliberately given to him so he would have an opportunity to repent. I like to think that he did..

I Samuel 25:39:

**When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, "Blessed be the Lord, who has pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal,**

Don't judge David, now, by the New Testament. He was very grateful that Nabal got it and that David was thereby vindicated in the eyes of men. Some of the Psalms also say this, but David is 1,000 years before the New Testament, and he is 3,000 before our time. So do not judge him based on the New Testament.

I Samuel 25:39b:

**...and has kept back His servant from evil. The Lord has also returned the evildoing of Nabal on his own head."**

He sees that had he done something, he would have usurped the prerogative of God. God was about to take care of it the very next morning, and he dealt with the one man who needed dealing with and not the whole family, or all the males. "The soul that sins, it shall die," the Scripture says. God holds each individual accountable. The principle in the Mosaic Law is that the son shall not die for the sins of the father, nor the father for the sins of the son. Each shall die for his own sins. Each man stands before his God alone.

I Samuel 25:39c:

**Then David sent a proposal to Abigail, to take her as his wife. When the servants of David came to Abigail at Carmel, they spoke to her, saying, "David has sent us to you, to take you as his wife." And she arose and bowed with her face to the ground and said, "Behold, your maidservant is a maid to wash the feet of my lord's servants." Then Abigail quickly arose, and rode on a donkey, with her five maidens who attended her; and she followed the messengers of**



## **David, and became his wife.**

Interesting, Abigail has a choice, doesn't she? She is now the widow of Nabal, a very wealthy man, heir to a vast estate. All she has to do is play footsy with Saul, and she can keep it. Or she can choose to go with God's man who is still a fugitive in the wilderness, whose future is out there somewhere and a little bit dim at the moment. She will end up in flight all the time until God comes through someday. Same choice Moses had. He was a son of Pharaoh's daughter but he chose to deny the riches of Egypt and the pleasures of sin for awhile in order to accept the reproach of the people of God.

What does Abigail do? How quickly does it take her to make up her mind? Who is it going to be Saul or David? YHWH's man or the man YHWH has rejected? Just like that she makes her choice. You can imagine, of course, what Saul will do to her property the moment he finds out she is with David. It will go into the royal exchequer to be given to someone else.

Now the intriguing thing is you would think because Abigail did all these things God would give her a long life, and she would walk happily into the sunset hand-in-hand with her David as queen of all Israel. But it does not happen that way. In Scriptures she does not appear when David is King of Israel. She does have a son, Chileab, for him when he becomes King of Judah in Hebron. One son only and then she disappears off the scene. She may have died in childbirth. Chileab, the son, does not appear after that either. She has a very short life span apparently, a very short ministry. Intriguing thing is they did have a son called Chileab, and Chileab means "restraint." The same word used in I Samuel 25, verse 33 "who have kept me this day from bloodshed." Here is this beautiful woman and what is it that David remembers most about her still? What is the thing that lives in David's mind about Abigail? Restraint! This godly woman who was used to keep God's king out of trouble apparently was not given a long life by God, but her impact on David went on for years.

It is similar to John the Baptist with Jesus Christ. John the Baptist was to be the messenger of Christ, the forerunner of Christ. He was set apart to this ministry from his mother's womb and was filled with the Spirit of God while yet in her womb. He was a priest, the son of a priest. His mother was even from a priestly family. His whole ministry was preparation. Thirty years he spent preparing for one short ministry which lasted about a year to 18 months at the most. He had tremendous popularity in the beginning. Then he was asked by God to give up his popularity. He was told by God, "When you get this big following, point them to Jesus. You must decrease and He must increase."

Finally, he did not die a hero's death. He chose to rebuke King Herod who had charge of Galilee and Perea, which were adjacent to Samaria and Judea. King Herod had taken his brother Philip's wife to be his queen, because Herodias had designs on becoming a queen. While he was in Herod's territory, John the Baptist rebuked Herod and Herod imprisoned him. After Salome, daughter of Herodias by Philip, inflamed Herod with a sensuous dance, he made a drunken oath to her in front of his debauched guests, "I'll give you anything up to half of my kingdom." She went running to her mother and said, "What shall I ask for?" [The Greek indicates "for myself."] She didn't know what was going on. Herodias immediately responded, "The head of John the Baptist on a platter." So John's head was chopped off for a drunken king, a young naive pawn and a wicked woman. Tradition says Herodias did an obscene dance around his head. That may just be tradition. Herodias hated him, and she won. That was God's "reward" on earth for his messenger whom the Lord himself said was "the greatest of the Old Testament prophets."

Do you see what this says? It says, if we look only at this life for the righteousness and justice of God, we are going to be disappointed. God has all eternity in view. He will take his only Son, bring him up in a miserable caravan town like Nazareth, have his parentage disputed, have him spend thirty years in preparation and only three and a half years in ministry then snuff him out like that! He can do that to us, but all we have to do when we look at Abigail or John the Baptist or our Lord Himself, is remember the eternal, long range consequences. Because Christ was crucified, someday "every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that he is Lord to the glory of God the Father." Because Abigail apparently was allowed to have a tremendous impact on David's very formative years, wait until we get upstairs and see what she is like now. If you think she was intelligent and beautiful down

here, wait until you see her glorified, the godly woman that restrained David.

Let me bring out a couple principles. The Abigail principle does not give you the right in the New Testament to go out and deliberately do something against your husband's wishes, knowing that you have usurped his place of headship. In the New Testament you are to submit to your husband in everything-, as to the Lord, trusting the Lord to deal with your husband as Abigail did. She went back and lived with Nabal as his wife. She went back to spend the rest of her years with a man who was going to be abusive and angry and hostile to her. She did not run off with David or run home to mother. She went back to her husband, willing to accept whatever the consequences were of her actions, for YHWH's sake.

Secondly, David took it from Abigail in his anger because she gave it to him gently. I Peter 3 points out that you win a husband by a "gentle and quiet spirit" not by a fish wife's approach. All that does is build up a wall of defense and deep-seated resentment.

Thirdly, David responded to Abigail's plea because she focused him on the Lord and not on herself. She made it her aim to get David to see that the issue was between him and his God, not between him and her rights. When you are dealing with your husband and he is non-responsive to the Word of God, do not assert your rights. Point him to the Lord and trust the Lord to deal with him.

David learned out of this to thank Abigail not for her beauty but for her restraining him from ungodly actions. Long after you women have gotten older, have wrinkles, and sag a little here and there, you can still hold your husband by bonds of steel if you build a life of character as his wife; if he loves you because of your discernment, your godliness, your walk with the Lord, your loveliness instead of your prettiness. I wish I could get that across to women. You are suckered by the TV everyday of the week. Use this, buy this, get L'Oreal and fix your hair all up. It is very expensive, but "You're worth it." That is the biggest con you ever heard in your life. No, what David remembers about Abigail is not her beauty, and David likes beauty. He remembers her loveliness, her godliness, and that is what is going to bind a husband to you forever, long after your prettiness is gone. Abigail went before David to do what God wanted her to do, not to assert her rights but to be God's instrument. Are you willing to be that in your husband's life even though he may be churlish, unteachable, unbending, unyielding? That's what Nabal was, and Abigail chose to be God's instrument not only in David's life but also in Nabal's.

Let's look next time at chapter 26, and I want to try a different approach with this chapter. I am going against some of the commentators. I am using some sanctified imagination next week. However, I think I am right on Scripturally, but I will give it to you as an option.

## **Prayer**

Father, we thank you so much for your Word, for the fact that it shows what the real values in life are. The things that count with you are not prettiness but true beauty and true godliness. The things that will have lasting quality are not things that last long on earth necessarily, but things that have eternal value, the spiritual not the physical. Father, we ask now that we might be wise enough to realize that your value system is entirely opposite from the world's, and we must be constantly on guard against allowing our value system to be perverted by the world. Help us to keep our minds and our thoughts on eternal issues and eternal values, so we take the things in this life and see them from your perspective, trusting you even in the midst of adversity because we know that you are right and that you never make a mistake. Thank you, Father, that you are that kind of a person and that we can trust you in everything and in every situation, and you will never, never fail us. Thank you in Jesus' name. Amen.

# Chapter 16

## Wilderness of Ziph, David spares Saul again

### 1 Samuel 26

Today we are looking at I Samuel, Chapter 26. I do not agree with some of the commentators on this particular passage, so I present this interpretation to you as an option. Some of the commentators believe David was going to the hill of Hachilah to make Saul repent; that he was going with the idea of forcing Saul to come to terms. Looking at the passage, I do not agree. I believe David was going there in anger and fury. I think God was testing him; testing both Saul and David. I want to approach it from that viewpoint. I am offering this as an option. I believe it is a valid option. I will not be dogmatic about it, but I do not think a leopard ever changes its spots. David is a vindictive, hostile person. Just in the last chapter he intended to wipe out Nabal. From a human standpoint, Nabal deserved to be wiped out, but David intended to wipe out not only Nabal but all of his children plus any male servants in the household. When he is angry, David has a strong tendency to fly off the handle and take matters into his own hands. However, in Chapter 25 David repented of killing Nabal, made a confession and, in a sense, told God "No more."

Saul is also a vindictive, violent man. You will remember in Chapter 24 that while chasing David (with God's permission), he was trapped in a cave with David and could easily have been slain, but David held off. Saul, therefore, swore repentance, confessed his sin, and told David, "No more."

So in effect now, both men have made confessions regarding their sin of violence and revenge and have agreed their actions were wrong.

But how can you tell a true confession? 1 John 1:9 says, "If I confess my sins [literally 'say with God,' agree with Him about my sins] God is faithful and righteous to forgive my sins and to cleanse me from all unrighteousness." He will always do it because He is faithful. He has to do it because He is righteous. In Chapter 24 Saul was sorry about his actions toward David and apparently confessed publicly. In Chapter 25 David was sorry about his actions toward Nabal and made a public confession in front of his 400 men and Abigail.

A true confession requires repentance, and repentance means a change of mind, a turning around, some positive step to stop doing whatever was wrong. With that kind of confession God forgives and God cleanses. However, if it is not that kind, God does not forgive and God does not cleanse. Understand this, the present state of mind or the present state of activity has nothing to do with eternal destiny. If you have received Christ as your Lord and your God, positionally you are forgiven in Christ. He died for all your sins, past, present and future. There is no question about that. What we are talking about here is experiencing God's forgiveness, His fellowship, fellowship with a Holy Being. For that we need to keep short accounts with God. We need to agree with him that we need forgiveness. Then we need to do something about our former way of life.

While both Saul and David are already God's anointed, they are two men running in opposite directions, Saul in the flesh, David in the spirit. David has his ups and downs spiritually, but his general trend line is up. Saul also has spiritual ups and downs, but unfortunately his general trend line is down.

We have just seen them both confess. Now God tests their confessions. For Saul, it is a tragic test and he fails it badly. According to Scripture, this is the end of testing for Saul. God takes him home. He does not, however, lose his salvation. We will later see him joined with Samuel.

David, even though his trend line is up, is still tested. I think that is a key, so let's look at it.

I Samuel 26, verse 1:

**Then the Ziphites came to Saul at Gibeah, saying, "Is not David hiding on the hill of**

**Hachilah, which is before Jeshimon?" [the wilderness] So Saul arose and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, having with him three thousand chosen men [here is that Task Force again] of Israel, to search for David in the wilderness of Ziph.**

Before we go further, let's look at Saul's confession. Does it meet the test? In Chapter 24 Saul publicly confessed to David, "You are more righteous than I; for you have dealt well with me, while I have dealt wickedly with you." However, at the next opportunity to commit the same exact sin, Saul with an army of three thousand men travels all the way from Benjamin down to Ziphite territory to seek David out. Now you don't move an army of that size without a lot of thought and planning. There's no change of direction here, and Saul fails the test of a true confession.

To continue, David has gone into the realm of the Calebites, up around Carmel, Ziph, just to the west of Engedi which is right on the Dead Sea about its middle point. About 12 miles into Judah, is the area of Maon, Ziph and Hebron founded by sons of Caleb. These people are Judahites, David's tribe. David is there married to Abigail, who is from one of the leading families in that territory. He has also married Ahinoam of Jezreel, which is only 3 miles north of Carmel. She is probably from one of its powerful families too. David is a king, and he is making alliances for the future. So he has married into two powerful Calebite families right in this territory.

Because of these alliances, the one spot in Judah where David ought to be safe, is the area of the Ziphites, the Calebites. Well, not so Once before the Ziphites deliberately told Saul where David was hiding, after tricking him into an untenable spot, and except for God's intervention, David would have been lost. Now David is back, but this time he is family. Does that make a difference? No. The first thing the Ziphites do is travel all the way to Gibeah of Benjamin and tell Saul, "Hey, he's back again. Let's get him." If you were a red-headed, impulsive Irishman with a touch of Jewish blood, and inclined to get even, how would you respond when betrayed by your own family? How about David?

Before we go further, why does God bring Ziphites in to sneak and tell? Why does he bring contrary people into our lives? God's deliberate design is to work on some character flaw in us. Has it ever occurred to you that what you see mirrored in the person you cannot get along with is what is mirrored in you in the eyes of God, and incidentally, in the eyes of man? We never see ourselves the way we are, and when we run into people who reflect us as we really are, our backs go up and so do our defenses.

David has to learn to deal with Ziphites, and he does. When he becomes king he never takes vengeance on any of these people, and he becomes king of Judah first. He does learn his lesson, but he doesn't like it right now.

I Samuel 26, verse 3:

**And Saul camped in the hill of Hachilah, [about 6 miles east of Ziph, about half way to Engedi in the wilderness. David likes this place. Apparently it has the advantage of being isolated. It must also have a good water supply and good game available because he has 600 mouths to feed.] which is before Jeshimon, [the wilderness] beside the road, and David was staying in the wilderness. When he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness, David sent out spies, and he knew that Saul was definitely coming. David then arose and came to the place where Saul had camped. And David saw the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the commander of his army; and Saul was lying in the circle of the camp, and the people were camped around him.**

When David left his wilderness headquarters in the Cave of Adullam near Gath, where he was safe, and took up the defense of the city of Keilah which was being besieged by the Philistines, what was the first step he took? He inquired of God. When he heard Saul was going to come down to get him, what did he do? He inquired of God. When he wondered whether to stay in the walled city of Keilah and defend himself or to flee, what did he do? He inquired of God. God told him to go defend Keilah. God told him Saul was definitely coming, and God told him to get out of that city. Step-by-step David inquired of God. He could because God had sent him Abiathar the High Priest with the ephod, the royal vestment that was used in those days to divine God's will.

Do you see anything conspicuous by its absence here? David is the aggressor this time. He is the guerrilla. Saul has brought this massive army into David's territory, and David has had it with Saul. From his spies, he knows Saul is definitely coming. Then David arises and deliberately goes to Saul's camp. He can readily find where Saul is sleeping, since the king always sleeps with a spear at his head. David has plans for that spear. He is going to move it over about a foot right through Saul's head. I believe David is moving here in hostility. God is allowing David to check out his repentance, his confession. God is a very faithful God. He will never lead you into temptation for you to fail or test you for you to fail. He leads you into testing that you might succeed. He always provides the means by which you can succeed if you choose to use those means. Let's look at the means he uses here.

I Samuel 26, verse 6:

**Then David answered [on the spies' report] and said to Ahimelech the Hittite and to Abishai [David's nephew] the son of Zeruiah, [David's sister] Joab's brother, saying, "Who will go down with me to Saul in the camp?" And Abishai said, "I will go down with you." [Abishai is a very brave man and becomes David's leading general later on. He is also a rather opportunistic young man] So David and Abishai came to the people by night, and behold, Saul lay sleeping inside the circle of the camp, with his spear stuck in the ground at his head; and Abner and the people were lying around him. Then Abishai said to David, "Today God has delivered your enemy into your hand; [Everyone is sound asleep. Go down the middle of the camp to where Saul lies asleep with his spear right there. Just pick it up, move it over one foot, vroom, and that takes care of all your problems. Nobody will even wake up." Abishai is reasoning, "God has delivered him into your hands. Give it to him."] now therefore, please let me strike him with the spear ["the" spear. He plans to use Saul's own spear] to the ground with one stroke, and I will not strike him the second time." [I won't even have to strike him again.] But David said to Abishai, "Do not destroy him, for who can stretch out his hand against the Lord's anointed and be without guilt?"**

Remember before when Saul came into that cave to relieve himself and was silhouetted against the bright sunlight? David and his men seated inside in the darkness had Saul totally at their mercy. What did his men say that time? Almost exactly the same thing, and that time David listened to them. While he could not quite bring himself to kill Saul, he did slash off a piece of his robe and thoroughly enjoyed thinking, "This is really Saul I am cutting." But his conscience immediately smote him. The action was not the issue here. The desire of the heart was the issue. God knew it, and David knew it. The Spirit of God put the finger on David right away. Guilt hit him immediately. Then he fought his men; literally, "He tore his men apart," when they encouraged him to kill Saul. He responded to the Spirit of God with true guilt. He fought his men and stopped them from killing Saul. He said "No" to the temptation.

There is a principle in Scripture. Your flesh will never change. All your life you will be assaulted in the avenues of weakness resulting from your lifestyle. Maturity does not come by no more assaults. Maturity comes by beginning to say, "No" to those assault points Satan uses on you. As you begin to say, "No, No, No" instead of "Yes, Yes, Yes" you discover the same temptation begins to trigger a "No" instead of a Yes." The temptation has not changed, but your response has changed. Because David took a strong stand back in that cave and saved Saul, when the same phrase cropped up again, "...God has delivered your enemy into your hand,' give me the spear." it does not trigger a "Yes," it triggers a "No." The second time it was easier to resist, and David said, "Who can do it without guilt. I've had this trip before. I don't want it again. You cannot touch the Lord's anointed without guilt."

So why, then, did he go up to Saul's camp? I think he went in anger. However, the Lord gave him a choice. The Lord did not leave him without resources. At the key point of decision, Abishai uttered almost the exact words that were mouthed to David once before. He said "No" to them then, so when the temptation came again, the same words trigger a "No" again. Without the flesh ever being changed, David began to build a path toward righteousness. We kid ourselves when we think our flesh will change. It will never get better. Only our choices can get better. What we do with the flesh is what is going to change. David made a stand against the flesh in that cave, and he became strong in the faith in that cave. Now God deliberately has Abishai, without his knowing it (I think), mouth exactly those same words. What hits David, "Oh, No, I've been this route before, and the Holy

Spirit stuck me with the spear of guilt. I don't want any part of this." David resists and says, "Who could do this without guilt."

David now begins to look at things from God's perspective. He sees that God himself will do the job that he would love to do.

Look at I Samuel 26, verse 10:

**David also said, "As the Lord lives, surely the Lord will strike him** [same phrase he used for Nabal, something like a stroke or a massive coronary. You cannot live in contention with Jehovah and stay healthy. Nabal is a good example of it.] **or his day will come that he dies, or he will go down into battle and perish. The Lord forbid that I should stretch out my hand against the Lord's anointed; but now please take the spear that is at his head and the jug of water, and let us go."** So David took the spear and the jug of water from beside Saul's head, and they went away, but no one saw or knew it, nor did any awake, for they were all asleep, because a sound sleep from the Lord had fallen on them.

David thought he was so smart, and so sly and such a good guerilla fighter, but God had anesthetized the whole of Saul's camp. Do you see the horror of that? If you want to go your route and you insist on it, God will let you. If David had wanted to go ahead and kill Saul, God would have let him, and nobody would have awakened. The irony is that God is about to kill Saul a couple of chapters down the road. So David would have sinned in killing Saul while actually doing the will of God. You think that God loves you so much he will stop you from those willful, deliberate choices that you make. No he won't. He loves you so much that he will let you do what you should not do when you choose to do what you know you should not do.

You ask, even though everyone was asleep how was David able to approach the camp? Wouldn't there have been some kind of out post on the alert? Saul slept in the middle of the camp surrounded by the men, while the guards would have been out in wilderness country. With about 3,000 men, they would have been all spread out and not a nice little group around a camp fire. Once David got by the outer guards he'd be OK. That is why I am sure Abishai went around to Saul's head. He didn't want a sound, not even want a groan, from Saul.

David, after making this statement, "God forbid I should stretch out my hand," says, "Now please take the spear that is at his head and the jug of water and let us go." David has a purpose here. The spear, which before was to have been an instrument of unrighteousness, is now going to be an instrument of righteousness used to convict Saul. David is human though. Look at 13.

I Samuel 26, verse 13:

**Then David crossed over to the other side, and stood on top of the mountain at a distance with a large area between them.** [He still knows Saul, and he wants to get plenty of room between himself and Saul. Listen to the line now] **And David called to the people and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, "Will you not answer, Abner?" Then Abner answered and said, "Who are you who calls to the king?"** [How dare you disturb the king's sleep] **So David said to Abner, "Are you not a man? And who is like you in Israel?** [He is in command of all the army. He is the man who has been bugging David for the last 10 years, chasing him like a hare in the hills.] **Why then have you not guarded your lord the king? For one of the people came to destroy the king your lord.** [There is the action of David's heart. If David had not really wanted to kill Saul, this taunting would have had no value in David's sight. But, oh, it did taste good. However, he has had a victory over it, see.] **This thing that you have done is not good. As the Lord lives, all of you must surely die, because you did not guard your lord, the Lord's anointed. And now, see where the king's spear is, and the jug of water that was at his head."** [In other words, "Hey, Abner, I take better care of your king than you do.]

Notice David's humanness. He has just had a tremendous spiritual victory, but he cannot resist just one little jab. Now, David can not curse Saul because in Exodus 20, Scripture says you are not allowed to revile God or curse the ruler of your people. However, it says nothing about cursing the General of your people. So David has a

little proxy vengeance here. He goes way over on the other side of the hill and holds up the spear and the jug of water. The jug was right by Saul's head as was the spear. He takes this opportunity to taunt Abner, the man who has been harassing him. This is a very tactical error. (Abner is now commander of the king's army. David used to be commander of Saul's army. Possibly there was rivalry between them even then.) Abner is quite a general, and David causes him to lose face in front of 3,000 of his troops. Abner is an oriental. How do you think Abner is going to respond? Poor old David just can not resist this kind of thing. When David, upon Saul's death, becomes king of Judah, Abner takes the remaining son of Saul, Ishbosheth, and with the ten northern tribes sets up his own kingdom in opposition to David. He does not return to David until Ishbosheth insults him and he loses face in Israel. Only then does he deliver Israel to David. David's little indulgence here may well have kept him from becoming king of all of Israel for several years. When you have a spiritual victory, don't push your luck. The retribution of God is always there. When you disobey God you will pay for it somewhere down the line. I think this incident is one of the basic reasons Abner refused to allow the ten tribes of Israel to join with Judah. under David as king.

Now how about David and Saul? I Samuel 26, verse 17:

**Then Saul recognized David's voice and said, "Is this your voice, my son David?" And David said, "It is my voice, my lord the king." He also said, "Why then is my lord pursuing his servant? For what have I done? ["You call me your son David, so what's with this 3,000 man army?"] Or what evil is in my hand? Now therefore please let my lord the king listen to the words of his servant.** [Where did David get that phrase to get Saul to listen to him? Abigail to David. Those are almost her exact words when David came running down in his rage to kill all the males in her family. Back in chapter 25, verse 24b she says, "Please let your maidservant speak to you and listen to the words of your maidservant." And he did listen and got out of trouble. David pleads with Saul based upon an experience he has just had when he was kept from sin.] **If the Lord has stirred you up against me, let Him accept an offering;** [This is interesting theologically. David recognizes that God does allow you to go your willful way, and he will, for example, put the whole camp asleep for you. He realizes he came down here with a heart to do evil, and God let him come. So he is telling Saul, "If God is letting you do this evil, all right then bring Him an offering." This is a technical term. This is the bloodless offering of good works. It is the very offering David has just offered God because of his own attitude. David wanted to kill also, and God almost let him do it, but David repented. Now he tells Saul, "Saul, you are being allowed to do this by God, then the answer to your problem is to offer an offering of good works just like I did."] **but if it is men, cursed are they before the Lord, for they have driven me out today that I should have no attachment with the inheritance of the Lord [Just write me out of the nation of Isarel] saying, 'Go, serve other gods.'** [In a sense they are making me flee Israel and flee Jehovah. You've dragged me out of my inheritance and away from my God.] **Now then, do not let my blood fall to the ground away from the presence of the Lord; for the king of Israel has come out to search for a single flea, just as one hunts a partridge in the mountains."**

That is an intriguing metaphor. Remember before when David said, "You have come out to look for a dead dog and a single flea." Of course, dead dogs won't bite. A single flea is ridiculous when you are infested with Philistines. So he makes Saul look ridiculous, "You come out here to look for one single flea." Then he changes his metaphor because of what just happened. The Israelite partridge runs along the ground. It does not fly. It escapes by fleeing, by running. In the flat lands large coveys are chased until they become exhausted. Then the Israelites throw sticks along the ground, strike them in the legs, knock them to the ground, catch them, break their necks and eat them.

So David says, "Saul, you are not being very bright. You are hunting a single partridge up in the mountains when there are coveys down there in the valley. There are Philistines everywhere, and in the mountains the partridge has the advantage. You can't chase him up and down hills very long. He can hide, and this particular partridge can turn around and bite you. Dead dogs may not bite, but a partridge named David can bite, and you just had a chance to see that."

So David gives him this veiled warning, and Saul gets the message.

## I Samuel 26, verse 21

**Then Saul said, "I have sinned.** [There is his confession again worth about two bits] **Return, my son David, for I will not harm you again because my life was precious in your sight this day. Behold, I have played the fool and have committed a serious error."** **And David answered and said,** [And look at the freedom a man of God has to rebuke the king of Israel, God's anointed. It is not sin to rebuke a man on a godly basis] **"Behold the spear of the king! Now let one of the young men come over and take it.** [He gives back to Saul his scepter. He is not trying to get the kingdom. He's not grabbing that symbol and keeping it] **And the Lord will repay each man for his righteousness and his faithfulness; for the Lord delivered you into my hand today, but I refused to stretch out my hand against the Lord's anointed.** [He senses that God had arranged this thing and had allowed it to happen and he made the right choice] **Now behold, as your life was highly valued in my sight this day, so may my life be highly valued in the sight of the Lord,** [Not in Saul's sight. He can't trust Saul anymore] and may He deliver me from all distress." [And, of course, he means mainly you. He's telling Saul, "You are no longer a man of your word. I cannot trust you, but I can trust YHWH, and that is where I rest my case, and it hits] **Then Saul said to David, "Blessed are you, my son David; you will both accomplish much and surely prevail."** [literally "vanquish" "You are going to win."] **So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place.**

David took two things, a spear and a jug of water, literally "a pitcher" of water. He did not return the pitcher of water. I would like to offer a Roe sanctified theory here as to why I think he did not return the water. Turn to II Samuel 23, where the mighty men of David and some of their deeds are being described. The particular deed described here happened just prior to this action in I Samuel 26 when David was at the cave of Adullam, the cave just outside of Gath back in Chapter 22.

II Samuel 23, verse 13 says:

**Then three of the thirty chief men went down and came to David in the harvest time to the cave of Adullam** [That is the one just 10 miles east of Gath where David is hiding] **while the troop of the Philistines was camping in the valley of Rephaim. And David was then in the stronghold, while the garrison of the Philistines was then in Bethlehem** [The Philistines would come at harvest time, drive the people inside their walled cities and then take all the crops that had already been harvested. It devastated the land. This is what was happening at this time.] **And David had a craving and said, "Oh that someone would give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem** [his home town] **which is by the gate.** [Now the Philistines were sitting right there in Bethlehem] **So the three mighty men broke through the camp of the Philistines, and drew water from the well of Bethlehem which was by the gate, and took it and brought it to David. Nevertheless he would not drink it, but poured it out to the Lord; and he said, "Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this. Shall I drink the blood of the men who went in jeopardy of their lives? Therefore he would not drink it.**

David's men brought him the water he craved. It was an offering of their love for him and was at the risk of their lives, I might add. That water symbolized the blood of those men which might have been poured out had they not been successful. "The life of the flesh is in the blood," the Lord said in Leviticus 17. "I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls." Therefore, no Israelite could eat or drink blood. The blood was precious to God for it represented the life of the person that was sacrificed. So David, before this latest episode, had offered to the Lord this drink offering a symbol of the blood of these men.

I believe David kept the jug of water he picked up by Saul's head because it represented Saul's blood to him. The spear represented David's ability to kill Saul. It also represented Saul's authority to reign as God's anointed until God put him away, either by stroke, by natural death, or by perishing in battle. So the spear David could give back to Saul, but not the water. The water represented the desire of David to shed the blood of Saul, and he cannot give that back to Saul. That had to go to Jehovah. So he poured it out as a drink offering. He realized that except for Jehovah he would have taken innocent blood. This is why I believe he did not give the jug back. He did not want to usurp the prerogative of God by shedding innocent blood. David passed the test, but Saul did not. That is my sanctified opinion. You can take it or leave it, but I personally feel it is possible from Scripture. It also ties into the



way David acts both before and after.

What, then, can we say about I John 1:9 then? What does it really mean to confess? And what does it really mean to repent? It means to deliberately do something positive in the opposite direction. If you honestly see things as God sees them, then you will know that the sin you call a peccadillo, just a slip, will separate you from God, and alone would be enough to cause Christ, the Son of God, to die for it. That gives you some concept of how to look at sin with the eyes of God. That produces a real desire to change. David did. He confirmed his position of true confession. So, my friends, do not claim I John 1:9 unless you plan to take a positive step in the opposite direction. You will either be a Saul or a David every time.

Before we close let me go back to something that came up very early in this message. I said, "If you have received Christ as your Lord and your God, positionally you are forgiven in Christ. He died for all your sins, past, present and future. There is no question about that." Someone asked, "If that is true then what is meant in Philippians 2:12-13 which says, '...Work out your salvation with fear and trembling for it is God who is at work in you both to will and to work for His good pleasure.'"

The word for "work out" means "to exploit" something you already possess. The Greek word means to take something that is your and wring it dry. It is from secular documents of that time. For example, one of the documents was written by the Romans to their silver mines in Gaul. They said "exploit" those mines. They already possessed the mines, but they told the manager, "We want those mines 'exploited.' Get all that silver out." So, that passage means "exploit" your salvation, which you already possess, with fear and trembling. The word "fear and trembling" does not mean cringing fear. It does not mean fear of God but rather a trembling sensation of, "I want to please God, and I do not want to fail." It is a positive emotion. Why? For it is God who is at work within you ("*energon*" the word that is only used for supernatural power) both to give you the desire to do this, and also to energize you ("*energein*" again), to give you supernatural power to fulfill your desire. It has nothing to do with gaining something. It refers to what you are doing with what you have.

Next week we'll look at I Samuel, chapter 27.

### **Prayer:**

Father, we thank you now from your Word, and we just ask for your blessing upon our lives that he might truly look at our lives and see them in your sight. We thank you for David, Father, who was a man after your own heart and a man after our own hearts. He had all the feelings and emotions we have and all the foibles and fallacies and You are in the process of molding that man into a really solid citizen, a man who will represent you, a man who will be a picture of Jesus Christ, a type of Jesus Christ all down through history. Father, we have a high and holy calling being made in your image and your likeness and some day we shall be exactly that, but, Father, help us to walk seriously before you knowing that you are at work in our hearts, that you want us to exploit our salvation with fear and trembling and with a deep desire to please you, but all the while resting in the fact that you are the one who is at work within us empowering us both to desire to do your will, and then in turn to give us the supernatural power to accomplish your will because everything does come from you. We are the choosers. We are not the actors. We have no power to act, but we do have power to choose. Father, help us to make the right choices. Thank you, Father, in Jesus' name. Amen.

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## **Chapter Seventeen**

## David in Ziklag

### 1 Samuel 27

We are coming to the last days of Saul's reign and the beginning of David's. It is a picture of two believers who are totally at odds with God, yet one of them is restored by God and one of them is taken home by God. David is obviously restored. Saul is not. In Saul's death, I think we have an illustration of the "sin unto death" alluded to in I John 5:16 or I Corinthians 11:30. We'll talk more about that in a couple of weeks.

I would like to look at David first. We will cover chapter 27 and a couple of verses of chapter 28 today. Next week it will be chapters 29 & 30. After that we'll pick up Saul in the latter part of 28 and then chapter 31. Even though both men are believers, they show the depravity of the natural man.

As Chapter 26 ended, David had refused Abishai's invitation to kill Saul even though God had anesthetized the whole camp and Saul's spear was right at hand. He makes the statement in I Samuel 26, verse 10, "As the Lord lives, surely the Lord will strike him, [as he did with Nabal maybe a stroke or cardiac arrest] or his day will come that he dies, [a natural death] or he will go down into battle and perish. The Lord forbid that I should stretch out my hand against the Lord's anointed." Then in verse 24 he confronts Saul with his evil in pursuing David when David is not harming him, "Now behold, as your life was highly valued in my sight this day, so may my life be highly valued in the sight of the Lord, and may He deliver me from all distress. Then Saul said to David, 'Blessed are you, my son David; you will both accomplish much and surely prevail.' [literally vanquish. You are going to win] So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place."

Now, David has just had a mighty spiritual victory. He has resisted the opportunity to kill Saul and left Saul in the hands of God. It would seem that, of all times, this would be the time when David would be walking securely with the Lord with no problems of faith. God has just demonstrated his adequacy and David has just made an extraordinary statement of faith. So what happens next? David takes his eyes off the Lord and looks at the circumstances.

There is a pattern here. I John 2:15 indicates "stop loving the world and the things that are in the world,...for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, [the word "lust" merely denotes a strong desire not necessarily sexual desire, and it can be either good or evil.] the strong desire of the flesh, and the strong desire for the material things in life or the strong desire for the boastful pride of life [status, pomp, ceremony, power, position] are not of the Father but are of the world and the world is passing away and its strong passionate desires; but the one who does the will of God abides forever." There is a progression to sin. It begins with normal, natural desires. In the case of Christ and his testing in Luke, it was his normal natural desire for food after forty days without food but a desire outside the will of God. It starts with a normal natural desire, but one outside the will of God. Then it progresses into a desire for things for things sake. You make little gods of something other than the true God and possessions become your desire. The last go around is when you make yourself God, the boastful pride of life. This is the progression downward. It is exactly what happened to Eve in Genesis 3. Why should Satan change his tactics. They have been working for thousands of years. A thousand years before David look what happened to Eve.

Genesis 3, verse 1:

**Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent. "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, lest you die.'" [God never said that, but there is a tree she wants and she starts putting little restrictions on here] And the serpent said to the woman, "You surely shall not die! [The Hebrew emphasizes the "Not" "NO! you shall not die," a flat denial of what God had said] For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." [The ultimate destiny of man apart from God. You'll be like him. You'll be a god.] When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, [a strong desire of the flesh, just normal natural**

desire. Secondly] **and that it was a delight to the eyes.** [She wanted to possess it. Beauty is part of a gift of God to women. They love beautiful things. Thirdly.] **and that the tree was desirable to make one wise,** [Like God, the boastful pride of life. The ultimate god] **she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.** [Obviously an act of love. She did not all of a sudden become a witch.]

This is the pattern, and this is what we see happening here. David has had a phenomenal spiritual victory, but then instead of looking at Yahweh he begins to look at his circumstances. Howard Hendricks, a professor of education at Dallas Theological Seminary, said to one of his Christian students, "How are you feeling?" The student replied, "I am doing pretty good under the circumstances." Howard said, "What are you doing under there?" With God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, what is a Christian doing "under" the circumstances? Well, he's under them because he's not looking up to God who is over the circumstances. You are never at a plateau with your circumstances. You are either under them or over them.

So, let's look at David, I Samuel 27, verse 1:

**Then David said to himself,** [not to God but to himself. This is a personal pronoun, so you can begin to understand the problem] **"Now I will perish one day by the hand of Saul. There is nothing better for me than to escape into the land of the Philistines. Saul then will despair of searching for me anymore in all the territory of Israel, and I will escape from his hand."**

David was getting tired of being chased around the wilderness. He began to tire of God's total provision. He wanted to have this thing over with. He wanted to be out from under the pressure, to be free from the possibility of death, to be free from the constant tension of sleeping with one hand on his sword and one ear listening for the special task force, run by a mad man, designed to get him. These were very normal, natural desires. In themselves there was nothing wrong with them, but he needed to get back to Judah, out of Moab, where he could learn that God would be his shield; that God would be his "exceeding great reward" as God had told Abraham. God was committed to David becoming king of Israel. He had anointed him to replace Saul, not to be slain by Saul, and David knew that. So his desire to get out from under the pressure may have been normal and natural but it was wrong. The Philistines were the one outfit that seemed to be holding their own against Saul, so, David figured that was the place to go to ease the pressure. Things had been seesawing back and forth. The more Saul pursued David, neglecting his kingship, the more the Philistines moved onto the frontiers and took over the land. David was just plain tired of going through the process of what God calls "boot camp," being honed, chafed, molded, "disciplined" in Hebrews 12, into the image and likeness of God, into a man after God's own heart. He wanted out. So, he said to himself, "I think I'll escape over into the territory of the Philistines."

Down the line, we have another example of looking at the circumstances instead of God. Remember a prophet named Elijah [I Kings 18] who prayed and for three and a half years it never rained in Israel? Without the Western winds, the land just shrivels and dries up. Ahab and Jezebel knew who had prayed. They looked for him for three and a half years and never found him. God hid him and provided for his needs. Then God said, "Now go back to Ahab [who has been wanting to kill Elijah for a long time] and have a showdown." Elijah, a man of real faith, goes. He gathers everyone up on Mt. Carmel. [This is Mt. Carmel up north, not the Carmel down below Hebron which we have been talking about with David.] Elijah boldly gets up in front of all Israel even though they hate him now. Except for seven thousand men, they have all turned to Baal. Jezebel, daughter of the King of Tyre, has brought with her 450 priests of Baal and 400 priests of Asherah along with Baal worshippers. Elijah challenges them all on that mountain top. Today we'll see who is God in Israel. He sets up two altars of stone, lays wood on them, gives the priests of Baal their choice of the oxen, has them slay the oxen, cut them in pieces and throw them on the altar. Only one restriction, nobody sets the fire. He challenges the priests of Baal to pray to Baal and have him light the fire.

All morning long they go through their song and dance. Elijah restrains himself until about noon when he just can't handle it any more and begins to taunt them, "Maybe Baal has gone hunting. Maybe he is on a journey or maybe he is otherwise occupied. Maybe he is asleep and needs to be awakened." He sticks it to them. He encourages their anger and hostility. Remember, these are all powerful enemies and if Jehovah doesn't come through, he is going to be fried. All afternoon they do their demonic dances and slash themselves and cry out.

Nothing happens. Elijah says, "OK, now, let's get a lot of water up here." They flood the sacrifice, the wood, the altar. They even dig a pit around the altar and fill the pit with water. They continue carrying water until everything is a sodden mess and water surrounds the altar like a moat. Then Elijah cries out to Jehovah, Yahweh, "Lord, let it be known that Thou art God in Israel...and that I have done all these things at Thy word" Fire comes out of heaven and burns up the sacrifice, the wood, the stone, the dust and the water. What a triumph! Then Elijah says, "Seize the prophets of Baal; do not let one of them escape" He takes them down to the brook Kishon and slays them all. He tells Ahab, "You'd better get going. There is going to be a thunderstorm." Then he bows down and prays. He's not quite so sure it is going to happen. With his head down between his knees, he tells his servant, "Look and tell me." He keeps asking, "Do you see anything?" Pretty soon there is a little cloud way out on the horizon. Yeah! He keeps praying. The cloud gets bigger and bigger and pretty soon it is a thunderstorm. A supernatural triumph and what a demonstration of the power of God to keep Elijah. Scene 2: Ahab goes home and talks to Jezebel, a truly wicked woman. She sends a little note, a little billet-doux, to Elijah. "May the gods do to me and even more, if tomorrow you are not like one of these," speaking of the dead priests of Baal lying all over the place. So what does Elijah do? He checks the circumstances, is terrified and takes off running right out of town, a whole day's journey into the wilderness. You can read the rest of the story in I Kings 19.

Back to David, I Samuel 27, verse 2:

**So David arose and crossed over, he and the six hundred men who were with him, to Achish the son of Maach, king of Gath. And David lived with Achish at Gath, he and his men, each with his household, even David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal's widow. Now it was told Saul that David had fled to Gath, so he no longer searched for him.**

David, to save his own skin, exposes six hundred men and their families to the paganism of the Philistines after he had just pleaded with Saul [chapter 26, verse 20], "Don't let me be chased out of the country. 'Don't let my blood fall to the ground away from the Lord.'" He wanted to be where he could worship his God. The tabernacle, of course, was where the Jews worshipped their God. But now David is willing to pay any price, no matter how it will influence his people or how it will influence their children, as long as he can stay alive.

What does God let happen in verse 4? Does he block David even though David is definitely out of the will of God and deep down must realize it? No? What does God let happen in verse 4? He lets the pressure lift. "Saul no longer searches for David." That is one of the horrifying things of this passage. The fact that he got out from under the circumstances, out from under the pressures, does not mean David is in the will of God. [You have a struggle in your home, and finally you say, "I've had it," and you flee to an apartment. To heck with the kids and wife. Sure you feel better. You are out from under all the responsibilities. There was a prayer in the prayer list this morning for a husband to return to his wife and two children. They are all Christians. He is tired of the responsibility. He is living in an apartment somewhere, and he feels out from under the responsibilities all right. The pressure is off. But I can find nowhere in Scripture where you are allowed to flee from your wife and children to avoid the pressure. This young man may feel better, but he is out of the will of God.] David feels better and God allows the pressure to be relieved. If you choose wrong, and you know it is wrong, God will let you have it. David feels excellent at this point. He is in Maui, on the beach, in the sunshine away from pressure. Achish loves him. Achish was going to kill him the first time he showed up, but Achish has just had a run in with Saul. Remember back in chapter 23 when David was trapped on that mountain and the Philistines invaded the land? Saul took off after the Philistines, pursued them and won. He was a good general. He may have been a little bit mad, but he was a good general. Achish lost men. Now here comes David with six hundred, well trained, guerrilla warriors with their own equipment, and they want to fight for Achish. David is welcomed with open arms and given the run of the city. He is fed and clothed and housed, and everything is going great. He has welfare coming out of his ears. The tragedy is that it does not stop there. It moves on from the satisfying of the desires that are normal but, in this case, illegal or immoral or unlawful in the eyes of God, to something more. You cannot be satisfied with the status quo when you are heading down into sin.

So David moves to the second stage, the desire for things. There is lots of loot out in that place, and he is not getting his share of it. Since his six hundred men aren't getting their share either, they are probably giving him

trouble. So look what happens next. Here we move into the "desire of the eyes," and David starts his little deceit.

I Samuel 27, verse 5:

**Then David said to Achish, "If now I have found favor in your sight, let them give me a place in one of the cities in the country, that I may live there; for why should your servant live in the royal city with you?"** [In parenthesis, "So, you can watch me and you can see what I am doing."] **So Achish gave him Ziklag that day;** [which is way down in the south of Philistine country, away from Gath, away from Achish's eyes] **therefore Ziklag has belonged to the kings of Judah to this day. And the number of days that David lived in the country of the Philistines was a year and four months.**

Ziklag was given to the tribe of Simeon when the land was first divided. Then the Philistines won it over and kind of left it deserted. David was given this deserted city which was on the border of the Negev, the south country, and it was just what he wanted. Down below the south country were wandering bedouin tribes who lived by plunder and had big herds. They wandered back and forth across the top of the Sinai Peninsula from Arabia all the way to Egypt. They didn't live in villages, towns or walled cities and could be destroyed without a trace. No one would know. What a resource! David didn't ask for Ziklag; it was given to him by Achish and was a perfect setup for raiding. We need to remember here that Achish was a feudal lord. As a feudal lord he could demand to know and had a right to know, and approve, every action David took. He also had a right to share in the spoils. The city of Ziklag was the perfect location for David to get far enough away from Achish to trick him. God lets it work again. God gives David the perfect site from which to cheat on his master. Verse 8, he moves now from deceit to deceit and murder.

I Samuel 27, verse 8:

**Now David and his men went up and raided** [literally to invade for plunder] **the Geshurites and the Girezites and the Amalekites; for they were the inhabitants of the land from ancient times, as you come to Shur even as far as the land of Egypt.** [Shur was the eastern frontier of the land of Egypt. It means wall. Apparently there was a series of walls or fortresses along there from Pharaoh's times to keep out enemies. These tribes had no roots down, no permanent settlements, nothing left as evidence.] **And David attacked the land and did not leave a man or a woman alive, and he took away the sheep, the cattle, the donkeys, the camels, and the clothing.** [He even stripped the slain. As a wandering nomad, your wardrobe consisted of what you wore. So David even stripped the slain. Do you see what is beginning to possess him now? He is no longer in charge of his sin. His sin is taking hold of him.] **Then he returned and came to Achish.**

It is working beautifully, isn't it? We have another thing working beautifully for David, the grace of God. David was down in the "Wilderness of the Cherethites" and the Pelethites who were actually Philistines [Cherethites comes from the word for Crete, which is where the Philistines came from. Pelethites was one of the words for Philistines.] David, even in the midst of his sin and apart from God, was a very attractive person. He had great charisma and aroused great loyalty. When he was living in Gath and in this wilderness, he made lots of friends among the Philistines. We are told later on that when David became king, his personal bodyguard was made up of Cherethites, Pelethites and Gittites, Gath people [II Samuel 15:18]. Six hundred people and their families left their country, joined themselves with David, and became his most loyal bodyguard. It is amazing the grace of God. In the midst of David's sin, God provided for David's needs down the road. After his son Absalom chases him out of town, the Cherethites, the Pelethites and the Gittites take their stand with David when they have everything to lose and nothing to gain. When he admonishes Ittai the Gittite to go back rather than cast his lot with a fugitive, Ittai says, "No, as the Lord lives and my lord the king lives, surely wherever my lord the king may be, whether for death or for life, there also your servant will be." [II Samuel 15:21] Six hundred pagan Philistines and their families move into Jehovah land and obviously became Jehovah worshippers. God was in the business of saving Philistines, even using a disobedient king. Ittai the Gittite became one of the three leading generals of Israel. God was doing a redemptive work at the same time he was dealing with David.

But now we have reached the final state, the boastful pride of life. David has it made, his own resources, his own

ability, his own deceit, all these wonderful things are what sustain him.

I Samuel 27, verse 10:

**Now Achish said, "Where have you made a raid today?" And David said, "Against the Negev of Judah [that is the south country of Judah] and against the Negev of the Jerahmeelites [that is another part of Judah] and against the Negev of the Kenites. [That was the tribe of the father-in-law of Moses and they were proteges of the tribe of Judah. So what David tells Achish, his feudal lord, is, "I've been raiding south into Judah." instead of south into the Negev of the Amalekites. He does not bring back any captives. He slays everybody, and he wants this done.] And David did not leave a man or a woman alive, to bring to Gath, saying, "Lest they should tell about us, saying, 'So has David done and so has been his practice all the time he has lived in the country of the Philistines.'" So Achish believed David, saying, "He has surely made himself odious among his people Israel; therefore he will become my servant forever."**

For sixteen months everything David turned his hand to succeeded. In I Chronicles, chapter 12 we are told people were attracted to him and warriors came from many parts of Israel to join him. He had an immense army and he was rich beyond his wildest dreams. He was accepted. He was the chief. He reigned. Now he was a local hero in Philistine country as he once had been in Israel. Remember, "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." [I Samuel 18:7]

David is sitting on top of the world. He has been telling Achish, "I am raiding the south country of Judah, and I am pillaging them, and I am slaughtering all the inhabitants." He had to claim it was Judah he was pillaging because nobody came back with him. The conqueror always brought back slaves. Slaves were very much in demand, especially in Egypt. Slaves were real booty. In I Samuel 30 when the Amalekites raided Ziklag they took all the women, all the people small and great. They didn't kill anybody. They planned to take them to the slave market in Egypt. David brings nobody back. He can't. He has to kill man, woman, child, even babies. Why? Because he has to remove anything that might tip off Achish that he is actually raiding Philistine country.

A baby Amalekite has different facial features than a Jew. The Girzites, Geshurites, Amalekites probably also have some kind of alliance with the Philistines. Actually what David is doing is planning for the future. He is securing the borders of Judah. He is removing these wandering tribes that strike on camels overnight then dash back into the desert. He is getting very rich by retaliating. For sixteen months he does this and every time Achish seeks an accounting of the spoils, he cheats Achish out of his share. He surely isn't going to give Achish any clothing because Achish would immediately recognize it as not being Jewish. David could maybe give him camels or a few things that had no identifying marks, but he isn't going to give him anything identifiable. So he's even cheating on his feudal lord. Mind you, for sixteen months he has been slaughtering babies and maintaining this deceit and this is "a man after God's own heart." All the while, of course, he's feeling more and more secure, more and more accepted, more and more like he is quite a guy. The thing is God is letting him do it. He does deceive Achish. Achish says, "He has surely made himself odious among his people Israel. Therefore he is my servant forever." The first time in David's life, except for that first brief period with Saul, he finally really feels accepted, secure and getting what is his, and God is letting him do it. But now it stops there.

Interesting thing about this particular period of David's life, we have no Psalms. We cannot trace any psalms back to this period. He is not the beautiful singer in Israel. He is not having fellowship with his Lord. In fact, there is no place to worship. He cannot make altars outside of Jerusalem, or where the Arc of the Covenant happens to be at the moment. He cannot sacrifice any place but with the Arc of the Covenant. He can hardly talk to his children about Yahweh and the attributes of truth and love when he is out slaughtering babies. His men cannot either. There is a sizable spiritual void right through this period of his life. He is no longer the sweet singer of Israel. He is the butcher of the south country.

Now God begins to squeeze. God does not allow Christians to go on like this, so he begins to put the thumb screws to David.

I Samuel 28, verse 1:

**Now it came about in those days** [those days when David was doing all this raiding and making a big name for himself, killing off the Jews] **that the Philistines gathered their armed camps for war, to fight against Israel. And Achish said to David, "Know assuredly that you will go out with me in the camp, you and your men."**

Oops! Now we are in trouble. The Philistines are about to launch a major campaign. They have been winning a lot of little battles. Now they are going to go way up into the north country of the Israelites, up where David is not liked. Let us face it, by now David is known to be a traitor. He is known to have settled down in Gath. He is known to be a feudal subject of Achish, king of Gath. He is a deserter. This was probably another contributing factor that delayed his reign over all of Israel for seven years. The first seven years he only reigned over Judah, his own tribe. They were the ones who received presents from the raiding that he did. From the standpoint of the ten northern tribes, he is a traitor. They didn't care for Saul any more than he did, but they didn't defect. David had taken his whole armed band over to the Philistines, and you can see why when he became king of Judah the ten northern tribes wanted no part of him.

Getting back to David's present predicament, because of his proven loyalty in Achish's eyes, Achish said, "We are going to mount a massive campaign up north, and David, you are going to fight with me." So, who is David going to fight? Saul. What covenant had he made with Saul? A covenant not to hurt him. What about that drink offering he poured out to Jehovah, symbol of the blood of Saul which he would not shed. Saul's blood belonged to Jehovah. Jehovah would strike Saul down. Jehovah would take him away with natural death or would kill him in battle. David had made a covenant with God. He had made a covenant with Saul. He had also made a covenant with Jonathan, his beloved friend, never to touch him either. Now Achish is requiring him to fight them all. David is in what might be called a sandwich, and he is the bologna in the middle.

I Samuel 28, verse 2a:

**And David said to Achish, "Very well, you shall know what your servant can do."**

That is a broad statement. That doesn't get him too deeply involved. I don't believe as some commentators do that David has come so far that he wants now to actually fight Israelites. I believed that at the beginning, but I don't believe it now because he deliberately did not slay any people of Judah. He hit the other nations that were enemies of Judah when he did his raids, but he never touched any Jews. So I had to change my opinion. I think he is a liar, a cheat, a hypocrite and a murderer, but, in his heart, he is not a traitor to the Jews. However, now he must be one or die. He left Judah to get out from under the pressure of Saul. Now where is he? Right back in the pressure cooker, but this time it's the Philistines squeezing him. So he gives this kind of broad answer that really doesn't mean much to anybody, "Very well, then, you shall know what your servant can do." I may be loyal or not. You don't know, but it sounds good doesn't it? David is a master of deceit by now. He has had sixteen months of experience, but look at what happens. God is really going to give it to him.

I Samuel, verse 2b:

**So Achish said to David, "Very well, I will make you my bodyguard for life."**

David, you are so lucky! I'm going to bring you back to the royal city and make you my personal bodyguard. When we go out to battle, you will surround me. Well, who do you think will be surrounding David? Thousands of Philistines. About this time David's blood pressure is 300 over 250 with a little fibrillation and not a cardiologist in the camp.

Tune in next week to see what happens. We'll look at chapters 29 & 30 next week. Watch God redeem David. Painful, yes! Perfect, yes! We'll do the balance of 28 the week after next.

## Prayer:

Father, we thank you for your Word and the way it does show us the way we really are, that each one of us is capable of the most dastardly crimes and but for the grace of God we would do them if we had the opportunity. That a man like David, a man after your own heart, the sweet singer, the sweet psalmist of Israel could stoop to deceit and hypocrisy and the slaughter of kids and stripping the slain, Father, everyone in this room could do exactly the same thing given the same opportunity and the same motivation. Thank you, Father, for letting us know what we are really like, so we can understand how much you really love us and how total and absolute your acceptance is and that no matter what we do or say or think, you are never disgusted; you are never upset; you are never angry with us. You have known us from all eternity and, in spite of all that, you loved us enough to die for us in Jesus Christ our Lord. Thank you, Father, in Jesus' name.

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## Chapter Eighteen

### David, a Philistine Vassal

#### 1 Samuel 29, 30

We are continuing to look at David in light of I John 2:15-17.

**Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. And the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever.**

"Lust" here is simply a strong passionate desire for either good or evil. In the context above it is for evil. There are normally three avenues of attack in temptation. First, the lust of the flesh. The "flesh" here obviously means the physical body, because all three of them are the "flesh" in the ethical sense. So the normal attack from temptation will come through the physical processes in life. In David's case it was simply his desire "to preserve his life." He says in I Samuel 27:1, "...Now, I will perish one day by the hand of Saul. There is nothing better for me than to escape into the land of the Philistines. Saul then will despair of searching for me..." So a basic natural desire to preserve his physical life drives David away from Judah, where he knows he belongs, into the hands of the Philistines where he has something to offer. He has 600 armed men, well experienced in guerrilla warfare. Achish has suffered a loss at the hands of Saul and would love to replenish his army with these trained men.

Second: the lust of the eyes, possession of material things. David has an opportunity, now, to really start making hay. All his life he has been poor. His dowry for Michal, the daughter of Saul, the king of Israel, was 100 foreskins of the Philistines. He could afford nothing more. With 600 armed men and the city of Ziklag, he can assault the wandering tribes to the south of the Philistine country. They are nomadic. They live by booty and plunder themselves. They are Amalekites, Geshurites, Gezrites, and they wander back and forth across the Sinai peninsula between Arabia and Egypt. They have no permanent residence and can be attacked and destroyed without a trace. He makes a number of incursions down there, raiding these tribes, slaughtering man, woman, child, even babies, leaving no trace and he becomes quite wealthy in the process.

Third: the pride of life. Achish thinks he is a very loyal subject and is out attacking the tribes of Judah, since he says he is. He has been deceiving his feudal lord Achish and getting away with it for 16 months. By now he is a little god in his own eyes, really Mr. Big. For the first time in 10 long years he has acceptance; he has victory; he has power; he has prestige; he has status; he has everything. It's a lot smaller scale perhaps than being King of



Israel, but he is Mr. Big. He is loaded, and he is preserving his life.

Now God begins to move in redemption. God's redemption is to allow us to reap the "the wrath of God," which is his settled abhorrence of sin. He allows us to reap, in our life, the effects of our rebellion. So here he allows David to be trapped. David has become a hero in the eyes of Achish, the feudal lord, the king of Gath of the Philistines. When the Philistines decide to make a massive incursion into Israelite country by going way up north, cutting across below the Lake of Galilee and chopping Israel in half, Achish says to David, "I'm going to take you with me." Boy, old David's heart begins to flutter and he almost has cardiac arrest. Ever deceitful he says, "Very well, you shall know what your servant can do," a nice broad diplomatic answer that says nothing.

Well, Achish takes it as a positive response from David meaning, "I'll go up there and I'll fight my best for you." So Achish replies, "You know what I'll do? I'll make you my personal bodyguard for life," which totally destroys David's whole future. If he is the king's bodyguard, he can't live in Ziklag. He has to go live in the city of Gath, under the king's eyes. He has to go with the king to fight the Israelites where he will be sandwiched between Achish's army and the other Lords of the Philistines. So God begins to chip away at this "god" named David and his resources. First thing David does is panic. His strategy has backfired on him.

God's second step in redemption is, to an oriental, the loss of face. God is going to rescue David from his problem, all right, but he is going to rub his nose in the dust.

I Samuel, Chapter 29, verse 1, begins redemptive step 2. God has David panic stricken. He is trapped. He doesn't know what to do. It would appear his only option is to get in the middle of the fight, rebel against his Philistine comrades and become a turncoat. Mind you, we are talking about God's anointed king over Israel. The Philistines are uncircumcised pagans, enemies of God, and God is now going to humiliate David in front of them.

I Samuel, 29:1:

**Now the Philistines gathered together all their armies to Aphek** [which is about 30 miles northwest of Jerusalem on the coastal plains] **while the Israelites were camping by the spring which is in Jezreel** [up north about 30 miles southwest of Galilee. In other words the two armies are gathered together about 40-50 miles apart. One on the plain. One up in the mountains. The Philistines are going to come sweeping up just below Galilee and assault the Israelites. The Israelites having a lesser force and being more lightly armed, want the Philistines in the mountains where they have the advantage] **And the lords of the Philistines were proceeding on by hundreds and by thousands, and David and his men were proceeding on in the rear with Achish.** [The Philistines were an oligarchy not a monarchy. There were five lords who ruled over the country. Each one had his own capitol city. Achish had Gath. There was one at Gaza, one at Ashkelon, one at Ashdod and one at Ekron. Normally they each ran their own little territory but on occasion, they united for military and self-preservation purposes. This was one of those occasions. Israel had been disintegrating while Saul wasted his time chasing David. Now thousands of Philistines were moving up the coastal plain to gather into a vast army and move against the Israelites. David, as part of Achish's army, was at the head of the army surrounding the king, so thousands of Achish's men were behind him. Also thousands upon thousands of the men of the other four Lords were ahead of him. He was boxed in with nowhere to go. He couldn't just suddenly fade away.] **Then the commanders of the Philistines** [The field commanders] **said, "What are these Hebrews doing here?" And Achish said to the commanders of the Philistines, "Is this not David, the servant of Saul the king of Israel, who has been with me these days, or rather these years,** [Achish even exaggerates to protect his friend David who has only been there a year and four months] **and I have found no fault in him from the day he deserted to me to this day?** [Notice that the "flesh" of Achish is a lot nicer than the "flesh" of David. Achish is really quite a delightful chap from a pagan standpoint. He totally trusts David. He obviously has a deep love for David and even lies a little for him.] **But the commanders of the Philistines were angry with him, and the commanders of the Philistines said to him, "Make the man go back, that he may return to his place where you have assigned him** [Which, of course, is way down at the end of Philistine country, as far from the battle as possible. They don't want David anywhere near the battle.] **and do not let him go down to battle with us, lest in the battle he become an adversary to us. For with what could this man make himself acceptable to his lord? Would it not be with the heads of these men?**

This is very interesting. The Philistines don't trust David as far as they can hurl the Rock of Gibraltar and with good reason. You will remember in I Samuel 14, just a few years earlier, when Jonathan assaulted and pursued the Philistines, the Hebrew mercenaries in the Philistine army turned on their masters, joined the Israelites and began slaughtering Philistines. The Philistines could see exactly the same thing happening again. And secondly, "lest in the battle he become an 'adversary'," the word in Hebrew for Satan. In the context here, it is a perfect picture of Satan.

Satan appears like one of us, on our side, until the crucial time, when he will turn on us and butcher us. Paul says he appears as an "angel of light" and a "minister of righteousness." He never says, "I am Satan; I am adversary, or I am the Devil; I am a liar." He may even appear in public in a lovely robe or a reverse collar. He may bring that three-part message, read the text, depart from the text, and never return to the text. He will not look evil. We prayed today for a young fellow, a very dear Christian friend of mine, who is down the tube right now. What took him down the tube was nothing that looked evil, but it has gripped him and he cannot break loose. Satan never looks bad. He always looks good. He offers you something you need, and want, and he knows it. He did it with Eve and he did it with Adam. He has just done it with David. David needed security from Saul. He was tired of being poor and needed money. He needed status. He needed self-worth. Satan said, "Stick with me. Let's go to Achish. He'll appreciate you." And Achish did. He gave David Ziklag where he became a Big Man on Campus. But now, he is boxed in and is going to have to fight the armies of the God of Israel. David is the anointed king of the armies of the God of Israel, and now he is on the opposing side from Jehovah. How did he get there? He is wondering that himself. The pagan Philistines seem to have a sense of honor that the flesh of David does not have, nor the flesh of the Jews for that matter. There is no way out for David except, as I said, to become a turncoat when he gets close to the Israelite lines. The Philistines can smell a rat, though, and they quote the proof text, David's favorite song.

I Samuel, 29:5

**Is this not David of whom they sing in the dances, saying, "Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands?"**

David wants to play both sides of the street. He wants to be a hero in Israel slaying Philistines. Now he wants to be a hero in Philistine country supposedly killing Israelites.

Who else had the same problem about a thousand years before? One of God's great men, Abraham. And how many times did it happen to Abraham? Twice. And who were the kings? Pharaoh, king of Egypt and Abimelech, king of Gerar of the Philistines. In both cases these men had a higher standard of honor than Abraham did. God has given light to the pagans. There is a standard of justice among the pagans, and there are honorable men among the pagans. That is not enough for salvation, but there are some very fine pagans. You see this in Achish. Achish may be a pagan, and he may be a cruel Philistine, but the Philistines had a very high culture, don't forget. They are not a bunch of aborigines. They came out of the Aegean area through Crete down to Egypt. They fought the Egyptians and were driven up to the coastal plain of what is now the Gaza Strip. At least from their standpoint, they also apparently had a very high moral standard, well, honorable standard anyway. Their gods were abominable, Dagon, Ashtoreth and Baal, but their personal integrity, in spite of this black religious background, was phenomenal, and once they went to David, they stayed with David until the end, as I described in Lesson #17. They honored their word. David surrounded himself with Philistines not Jews.

OK, God has humiliated him. Now comes the guilt trip.

I Samuel, 29:6

**Then Achish called David and said to him, "As Yahweh lives [Boy, that must have struck David right in the heart. He hasn't called on Yahweh for months] you have been upright, and your going out and your coming in with me in the army are pleasing in my sight; for I have not found evil in you from the day of your coming to me to this day [What has David been doing for the last 16 months? Just exactly the opposite. He has been shafting Achish. He has been deceiving Achish. He has been butchering**

babies to hide his sin. He has been an evil man, a deceitful man and Achish comes up with Yahweh, David's God. The guilt must begin to weight a little heavy about now] **Nevertheless you are not pleasing in the sight of the lords.** [You are pleasing in my sight, but not in the sight of the lords] **Now therefore return, and go in peace, that you may not displease the lords of the Philistines."**

One of the troubles with deceit is that even when you begin to feel guilt, there is no easy way out. You find you must keep on deceiving in order to work your way out. Liars need brilliant memories. Truth you can put in the air and forget it. If it comes out partial truth, it still ends up justified as truth. But deceit, no! You have to remember all the details. Poor David is caught here. Now he has to keep on deceiving and the guilt is getting pretty heavy. He can't agree to return. He must object somewhat in order to keep his poise, if he is loyal, yet not too strongly lest Achish change his mind and keep him up front. So he gives another of his famous mean nothing answers.]

I Samuel 29:9:

**And David said to Achish, "But what have I done? And what have you found in your servant from the day when I came before you to this day, that I may not go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king?"**

What had David told Goliath of Gath 15 years back? He told him he was fighting against God and "the armies of the living Lord." Here David is talking about those same armies as being enemies of God. He is having to carry on his deceit, down, down, farther and farther. So he makes this kind of vague statement. He also probably wants to find out, with probably a little deceit here too, just how much Achish really knows. He is beginning to have some real struggle with guilt by now. Here God sticks it to him worse.

I Samuel, 29:9

**But Achish answered and said to David, "I know that you are pleasing in my sight like an angel of God;** [He didn't have to say that. That is a Hebrew idiom spoken of persons who are wonderful and gracious. It means you are like God in prudence and wisdom. David is neither prudent nor wise right now. He has been practicing evil for 16 months and all his wisdom has backfired and squeezed him into a sandwich.] **nevertheless the commanders of the Philistines have said, 'He must not go up with us to the battle.' Now then arise early in the morning with the servants of your lord who have come with you, and as soon as you have arisen early in the morning and have light, depart."** ["The Philistines don't want you in camp any longer than necessary. As soon as it becomes daylight get out of here." He is totally rejected.] **So David arose early, he and his men, to depart in the morning, to return to the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel.**

David goes back home in humiliation, but I suspect deep inside he is rejoicing a little, "Well, I got out of it and once again I made it." However, God has something waiting for him. He is dealing with the problem. First David's pride and now he has to deal with the problem of David's possessions, the lust of the eyes. There is also the problem of David's self-sufficiency regarding his personal security. By the way, it is interesting the depth at which God is operating. When David took the trip from Ziklag at the very foot of the Philistine country to Apehek at the very top of the Philistine country, he got a perfect picture of the geography where he will later fight. And the personal bodyguard of Achish sat in on the tactical, strategic maneuvers of the Philistines. So he learned both about their attack strategy and also about the kind of country in which he would later be fighting. And God brings him back now to bring the Philistines under subjection. So God does redeem something out of the situation even though he had to bring David back in humiliation.

Now David, still walking in the flesh, let's see what happens to him.

I Samuel, 30:1:

**Then it happened when David and his men came to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had made a raid on the Negev and on Ziklag, and had overthrown Ziklag and burned it with fire.** [Their loot is gone. Their homes are gone. Everything is gone.] **and they took captive the**

**women and all who were in it, both small and great, without killing anyone, [Of course, David, doesn't know that yet] and carried them off and went their way. And when David and his men came to the city, behold, it was burned with fire, and their wives and their sons and their daughters had been taken captive. Then David and the people who were with him lifted their voices and wept until there was no strength in them to weep. Now David's two wives have been taken captive, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess and Abigail, the widow of Nabal the Camelite.**

Having dealt with the "Pride of Life," God now deals with the lust of the eyes, and through the burning of Ziklag, totally wipes out the property of David and his men. David begins now to feel much like the Amalekites, the Geshurites and the Gezrites must have felt as he raided and butchered them. The thing that began to get him was the lust of the flesh, the desire to preserve his life by his own means instead of trusting God. We look at that in verse 6

I Samuel, 30:6

**Moreover David was greatly distressed because the people spoke of stoning him, for all the people were embittered, each one because of his sons and his daughters.**

Up to now, David has been taking credit for his wisdom in escaping Saul's pursuit of him. He's responsible for their being down in Ziklag where they are making themselves rich. David thinking he has wiped out the Amalekites and that the city of Ziklag is quite safe, takes most of his men with him up north. There are very few left in camp, so few, as a matter of fact, that the Amalekites can overwhelm them without having to kill anyone. There was no defence of the city. The Amalekites took everything, men, women, children, all the spoils. They, by the grace of God, were so greedy, instead of vindictive, that they took the women and children to sell as slaves in Egypt rather than butcher them as David had been doing to them.

Now totally wiped out, David displays the difference between himself and Saul. Last part of verse 6.

I Samuel 30:6b

**But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God.**

Even though he does all kinds of dastardly deeds, one of the marks you see all the way through David's life is that when the finger is on him, when the pressure comes down on him, he always turns to God. The beautiful part about it is there is immediate restoration.

I Samuel 30:7

**Then David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, "Please bring me the ephod." [The one with the Urim and the Thummim, the lights and the perfections, from which you get a yes or no answer from God] So Abiathar brought the ephod to David. And David inquired of the Lord saying, "Shall I pursue this band? Shall I overtake them? [He asks two questions right off the bat] And He [God] said to him, "Pursue, [#1 answer Go. #2] for you shall surely overtake them and [#3] you shall surely rescue all."**

That final question was probably a question David did not want to ask. He had ask two questions in a row, and he had gotten two yes answers, so he mustered enough courage to ask the third. This one was really critical "What about the people? Have they done to our people what we did to their people?" God says, "No, you will rescue them all." There is something interesting here. What is lacking in the way God deals with David? David has turned from God and gone away from His presence for 16 months. He repents because he is driven to his knees. He's belly up looking at the sky. What does God not do when David turns to him? What would I do if my children had behaved this way to me? Yeah! "I told you so. OK, now these are the new terms I'm laying down. You have my acceptance and my forgiveness, but this and this and this will be the requirements from now on." What does God do? He accepts David totally, completely, immediately with no terms; no terms. That is a gracious

God. Then David obeys.

I Samuel 30:9

**So David went, he and the six hundred men who were with him...**

I won't go through this whole passage, but as he pursued the Amalekites, David ran into an Egyptian slave of theirs who was sick and had been left behind to die. David restored him with food and water, and this Egyptian led them to the camp of the Amalekites. We pick up the story in verse 16.

I Samuel 30:16

**And when he [the Egyptian slave] had brought him [David] down, behold, they were spread over all the land, eating and drinking and dancing [David is way up in Philistine country. We are way down here, who needs guards?] because of all the great spoil that they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from the land of Judah. And David slaughtered them from the twilight until the evening of the next day; and not a man of them escaped, except four hundred young men who rode on camels and fled.**

The sun at twilight is right on the horizon. You can't see anything when you are driving a car. It is totally blinding. Anything coming right out of the sun could hit you and you wouldn't even see it. David is no fool when it comes to fighting. He just waits on the western side until the sun gets down in their eyes and then right out of that sunlight he comes. He hits them with a night assault and butchers them until the very next day. 24 hours he spends butchering the Amalekites.

In Exodus 17:14-16, God tells Moses "I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven" Then Moses says, "The Lord has sworn; the Lord will have war against Amalek from generation to generation." The Amalekites are a picture of the flesh. They attack the nation of Israel as they come out of Egypt and pick off the weak and the sick straggling in the rear. They do this to a God who has just displayed his power and might by bringing the Israelites out of Egypt. They have no fear of Yahweh. So, if the Amalekites are a picture of the flesh, how is it that God had 400 of them escape on camels when he had ordered David and all Israel to blot out their name from under heaven? He had also made the comment that there would be war with Amalek from generation to generation. What does this say about the flesh in this life? Yes! you are never going to eliminate it. You are constantly going to have to fight it. You are going to have war with it from generation to generation. Don't ever, ever kid yourself that you can crucify the flesh once for all. Romans 6 says the flesh has been rendered inoperative (in the original language) not destroyed, not annihilated. That is beautifully picked up in I John 1, verse 5

I John 1:5:

**And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son [keeps on] cleansing us from all sin.**

It says even while I am walking in the light of God, in total and unbroken fellowship with God and with my fellow believers, there are errors in my life because of my immaturity, or my blindness, that are still a stench in the nostrils of God. Don't sweat it though! God will keep on cleansing us as long as we learn to walk in the light. The very next verse says:

I John 1:8:

**If we say that we have no sin, [singular, the sin nature, Adamic nature] ourselves we are deceiving [literally] and the truth is not in us.**

Don't ever kid yourself that the flesh is not always waiting there. You are to fight the flesh the rest of your natural life in the power of the Spirit of God, from generation to generation. Until you go to be with Jesus Christ, there will always be 400 of those fellows on camels getting away for the next time. And if you say you have no old nature anymore, that you have it licked, "yourself you are deceiving", nobody else. Ask your wife or your mother. Don't kid yourself.

We finish with a beautiful passage.

I Samuel 30:18:

**So David recovered all that the Amalekites had taken, and rescued his two wives. But nothing of theirs was missing, whether small or great, sons or daughters, spoil or anything that they had taken for themselves; David brought it all back.**

When God restores and redeems he goes first class. David has spent 16 months in deliberate disobedience to God. The moment he repents and turns back to God, total restoration, total redemption. Now he has scars that will have to work their way out, but the fellowship, the restoration, the access to God, the experience of God in His purity and His power and holiness, is immediately restored. Look at that verse, Chapter 1, verse 9.

I John 1:9:

**If we confess our sins, God is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make God a liar, and His word is not in us.**

The basis for forgiveness is not penance but repentance, confession. The moment I agree with God, he is faithful; he will always do it, and he is righteous; he has to do it. Christ has paid for that sin. He will forgive me of all my sins and cleanse me from all my unrighteous. Total restoration. Total redemption based upon confession, true confession.

Let me answer a question that was raised concerning the fact that everything was restored and there seemed to be no scars. David got his wives back; he got his children back, and nothing was missing small or great. That is true, but his kids were nowhere. He lost Abigail somewhere along the line to death. His life of rebellion reflected in his children. Every one of his kids, except Solomon, rebelled. Saul's kids, as we will see, go down to death with Saul. At the time David was out there doing his thing, he was drilling into his family deep, deep sin, deep deep rebellion. It comes out down the line and almost gets him killed. You are restored with fellowship, but the scars of sin work their way out.

Next time, now, I want to look at Saul's rebellion and how he handled it. I would like to take I Samuel, 28:3-25 and then I Samuel, 31, the death of Saul.

### **Prayer:**

Father, we thank you for your Word. We thank you for the way it reveals our hearts. Mostly, Father, we thank you for the way it reveals your heart that even though we stray and do it by stupid, stubborn rebelliousness, that you will bring certain things into our lives that may be humiliating and may cost us moments of anguish, but you love us enough and care enough for us that you will hurt us in order to bring us home. Thank you, Father, that your grace will bring us home, and there will be a total restoration. We may have some scars, but we will be totally restored. Thank you for much, Father, for your grace that reaches down to us no matter where we are and no matter what our needs. Thank you, Father, in Jesus' name. Amen

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# Chapter Nineteen

## Saul Consults Medium at Endor

### 1 Samuel 28

Before we proceed today I would like to speak a little on the subject of the sin unto death mentioned in I John 5:16.

There is both an interaction and a paradox, if you will, of the human will and the sovereignty of God. My human will is directly involved in God working out his salvation, and yet God's sovereignty says it is going to be worked out exactly the way God wants it to be. He will take his sovereignty and make my will respond to him. If it doesn't, then God reserves the right to take me home.

As a Christian, I am an ambassador of the living God. When we send an ambassador to another country, he is a representative of the United State Government. He is to do what the United States Government says, and he is to say what the United States Government says for him to say. If he does not obey the United States of America, particularly the President, he is recalled, but he is recalled home. He is not sent to Siberia. So there's this strange paradox of my responsibility and God's sovereignty. God has a provision made for taking me home when I rebel. Yet in the over all providence of God it has been programmed in my life from all eternity, that I will end up doing exactly what God wants me to do. I do not thwart the program of God. God will do anything possible to bring me to himself. If it doesn't work, he will use me as an example to those around me. We forget that a death situation doesn't just involve the person, it involves all of those around him. I John 5:16 is a very difficult passage and the commentators are spread all over the ball park on it, but I believe the sin unto death spoken of in that passage does indeed involve physical death. Every single case I have looked up, and that is by no means an exhaustive study, has always involved an impact on the total congregation.

Example #1: In Joshua 7 when Achan took the wedge of gold at Jericho, it caused the Jewish congregation to be defeated in battle at Ai and some Jews to be killed. God destroyed Achan.

Example #2: In Numbers 20:8-12 Moses did not honor God before the whole assembly and struck the rock, Whack! Whack!, when he had been told to "speak" to it. God graciously gave the Jews water because they were thirsty, but he told Moses he would not enter the Promised Land. In Deuteronomy 3 Moses pleads with God. God says, "No. It is settled. Don't speak of it. I'll take you up on the mountain Pisgah and I'll let you see the land, but you will not enter it. You dishonored me in front of all Israel."

Example #3 In Numbers 15:32-36, the law had just been given. There was a man who gathered wood on the Sabbath. They had just gotten the law. It said you were to kill a man who defiled the Sabbath, but they had never killed a man for defiling the Sabbath before. They didn't know what to do. So they got the whole congregation together and sought the mind of God. God said, "Kill him. He openly defied me in front of the whole congregation." You see, it affected the whole congregation. In the New Testament,

Example #4, In Acts 5:1-10, Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit. They lied directly in front of the congregation and they were struck down.

Example #5, in I Corinthians 5, a man involved in incestuous conduct. His body was to be delivered unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh. The root word for destruction here comes from the verb "slay." I firmly believe the man repented and came back to the Lord, but he did lose his life. Why? Because he was living with his father's wife which in Leviticus 20:11 is punishable by death. It could affect the whole congregation.

So these types of things are what I am talking about. It appears the sin unto death seems to be involved with

people. God has to make a public example in a situation having an impact upon the people. I reiterate, I am not making a dogmatic statement because this passage is very difficult, but all through Scripture God has reserved the right to take people home because of their affect on the congregation. I mention it here because in our lesson today I think we will see an example of this.

We have been looking at the lives of two kings, one, David, is about to become a king and one, Saul, is about to lose his kingdom. It is my belief that both of them are believers.

David is a man after God's own heart. He has tremendous falls, but his heart is set upon Jehovah, and when Jehovah puts the finger on him, he does not rationalize his sin. He agrees with God, confesses his sin and accepts whatever God wants to do with him.

Saul, on the other hand, is a man of the flesh. When the finger is put upon him, he rationalizes away every accountability, responsibility, and goes down the tube, for the flesh, as we saw, cannot please God. I emphasize cannot.

Today we are going to look at chapter 28. This is a graphic picture of the flesh in action, both the "bad" part of the flesh and the "good" part of the flesh. I use quotes for those words because the flesh is all bad. We think of the flesh as those evil things, those wicked thoughts that come into our minds, that totally depraved nature that crops up with thoughts and deeds we never dreamed we would think about, and which we are ashamed to tell people about. That is part of the flesh. Actuality, though, the flesh is simply life without Jesus Christ. From the human perspective it can be morally good, ethically great and very compassionate as well as depraved, wicked and vile. We are going to see the flesh both in its evilness and in its goodness but from a human perspective. The operative word here is human. It is always human perspective. It is always human resource. And even in its goodness, it never, ever hits the core of the problem: the person's need of the Spirit of God, the need for the life of Jesus Christ lived out through humanity that it might free me from me. The flesh never frees me from me. The flesh concentrates on me. It focuses on me. It says, "I can do it if I just strive a little harder. In me is this spark of divinity that just needs to be fanned a little to develop full-blown into beautiful Christianity." Of course, it always ends up a stink weed. In Chapter 28 we will see that in the life of Saul, there is both deliberate rebellion on Saul's part and compassion on the part of the witch, or medium, which diverts Saul completely from the core of his problem and sends him right down the tube. Both evilness and compassion, in the flesh, will drive you away from Jesus Christ.

Let's start now with verse 3 of I Samuel 28. (We looked at verses 1 and 2 in Lesson #17, 2 weeks ago)

The Philistines have gone up the seacoast of Palestine and have gathered their forces at Aphek. From there they marched up to the base of the Sea of Galilee where the forces of Israel are gathered by the spring in Jezreel. Saul apparently allowed the defences of his borders to so deteriorate that the Philistines can march boldly up the seacoast and are now going to cross below Galilee and control Israel by splitting it in half. They have pretty well taken over the lower area and are now planning to take over the upper area. They have the forces to do it too. The Israelite armies are demoralized and have had no leadership since Saul has been too busy trying to kill his rival. He is becoming more and more paranoid, has chosen to disobey God and has tried to kill God's anointed. David, meanwhile, has been freed from his sin again Saul. Chastened and obeying God, he has gone after the Amalekites. Saul, on the other hand, is now trapped with his own problems. He sees this great gathering of Philistines with their iron weaponry and their high morale, since they have been making it big, sweeping up from Aphek to Shunem (near the Hill of Moreh), and he is terrified. He brings his forces up to Mt. Gilboa where, with a valley between them, they will be facing each other. So we will pick up right there. I Samuel 28:3. Verse 3 gives us a little setting. The writer points out two things that are critical in this whole issue.

I Samuel, 28:3:

**Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him and buried him in Ramah his own city.  
And Saul had removed from the land those who were mediums and spiritists.**



First, Samuel, Saul's last pipeline to Yahweh, who will not answer Saul, is dead. Secondly, apparently to cultivate Samuel, he destroyed all mediums and all wizards in Israel. Any person in Israel who either practiced occultism, or even went to someone who did, was to be slain. Both the Deuteronomy and Levitical teachings were very definite. God did not want any of them in the land. They were both defiling and detestable to Jehovah. And so Saul obeys God, apparently in order to curry favor with Samuel. He does remove from the land the mediums, the wizards, the witchcraft and the necromancers, those that raise the dead. So now here he is without Samuel as the pipeline to God and without an occult system to find out about the future.

I Samuel, 28:4:

**So the Philistines gathered together and came and camped in Shunem; and Saul gathered all Israel together and they camped in Gilboa.**

If God cannot reach you with the love of God, he will try to reach you by the wrath of God. As we go through this chapter, I want you to look at it as God's last attempt to reach Saul. Look at it not for the wrath of God, but for the wrath of God used as an instrument of the grace of God. God really wants Saul to change his mind. He does something here he has never done in Scripture before. He brings back a man from the dead. In Luke 16, Christ tells of a rich man living a lavish life while Lazarus, a poor beggar, lies in front of his gate wishing for even the crumbs from his table. The beggar is a believer The rich man is not. They both die. The rich man is in Hades in torment. Lazarus is in Abraham's bosom, a picture of Paradise. The rich man begs to have Lazarus come over, dip his fingers in water and put it to his lips for he is in torment. But Abraham says, "I'm sorry he can't do that. 'Remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things, but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. Besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed.' We cannot cross over to you if we would, and you cannot cross over to us if you would." So the rich man said, "Then I beg you send Lazarus back from the dead to warn my five brothers so they don't come here." Abraham said, "They have Moses and the Prophets," (The same law of God that Saul had). The rich man says, "No, if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent." Abraham says, "No, they won't. If they will not repent because of Moses and the Prophets, they will not repent even if a man comes back from the dead." It is my personal belief that in this story Jesus is referring to the incident with Saul which we are about to study. I am not saying that the Word of God teaches this, just that it is my personal belief.

Let us look at this passage now as the grace of God. First God wipes out Saul's resources, so he will have to look up instead of in.

I Samuel 28:5

**When Saul saw the camp of the Philistines, he was afraid and his heart trembled greatly. [He is no longer the general in command. He is Chicken Little.] When Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord did not answer him, either by dreams or by Urim or by prophets.**

David has Abiathar the priest and the ephod down at Ziklag so apparently Saul has established a second priesthood. Even though there is a whole school of prophets up where Saul is, God will not respond to Saul because he is in disobedience. He has maintained himself on the throne of Israel for maybe 15 years, even though he knows God's anointed king is now David. In chapter 15 God tore the kingdom from Saul because of his disobedience. He refused to totally slay the Amalekites, a picture of the flesh. He stayed on the throne of Israel in direct defiance of Jehovah. In Old Testament Scripture there is no sin offering for the sin of the high hand, the sin of defiance. The idea is your hand thrust against God.

So, now with Samuel removed, Saul have to resort to something he knows is "detestable" to Jehovah, something he knows to be wrong. He turns to the occult.

I Samuel 28:7:

**Then Saul said to his servants, "Seek for me a woman who is a medium, that I may go to her**

**and inquire of her." And his servants said to him, "Behold, there is a woman who is a medium at Endor."**

En-dor is just a few miles north of the Israelite camp, very close to Nazareth. Saul knows that mediums, wizards and spiritists are wrong. He himself purged Israel of them. So when he can't find out the future from God, he rationalizes, "I've got to know the future," and he makes evil good. That it one of the marks of the flesh. It will take something which deep in your heart you know to be evil and rationalize it until, having convinced yourself it is good, you practice it. As the commanding general of Israel who is outnumbered, Saul really needs to know the future. He needs to know, "Shall I pursue the Philistines? Shall I fight them? God, will you deliver them into my hands?" But God is silent. So Saul very nicely rationalizes away a wrong because he has a need. It is a necessity. Look at verse 8.

I Samuel, 28:8:

**Then Saul disguised himself by putting on other clothes, and went, he and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night; and he said, "Conjure up for me, please, and bring up for me whom I shall name to you."**

He disguises himself so the woman will not recognize him as Saul the killer of mediums. He also goes by night so the Israelites will not recognize where he is going. Had he been disguising himself just for the woman's sake, he could have gone during the day. However, deep inside him there is guilt. There is still a witness of the Spirit that says this is wrong. So he covers both problems. He is still rationalizing.

I Samuel, 28:9:

**But the woman said to him, "Behold, you know what Saul has done, how he has cut off those who are mediums and spiritists from the land. Why are you then laying a snare for my life to bring about my death?" And Saul vowed to her by the Lord, [by Yahweh himself], saying. "As Yahweh lives, there shall no punishment come upon you for this thing."**

Kind of interesting isn't it? He just did away with a mass of spiritists and mediums. Now notice God takes an ungodly woman who is probably possessed by a medium, or demonized I should say; the word in the Greek is actually "demonized," and has her warn Saul that what he is doing is punishable by death. He knows what the law is. He knows it is punishable by death to heed a medium or even to seek a medium. So what does he do? He does what he's done all along. He plays God. The flesh loves to play God. (Remember, "Hath God said you shall not eat of the fruit of any of the trees in the Garden of Eden?" Genesis 3:16) "As Yahweh lives," Saul says, "no punishment shall come upon you for this thing." He deliberately goes against God's known will, and says, "I won't kill you. You're free."

I Samuel, 28:11:

**Then the woman said, "Whom shall I bring up for you?" And he said, "Bring up Samuel for me." When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice; and the woman spoke to Saul, saying, "Why have you deceived me? For you are Saul."**

She goes into her routine for the little demon she works with. She is used to conjuring up trickery and deceit, but all of a sudden she gets herself something real, and she sees Samuel. She is no longer in control, nor is the demon in control. She is terrified, and so is the demon by the way. He tips her off to who this disguised man is standing in front of her. She says, "You are Saul." Now what is God again trying to do for Saul? He is giving him another chance for repentance. He's trying to warn him, "This is no normal seance." The demon isn't in control of this situation either, God is. But Saul is committed.

I Samuel 28:13:

**And the king said to her, "Do not be afraid; but what do you see?" And the woman said to**

**Saul, "I see a divine being [or a heavenly being] coming up out of the earth." And he said to her, "What is his form?" [He is afraid of being tricked] And she said, "An old man is coming up, and he is wrapped with a robe (or a prophet's mantle). [There is to be no mistake. God is seeking to make Samuel very recognizable] And Saul knew that it was Samuel, and he bowed with his face to the ground and did homage.**

Saul is down on his knees before Samuel with his hands and his face to the ground. Another intriguing thing here. Who will Saul pay homage to? Samuel a dead man. Who won't he pay homage to? The living God. See what the flesh does. It diverts your worship from a living God, to the worship of a dead man or a dead something that has no life in it. That is what Romans, 1:18-32 and II Thessalonians 2:10-11 says. Those that knew the truth but refused it God gave over to delusion that they might believe the lie.

I Samuel, 28:15:

**Then Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?" And Saul answered, "I am greatly distressed; for the Philistines are waging war against me, and God has departed from me and answers me no more, either through prophets or by dreams, therefore I have called you, that you may make known to me what I should do."**

What a contradiction. God has departed from Saul and won't answer him so he's going to call up a prophet of God and expect him to answer. What does the word prophet mean, "an outspokeer from God." God won't speak yet Saul expects the prophet of God to speak anyway. He doesn't have any concept of what he is really doing. So Samuel straightens him out.

I Samuel, 28:16:

**And Samuel said, "Why then do you ask me, since the Lord has departed from you and has become your adversary?"**

This is why, I think, this is the key to the sin unto death. When you are in such a state of high-handedness against God, not stumbling into it, not being angry with God and flipping your wig or something like that, but you have reached a settled state of rebellion; you have become an adversary to God, so he has become an adversary to you. Therefore you have to be called home.

So now God has become an adversary to Saul. Saul has had 15 years to change his mind, and he hasn't done it yet.

I Samuel, 28:17:

**"And the Lord has done accordingly as He spoke through me; for the Lord has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, to David. As you did not obey the Lord and did not execute His fierce wrath on Amalek, so the Lord has done this thing to you this day."**

Remember Saul lost the "line" of the kingdom when he sacrificed instead of waiting for Samuel. He didn't lose the kingdom at that time. He lost it when he refused to slay all the Amalekites, all their possessions, everything even touching them, their goods, their animals, whatever. If you recall in chapter 15 he slaughtered all the Amalekites except the king. He kept all the "good" animals and all the "good" things, the good in quotes, and destroyed all the detestable things, the cheap stuff. Samuel demanded that Agag, king of the Amalekites, be brought to him, and Agag came and said "'Surely the bitterness of death is past.' You have killed off all the Amalekites except for me, you're not going to kill a king." Agag is the chief one left to kill. Why didn't Saul kill him, the king of the Amalekites? He killed all the others. He only kept the cattle, the sheep, the oxen and the goods that were "good." Why did he not kill Agag? Prestige! The oriental pagan despots always brought back kings as their prize trophy. What is a "prize trophy" significant of in the state in which Saul was walking? The flesh. He keeps the king of the flesh. He thinks he is ruling over Agag. Agag is really ruling over him. Why is it that we always keep the king?

Why must the king be destroyed in a fleshly situation? Because he is the king. Either he rules or we rule. And Saul doesn't even see that. Because Saul failed to destroy the Amalekites, Samuel did. He hacked Agag to pieces totally removing the Amalekites in that situation. But here we see one of the problems in the sin of a leader.

I Samuel, 28:19:

**"Moreover the Lord will also give over Israel along with you into the hands of the Philistines, therefore tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. Indeed the Lord will give over the army of Israel into the hands of the Philistines!"**

How many people are going to be affected, are going to be hurt, by Saul's rebellion? His precious sons, Jonathan, Abinadab and Malchi-shua, those that stayed by him all the way, are going to die. More than that the armies of Israel will be affected. They have made some bad choices themselves. Saul has retained his kingship, and even though they know by now that David is God's anointed, they still have stayed with Saul. In fact they still remain with Saul for another seven years after his death. When Abner takes over and makes Ishbosheth, Saul's son, king of Israel, they (the northern tribes) stay with them. They do not go down to Judah. For seven years David is king only of Judah. So God is going to give over the armies of Israel who made the choice to follow Saul instead of David. He is also going to give over Saul's three sons, his most prized, beloved possessions, one of which is the godly Jonathan. This just crushes Saul, but it is exactly where God can move in.

I Samuel, 28:20:

**Then Saul immediately fell full length upon the ground [remember he is on his knees with his face down, now he just slides down, and is flat spread out on the ground] and was very afraid because of the words of Samuel; also there was no strength in him, for he had eaten no food all day and all night.**

Saul has two basic problems. One is a deep terror of the future and the second is a deep physical weakness. Now, here is the compassionate flesh in action. The flesh has an amazing ability to come in just at the right moment with just the wrong answer and just the wrong focus. Saul is totally wiped out. It is his one chance to cry out to God in terror, in anguish, in weakness and hopelessness and throw himself on the mercy of God. God would have responded just like that. But in comes the flesh.

I Samuel, 28:21:

**And the woman came to Saul and saw that he was terrified, and said to him, "Behold, your maidservant has obeyed you, and I have taken my life in my hand, and have listened to your words which you spoke to me. So now also, please listen to the voice of your maidservant, and let me set a piece of bread before you that you may eat and have strength when you go on your way."**

What does the flesh always try to appear like when it comes to rescue you? Yes, a friend, a helper, a loving companion, someone whose arm goes around you. It's you. It's good ole Bob the Slob back again, and we've been together for years.

Don't ever kid yourself that the flesh comes to you with "Evil" stamped across its forehead. Satan never does anything like that. Satan masquerades as an angel of light in the service of a ministry of righteousness and appears right at the wrong time, at the crucial moment, looking good, but always focusing on the wrong thing. Saul has a spiritual need and a physical need and what does the "maidservant" focus on? His physical need., and she offers her credentials. What are her credentials? Well, look at them, they are good. "Your maidservant has obeyed you," and secondly, "I have taken my life in my hand for you," and "I have listened to your words which you spoke to me." I have credentials that show you I can help you. I've been on your side all along Now, because I'm on your side, please listen to me. I'm with you. Let's get something to feed your body so you can get up and go out of here and go to your destiny," which, of course, is down the tube. But we'll do it with strength and vigor! If you are

going to walk in the flesh, at least walk well. We giggle, but that is the terrible tragedy. We feed the flesh and make it strong and healthy so it can destroy us. If we would crucify it, cut off its source, it would wither, but no, we feed it.

I Samuel, 28 23:

**But he refused and said, "I will not eat." However, his servants** [His dear friends two came with him, the two he can trust to go on this trip] **together with the woman urged him, and he listened to them. So he arose from the ground and sat on the bed.**

What has happened to Saul's position of humility, of being totally wiped out? What do you suppose happened to Saul's attitude the moment he got up and sat on the bed with his spear in his hand? He became a king in Israel again, didn't he? He is no longer flat out on the ground in a totally humiliated position. He's up on the bed, and being catered to. He begins to feel a little better, more like a king. This is step number 1.

Now Step number 2. Beautiful compassion calls for action on the part of the flesh.

I Samuel, 28:24:

**And the woman had a fattened calf in the house, and she quickly slaughtered it; and she took flour, kneaded it, and baked unleavened bread from it. And she brought it before Saul and his servants, and they ate. Then they arose and went away that night.**

See to what lengths the flesh will go to keep you? This is not exactly a wealthy woman apparently. Endor is a miserable place, today at least. I don't know what it was like in those days. But it must have been an out-of-the-way place for her to be able to practice her spiritism and not get trapped. But what does she do for Saul? How far does she go for Saul? She slaughters a fatted calf. What does the fatted calf symbolize in Israel? What happened to the prodigal son, for example? It's the best. It is a celebration. It is a victory celebration. Who's won the victory? Yes, the flesh. Saul is up. He's sitting on the bed feeling like a king again. He's being catered to. Out comes the fatted calf which makes Saul feel good, feel regal, feel in charge, feel like he isn't quite as bad as he was, and it really cost that woman something. So they ate. They arose and they went on their way. What a testimony. They went back out into the night. By the way, they had to skirt the camp of the Philistines to do this.

What does it say about the flesh? What are some of the things you see about the flesh in this passage? Yes, it will go to any length to satisfy itself no matter what the cost. What else do you see about it?

Comment from class: Isn't it interesting that the evil that Saul sought he sought even though he knew it was going to destroy him? Yes, he sought it out, but in this case it didn't look evil at the time, did it? It looked necessary. Ever notice that in your fleshly reactions? You will do something you know to be wrong but you are convinced is necessary. So you rationalize based on necessity. You cheat on your income tax, for example. Why? Because the house payment is coming due, or something like that, and you don't have the money, so it is necessary. That is what the flesh will always try to do. It will take the immediacy of the situation, your present circumstances not the long range goal, and make that the big thing to the detriment of the other.

Remember we looked at how Satan works versus how the Scripture works, God comes to you with facts, Scripture, period, and appeals to the mind. He says, "Now, I'm God, I have spoken the Word of God. I am the truth. I want you to take the facts of Scripture, and because I am God and I have said them, I want you to believe them. I want you to act like they are true." It goes to my mind and my will. When I act like they are true, I get the "feeling" that they are. My emotions are the proof of my mind acting according to my will in faith on the Word of God, and my feelings are the actual proof of that. Satan is exactly the reverse. He comes in, "Yeah, hath God said?" He immediately jabs you with a little sharp barb of doubt, works on the emotions. He starts out with emotions and gets slowly in control through the flesh, or the world. Then he goes from the emotions to rationalize the mind, to pervert the mind. Then the emotions and the mind gang up on the will, and pretty soon you have done something you never dreamed you would do, but you have emotionalized yourself into something you should do,

and you have rationalized to the point where it is no longer even bad.

One thing I want to leave you with is, how much does God want this willful, high-handed king to repent? What has he done in this chapter. He has done everything he can, hasn't he? He literally overruled a demonic situation. He brought a man back from the dead. There is nothing like it in Scripture, and he does it just for Saul's sake, and Saul blows it.

You say to me, "God almost has him, though."

Yes, he does almost have Saul. That's right. The trouble is when anyone starts living in the flesh, it tends to become normal and natural, and you just continue on in the flesh. Unfortunately the flesh doesn't always look bad. It may even look very good. But God does not want you walking in the flesh, and he does everything he can to stop you.

**Question from the class:** Now you just mentioned a couple times about God taking Saul back home, taking him home where?

With Samuel. Samuel says, "Tomorrow you and your sons will be with me." Samuel is a godly man. Jonathan is a godly man.

**Class:** Where is this?

This is heaven, paradise, at home with God. Saul's performance is not an issue. Saul's performance for 15 years is not an issue about where he is going. God did anoint Saul. God did change his life. He said so back in I Samuel 10:6-9. God did fill him with the Spirit.

Saul, was a man chosen of God, anointed of God, filled with the Spirit of God for the mission that God gave him. The key is not performance. It is our choice, our destiny by God, so Saul goes to be with Samuel along with Jonathan who is obviously a godly man, who was willing to give up his throne for David's sake because David was anointed of God. Saul ended up exactly as God wanted him to end up. Saul did step out of light, but God didn't remove him as king because of his rebellion. So, here is that strange paradox of the sovereignty of God and the moral responsibility of man.

Next time chapter 31 and chapter 1 of II Samuel, and we'll see the wages of sin.

Father, we thank you for your Word, and we just ask now that we might be mindful of the warning that the flesh is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, that it may come to us in the form of compassion, that it may come to us in the form of a person on our side. It will look like it is good. It will do anything possible to lure us down the primrose path, walking in the flesh instead of walking in the Spirit. Father, teach us that the flesh fights dirty. It is not nice. It is never acceptable. It is just plain rotten, and it cannot please you. Father, help us not to rationalize. Help us to face up to it and call it what it is, Sin, S-I-N, and to put it away in repentance and confession and thanksgiving that we do not have to be enslaved by Agag, the Amalekite. We have been enslaved by Jesus Christ the Lord God Almighty, the Holy One of God. Thank you, Father for this option, in Jesus' name. Amen

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## Chapter Twenty

### Death of Saul

## 1 Samuel 31 and II Samuel 1

Today we will be looking at I Samuel 31 & II Samuel 1. I think we make a real mistake if we look at the life and death of Saul without looking at Saul's end from the eternal perspective. In I Corinthians, Chapter 3, Paul has been arguing with the Corinthians that God is the one who is in charge of everything. He is the one who allows anyone to sow, to water or to have a harvest. He provides for the new converts for the church. Each person involved in that work, whether Paul, Apollos, Cephas or even Christ himself, is part of God's program. They are God's workmen to produce this crop of new Christians. Therefore each one shares in the harvest. In verse 10 he talks about building a foundation which others are building upon. This is what he did in the Corinthian church.

I Corinthians, 3:10 says:

**According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation,** [He started the Corinthian church] **and another is building upon it.** [Such as Apollos & Cephas, etc] **But let each man be careful how he builds upon it. For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.** [We all start out life as Christians with Christ as our foundation] **Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day** [That is the day of Christ, the Judgment Seat of Christ.] **will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire;** [Each man's work will be revealed by fire] **and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward.** [If it is gold, silver, precious stone, the fire will burn off the dross and leave it there purified.] **If any man's work is burned up** [wood, hay or straw. Gone! It's only ashes.], **he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.**

Skip down to I Corinthians, 4:5:

**Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.**

When the Lord comes he will bring two things to light. One, the hidden things of darkness; this facade we put on to look religious, to look Christian, to look like our great work is for God when deep inside we are actually doing it for ourselves. Second, he will bring to light the hidden motives of the heart. We may be stumbling all over the place as Christians. We may be too young, or too untaught, or just ignorant, when deep inside we earnestly desire to please Jesus Christ. One person may be "pleasing" him on the outside when his heart is wrong, and the other person, from the world's perspective, may be fouling up miserably, when his heart is right. So we can't tell by a person's actions where his heart is, and it is the heart God looks at. The gold silver and precious stones or the wood, hay and stubble, is not the number of souls you have saved or the number of Bible classes you have taught or the times you have stumbled and gone down the tube in your Christian life. It is what was your heart like when you were saving a soul or getting drunk or whatever. That is what God looks at.

Now we want to look at Saul from God's perspective. Where was Saul's heart, not what were his outward actions. It is beautifully brought out in the 2 Chapters we will look at today. This is a picture, I think, of that passage in Philippians where Paul says:

Philippians 1:6:

**For I am confident of this very thing, that He** [God] **who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus**

God is going to win! You are going to make it. You are going to end up being what God wants you to be. There may be a lot of loss of reward. You may have blown a lot of things in your life, but when God gets through with you, you will be what he wants you to be. Now, as seen in I John 2, you may be a child, a young man or a father in your spiritual walk. You may only get to a child's stage, but that is where God wants you to be, and you will

make it.

So let's proceed. Last week we saw that the appearance of Samuel during the seance with the Witch of Endor totally wiped Saul out emotionally. Because he had had nothing to eat, he was already destroyed physically. The Witch in her compassion, like the flesh always does, moved in, focused on the wrong problem and restored him physically. So, apparently without repenting and physically restored but with no emotional healing, he leaves. Well, God is going to wipe out the physical now. He's going to give Saul a chance to deal with Saul. When you get down to fundamentals, you begin to deal with things as they really are.

Remember Nabal. He had a stroke but was kept alive for 10 days to let him think. I personally believe God gave Abigail her husband, as we are told in I Peter 3. Wives submit to your husbands and love them for life, and God may just give them to you.

Here is God, now, moving in on Saul. Look at how hard it is for Saul to die. God was determined to keep him alive for some purpose. I personally think the purpose was repentance, and I think I will be able to prove it by the end of 2 Samuel, Chapter 1.

I Samuel 31:1:

**Now the Philistines were fighting against Israel, and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines and fell slain on Mount Gilboa. And the Philistines overtook Saul and his sons; and the Philistines killed Jonathan and Abinadab and Malchi-shua the sons of Saul. And the battle went heavily against Saul, and the archers (not hit him but) found him; and he was badly wounded by the archers.**

As you will recall from last week, the Philistines are up in the Valley of Jezreel where the Battle of Armageddon will be fought someday. This valley runs just below Galilee across the plain of Palestine. It divides the land. The Philistines are seeking to cut Palestine in half. They are on one hill and the Israelites are on the other hill on the side of Mt. Gilboa, which is quite a height. The two armies come down into the valley to fight. The Israelites obviously are thinking if things go against them they can retreat up the hill and be safe in the hills. Well, they can't. God has given them over, you'll recall. He gave over not only Saul but also the Israelites. They were doing nothing about a king who was rebelling against God. They had not accepted God's anointed either and were still following Saul, the wrong king. It was common knowledge by that time that David was God's anointed. On two different occasions, Saul himself had publicly admitted that in front of his army.

So, the battle is joined. The Philistines rout the Israelites. They don't stop at Jezreel either. They chase the Israelites up Mt. Gilboa slaughtering them all the way. Three of the people slain in that slaughter are Jonathan, Abinadab and Malchi-shua, the sons of Saul, who stayed with him until the very end. Saul's desperate craving for the kingdom lost him his three most precious possessions. You never sin as an island. Not only do you get hurt, but those dearest to you get hurt. In this case Saul lost his three sons.

Also apparently there was a special unit of archers out looking for Saul. This was one of the tactics of those days. Kings led their armies into battle. So, if you assigned a special force to wipe out the king or leading general, whoever was in charge, you could destroy the morale of the army. When we get to David's life as king, we will see that eventually his men prevented him from going to battle because the enemy always sought to hone in on him. David WAS Israel. He was the unifying force of Israel. So, he was eventually prevented from going to battle lest he be killed.

The archers do "find" Saul, [That is literally what the verb in Chapter 31, verse 2 means.] and they badly wound him. He is not killed, just badly wounded. He is hurting badly, but he is still alive.

I Samuel 31:4:

**Then Saul said to his armor bearer, "Draw your sword and pierce me through with it, lest**



**these uncircumcised come and pierce me through and make sport of me."**

The Philistines were extremely cruel people. We saw that in how they dealt with Samson, for example. They did like to make sport of their victims, and if they found a king alive, they would kill him slowly and make him squirm. They would humiliate and disgrace him, and Saul didn't want that. Saul still had a little pride left. So he said to his armor bearer, "Pierce me through lest they make sport of me." He cannot seem to die.

I Samuel 31:4b:

**But his armor bearer would not, for he was greatly afraid. [This is God's anointed king. He is responsible for his king's life and he is scared to death. He won't do it.] So Saul took his sword and fell on it.**

So Saul, like Judas, tried to take the matter into his own hands but he didn't do a very good job.

Right now, between 4 and 5, I believe we will see that II Samuel, Chapter 1 fills us in about the Amalekite and how Saul actually did die.

I Samuel 31:5:

**And when his armor bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his sword and died with him. Thus Saul died with his three sons, his armor bearer, and all his men** [in I Chronicles 10:3 it is "all those of his house." His own special retainers.] **on that day together.**

We'll see later that Abner, Saul's general, Saul's cousin, did escape, but Saul and those that are his, including his sons, his armor bearer and his local retainers all die together. God has now eliminated from the kingdom of God the man who would not give up the kingdom of God.

I Samuel 31:7:

**And when the man of Israel who were on the other side of the valley, with those who were beyond the Jordan, saw that the men of Israel had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, they abandoned the cities and fled; then the Philistines came and lived in them.**

When Saul and all the retainers were killed and the Israelites saw the battle raging on up the hill after them, they turned tail and ran. This allowed the Philistines to move right into the Valley of Jezreel, surge all the way to the Jordan, even cross the Jordan and cut Israel in half. They didn't even have to fight. The great fortress of Beth-shan, which comes into the action a few verses later on, was situated on a mountain in the middle of the plain and was literally the focal point for central Palestine. The Philistines didn't even have to fight for it. They just walked in and took it over. God "gave them over." When God gives you over, you are out. OUT! These were the people of God, and this was God's discipline for the kingdom.

The tragedy here is the effect it can have on unbelievers when the people of God need disciplining. We hurt not only ourselves, those who love us, the church of God and other brothers in Christ, but we have a terribly hardening effect upon unbelievers. If you are at all vocal and are known as a Christian, when you fall, unfortunately you drag down a lot of unbelievers with you. Look at verse 8.

I Samuel 31:8:

**And it came about on the next day when the Philistines came to strip the slain,** [They now possess the whole valley for this] **that they found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilboa.** [And the very thing Saul does not want to happen happens.] **And they cut off his head,** [Just like David did to Goliath to disgrace his body] **and stripped off his weapons** [and his armor per I Chronicles 10] **and sent them throughout the land of the Philistines, to carry the good news to the house of their idols and to the people. And they put his weapons in the temple of Ashtaroath, and they fastened his**

**body to the wall of Beth-shan.** [I Chronicles 10 says they put his head in the house of Dagon, their chief god]

What is the Philistines' "good news" instead of Yahweh's "good news"? Who has won in the eyes of the witnesses? Dagon! Dagon just beat Yahweh. Here is the gospel the Philistines preached, "Hey! our god IS God. He just creamed Yahweh. He clobbered Yahweh's people. We wiped out Yahweh's king, and here is the evidence." They proclaimed this news all over, to all their temples. The attendance in the temples doubled after that, I might add. The giving probably went up twice as much too. After sending the word to the people, they left the evidence strung up all over. In the temple of Ashtaroth, the goddess of fertility, the filthiest culture you can imagine, they hung Saul's armor. His head they fastened in the house of Dagon, their chief god. That was the house Samson destroyed one time a little earlier. Then they hung the bodies up on the greatest central Palestine fortress the Israelites used to possess, Beth-shan. They just strung up all four bodies, Saul and his three sons. Who won? Dagon. Who lost? Yahweh.

These people believed in local gods, ergo their god was far bigger than Yahweh. Who wants to turn to Yahweh when he doesn't win? We all like to be on the winning side. The tragedy was that the "good news" to the Philistines was that a false god was THE god. Unfortunately they are led into this by the rebellion of the people of God, the Israelites, because God allowed it to happen.

Let me say again, we do not sin as an island. One of the spiritual principles in Scripture is that when we fall we drag down with us not only believers but also unbelievers. It hardens their position of unbelief. Why should they accept our Lord as their Lord and their God if we demonstrate his total inadequacy for our problems, his total insufficiency to keep us out of sin, his total worthlessness to give us peace amid circumstances. Why should they change? They can go to pills, or the bottle or a psychiatrist's couch, and they can get peace there. Oh, there is a hangover, and it costs a lot of money on a psychiatrist's couch, but they find peace. Why should they go to Jesus when we are acting so up tight under the circumstances. That is the sadness of Christians falling. It would be better if we didn't name the name of Jesus Christ at all. At least people wouldn't know who we were supposed to be walking with and having faith in and gaining our strength and our life from. Unfortunately in this particular episode they know it is Yahweh. So the name of Yahweh is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of the Jews, as it is a thousand years later.

I Samuel 31:11:

**Now when the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead** [This is across the Jordan about 20 miles from Beth-shan] **heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, all the valiant men rose and walked all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-shan, and they came to Jabesh, and burned them there** [with fire]. **And they took their bones and buried them under the tamarisk tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days.**

Back when Saul first became king and he was God's man, Jabesh-gilead was besieged by the Ammonites (sons of Lot). They came out of the hills on the eastern side of the Jordan and surrounded the town. The town said, "We can't fight you. You are too big. What can we do to make a deal?" Nahash, king of the Ammonites said, "O.K., if you surrender we will let you live, but I'm going to gouge out everyone's right eye as a reproach on all Israel." The right eye, of course, was the key eye. You held your shield in the left hand and your sword in the right hand. Without a right eye the shield would blank out the only eye you had, and there would be a blind spot on the right. You would have to switch hands to fight, and you would still have a blind spot. Your value as a warrior would be destroyed. Nahash's intent was to deliberately disgrace Israel. So, what happened? The Spirit of the Lord came mightily on Saul, and he called Israel together. He subsequently defeated the Ammonites and rescued Jabesh-gilead. This was when he was God's man. Jabesh-gilead remembered that. They didn't think about all the things that happened after that. They only remembered that when they needed him most, Saul was there, and he was God's man, and he did win for them. So they honored him. They went on this 20 mile night walk to retrieve the four bodies. Apparently the bodies had been badly abused so they burned off their flesh off so they could never again be viewed in that state. Then they buried the bones under a tamarisk tree. The Philistines continued their incursion all the way to the Jordan but were never again able to get the bodies to disgrace them.

In I Chronicles 10:13 we have this sentence.

**So Saul died for his trespass which he committed against the Lord, because of the word of the Lord which he did not keep**

This speaks of when he was supposed to totally destroy the Amalekites, man, woman, child, infant, sheep, oxen, camels, donkeys because they were a picture of the flesh. However, he wouldn't do it. He kept the best of the flesh, remember, best of the sheep, oxen, camel, donkeys, and he kept the king alive. He couldn't bring himself to destroy the "best," and it cost him his kingdom at that time. That is when God told him, "I am ripping the kingdom from you because of this. It is no longer yours. You could have had it, but it is not yours any more." Also he died for that trespass.

I Chronicles 10:13b:

**"And also because he asked counsel of a medium, making inquiry of it and did not inquire of the Lord."**

He did try to inquire of the Lord, remember, but the Lord would not answer him. So he probably did not inquire with a pure heart. James says, "You ask and receive not because you ask with the wrong motives." Saul apparently did just that. God would not respond to the wrong motives, and since God did not respond, Saul went to a medium which he knew to be wrong. He knew the penalty was death. For inquiring of a medium, for going to a medium, or for being a medium you were to be slain. So God killed him for #1 not wiping out the flesh, the Amalekites, and #2 deliberately disobeying the law of God which he had himself enforced by eliminating all the spiritists and mediums in Israel.

And it goes on to say, I Chronicles 10:14:

**"Therefore he [God] killed him [Saul] and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse."**

This is the tragic end of the people's desire. What was the desire of the people when they got Saul? Remember what they were asking? "We want a king," and what kind of a king? "One like all the other nations have." They wanted someone who looked good, looked kingly, looked regal, who would lead them into battle. What did Saul look like? Physically he was everything you would want a king to be. He was head and shoulders above all of Israel. He came from a very godly line. He had excellent parentage. He was a wonderful father. His three sons went to their deaths with him. He was really quite a man humanistically and naturalistically speaking. The tragedy was that spiritually he was nowhere. So the people got exactly what they were asking for, a king like all the other nations had, and God had to remove him from office the hard way.

This is what it looks like from the human perspective. Now let's go to chapter 1 of II Samuel and look at it from God's perspective.

II Samuel 1:1:

**Now it came about after the death of Saul, when David had returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites, that David remained two days in Ziklag. And it happened on the third day, that behold, a man came out of the camp from Saul, with his clothes torn and dust on his head. [That is a sign of deep mourning.] And it came about when he came to David that he fell to the ground and prostrated himself. Then David said to him, "From where do you come?" And he said to him, "I have escaped from the camp of Israel." And David said to him, "How did things go? Please tell me." And he said, [One] "The people have fled from the battle, [Two] and also many of the people have fallen and are dead; [Three, and this is what he knows David really wants to know] and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also."**

Because of his trickery, David is accepted by neither the Israelites nor the Philistines. So he has to sit in Ziklag, in that burned out town, wondering what his future is going to be. Who is going to win? What is it all about? This

young man apparently seeks David out because he is expecting a reward. We will see why here in a minute.

II Samuel 1:5:

**So David said to the young man who told him, "How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?"** [The thing David is really concerned about is Saul and Jonathan.] **And the young man who told him said, "By chance I happened to be on Mount Gilboa, and behold, Saul was leaning on his spear. And behold, the chariots and the horseman pursued him closely** [They were about to catch him alive and then be able to make sport of him] **And when he looked behind him, he saw me and called to me. And I said, 'Here I am.'** [Saul had to call him, of course, because his armor bearer was afraid to put him to death] **And he said to me, 'Who are you?' and I answered him, 'I am an Amalekite.'** [I am a type of the flesh. I do not fear God. I don't care about Jehovah. I can do what others can't do.] **The he said to me, [Saul apparently knows him] 'Please stand beside me and kill me; for agony** [Literally "cramps". He 's impaled on his sword, is in a horrible death throw, but he can't die. He can't kill himself because he apparently is so weak he can't extract the sword , and yet he can't die. The word is not agony it is cramps. He is thrashing around] **has seized me because my life still lingers in me.' So I stood beside him** [the Amalekite speaking] **and killed him, because I knew that he could not live after he had fallen. [He had fallen on his own sword, but he hadn't done the job.] And I took the crown which was on his head and the bracelet which was on his arm, and I have brought them here to my lord.** [to David]"

#1. Since the Amalekite had no fear of Jehovah, he could kill Yahweh's anointed, and so he killed Saul. #2. How much is Saul possessed by the kingdom rather than Saul possessing the kingdom? Saul knows he is going to die in battle. What does Saul do? How does Saul go out to battle? What does he have on his head, a helmet? No, a crown! What does he have on his arm? The gold bracelet of a king. He is going to be king until the day he dies. Nobody is going to take his kingship away from him, and if it costs him his life he is going to die with a gold crown. By the way a gold crown is very soft metal. A blade will go through a gold crown like you wouldn't believe versus a nice rounded iron helmet. The king is going to be king until he dies. So God has got to cut him down to size, and God does it agonizingly and slowly. He is finally killed by an Amalekite.

Kind of interesting. What does that tell you about the Amalekites, about the flesh? Either you get it, or it will get you. Saul refused to destroy the Amalekites, and he ended up being destroyed by an Amalekite, by a mercenary. Now they had mercenaries in Judah's army. Intriguing thing is God had an Amalekite down there, the one type of person that all through Scripture never feared Jehovah. Deuteronomy 25 states the Israelites were to blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven because he did not fear Yahweh. The Israelites, in desperation, were hiring Amalekites to fight for them and had made peace with them when God had said to destroy them. So Saul is finally slain by what he will not deal with.

Of course, the young man embraces David, because, look what he has done for David. What does he expect from David? He's got a gold crown and a gold bracelet. That would melt down to a pretty good nugget of gold, but what do you think he really expects from David? Yes! He is handing David the kingdom. "I killed Saul. He is gone. Jonathan , the heir apparent is dead. The kingdom is yours, and I should get a piece of the action." No thought about killing God's anointed. Just thought about himself. I think he expected to stay with David for the rest of his natural life. Unfortunately for him, David was not impressed.

II Samuel 1:11:

**Then David took hold of his clothes and tore them, and so also did all the men who were with him. And they mourned and wept and fasted until evening for Saul and his son Jonathan and for the people of the Lord** [worshippers of Yahweh] **and the house** [nation] **of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword.**

Intriguing, the only two that are recorded as mourning for Saul are the one that he rescued many years before and the one he had hunted for many many years. Those two mourn him.

Now the Amalekites. II Samuel 1:13:

**And David said to the young man who told him, "Where are you from?" And he answered, "I am the son of an alien, an Amalekite." [That finished him]**

What do the Israelites consider Amalekites to be? Aliens. They are flesh and are never to be absorbed into the house of Israel. This man is not a proselyte. He is an alien. The flesh will always be alien in our lives. It no longer has any right to be in the life of a Christian though it will fight to get back in. It will help you, in quotes. It will join your side, in quotes. It will fight with you, in quotes, and it will cut your head off at the right time, in quotes. It is always an alien. It has no right to be in your life.

II Samuel 1:14:

**Then David said to him, "How is it you were not afraid to stretch out your hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?" And David called one of the young men and said, "Go, cut him down." So he struck him and he died. And David said to him, "Your blood is on your head, for your mouth has testified against you saying, 'I have killed the Lord's anointed.'"**

The tragedy is that the flesh is always against God's anointed. God says the only thing acceptable to him is the life of Christ. Therefore, the life of Christ living in me and through me is the only thing God will accept. Anything with the slightest taint of Bob the Slob is worthless. It is unacceptable in the sight of God. But the Amalekites obviously think that is not really the truth. There's a little good in me. I'm a nice father. I dress nicely on Sunday. I'm not naked. I have a nice tie on. "I can really help you out, God." I'm not that bad. I really don't need Jesus Christ to do the job. That is what I will always say. I really can make it on my own. Oh, I may call upon the Lord when I get stuck or something, but deep down inside the flesh tells me I've really got what it takes to do the job.

II Samuel 1:17:

**Then David chanted with this lament over Saul and Jonathan his son, and he told them to teach the sons of Judah the song of the bow; behold, it is written in the book of Jashar.**

David calls this beautiful lament, this beautiful elegy "The Song of the Bow" and he has it put in the book of Jashar, which is a book of epic poems about national heroes, particularly very pious heroes.

Now we will look at Saul's epitaph. II Samuel 1:19:

**Your beauty, O Israel, is slain on your high places** [The beauty obviously is Saul and Jonathan, and the high places is Mt. Gilboa].

**How have the mighty fallen!** [Each one of these phrases "How the mighty have fallen" represents a stanza. There's a long one here, Then shorter on in verse 25, and a wind up stanza very 27]

**Tell it not in Gath,  
Proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon;** [These are two of the major cities on the Philistines]  
**Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice.  
Lest the daughter of the uncircumcised exult.**

In those days when conquering armies returned from battle, the women came out dancing and singing and playing musical instruments to celebrate the victory. They did that when David slew his tens of thousands and Saul his thousands. Remember how the women came out with tambourines dancing and singing their "Hit Parade Song" of David. Now David is saying, "Don't let the Philistines hear about what happened. It will just increase our sorrow. We have had a tragedy in Israel."

II Samuel 1:21:

**O mountains of Gilboa,** [A curse on the site where the death occurred]

**Let not dew or rain be on you, nor fields of offerings** [The fields that produced the first fruit offerings.  
Why curse that land?]

**For there the shield of the mighty was defiled,  
The shield of Saul, not anointed with oil.**

Saul's shield which should have protected his life was now stained with his own blood. Worse than that it was hanging in the temple of Ashtaroth, the goddess of fertility, rusting away and stained with the dried blood of Saul. It was totally defiled. Its location was even defiled.

Then he points out that while they did get killed, they took some Philistines with them. II Samuel 1:22:

**From the blood of the slain from the fat of the mighty,  
The bow of Jonathan did not turn back,  
And the sword of Saul did not return empty.**

The Scriptures speak of arrows as drinking the blood of the enemy and of swords devouring the flesh of the enemy. So what he is saying here is that the bow of Jonathan drank the blood of the slain and the sword of Saul pulled itself full from the fat of the mighty. They died, but they took a lot of the enemy with them. They were really mighty men even in their death.

Then there is this beautiful remembrance of Saul and Jonathan.

II Samuel 1:23:

**Saul and Jonathan, beloved and pleasant** [the word literally means "kind"]  
**in their life,**

**And in their death they were not parted;** [Father and Son went down together]

**They were swifter than eagles,**

**They were stronger than lions,** [These are typical characteristics attributed to heroes in the Old Testament days and David attributes them to Saul and Jonathan. And here is the last lament for Saul]

**O daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,  
Who clothed you luxuriously in scarlet,  
Who put ornaments of gold on you apparel,**

He harks back to the days when Saul was truly a godly king. He was a tremendous king for awhile, and he won many battles. He brought rich booty to Israel. The women did dress in this gorgeous scarlet, and they did put gold ornaments on their apparel because of Saul. Daughters of Israel you are to remember that. Remember the kind of man he really was.

Then he reserves stanza just for Jonathan. II Samuel 1:25:

**How have the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!  
Jonathan is slain on your high places** [Gilboa].

**I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan;** [Remember when his own brothers would not accept him, Jonathan, who was probably double his age, heir apparent to the throne, David's rival for the throne, took David and make him his brother. He even took second place to David. This was the real thing.]

**You have been very pleasant to me.  
Your love to me was more wonderful  
Than the love of women.**

There was a tremendous bond between David and Jonathan. Incidentally when I read the above I was struck by

the tragedy. This is the destruction involved in multiple marriages and multiple wives. David had no concept of a one flesh relationship. He had at least five wives at this time. He had another five wives and concubines later on. He had no idea of one flesh relationship with one woman for life. So he had a deeper affection, a closer relationship with a man [This was not homosexuality. This was a brother] than he did with a wife. It is a beautiful picture of Jonathan but a tragic statement on multiple wives.

Then the final stanza of grief. II Samuel 1:27:

**How have the mighty fallen,  
And the weapons of war perished.**

Now, who wrote this elegy? Who wrote this elegy? The Holy Spirit of God wrote this elegy, my friends, not David. David was the penman. This is the Bible, the inspired Word of God. This is God's last word about Saul. Saul was chosen of God to be king of Israel. He was changed by God, we are told in earlier passages, to be God's man. Saul was mightily filled with the Spirit of God to be ruler over Israel. Saul's line would have ruled over Israel forever if he had obeyed God. God said so remember? God did not set Saul up to fail. He set him up to succeed.

From the eternal perspective did Saul succeed? Did he end up as gold, silver and precious stones? What does it say? Yes! Oh, yes, he lost a lot of wood, hay and straw. He lost his wars, and whatever that entailed as far as eternal value. I am not minimizing that, and there was a lot of wood, hay and straw in Saul's life. God burned that up at the judgment seat of Christ. It is gone. All those opportunities to be God's man are gone. But what did God say. He said he looks at the motives of man's heart not at his outward actions, and Saul deep down had real agonizing struggles. Deep down there was gold, silver and precious stones, and when it was all done and the dross was burned off God looked only at the remainder. He forgave Saul's sin and forgot them. His elegy is God's view of Saul's life after he dealt with Saul's rebellion. Saul did become what God wanted him to become.

It is just like Lot. Lot in the book of Genesis is a wipe out. However, II Peter 2 calls him a righteous man whose soul was tormented daily by the lawless deeds he saw about him. He lived in Sodom. Now, he was hooked on Sodom, and he couldn't leave it, but deep down he was torn asunder because he was God's man and he was righteous. Two thousand years after Lot's last word in the book of Genesis, God said he was a righteous man.

Don't ever judge by the outside. You may be 180 degrees out of step with God. My friends, we are going to make it. We may have a lot of wood, hay and straw in our lives which will be burned up, and for which we will lose rewards. I don't want to minimize that, but we are going to end up gold, silver and precious stones in the sight of God. All our sins will be forgiven and all our sins will be forgotten. God is going to see us only as gold, silver and precious stones and everybody in this room that names the name of Jesus shall have praise from God. I Corinthians 4 says so. That is the kind of God we have. Don't make him too small. Don't sell him short. He is something.

Father, we just thank you so much that you are something. We don't understand you. We can't figure you out. You are really something. Oh, boy, how we appreciate you. Now we thank you for your desire, your commitment, your sovereignty that is going to make us gold, silver and precious stones if you have to kill us. Father, we thank you so much in Jesus' name.

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## **Chapter Twenty-One**

### **Murder of Ishbosheth**

## II Samuel 4:5 - 5:5

(Lessons on II Samuel, Chapters 2 and 3 are not available)

I offer a summary here, but for real continuity you might want to read those two chapters:

In II Samuel 2, David, his men and his wives leave Ziklag, and, at the Lord's instructions, go to Hebron. There David is anointed king over the house of Judah. He is also told that it was the men of Jabesh-gilead who buried Saul. Abner, commander of Saul's army, takes Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, and makes him king over all Israel. There proceeds a battle between Joab, David's general, and Abner, Saul's general, in which Abner kills Asahel, Joab's brother. 19 of David's men (including Asahel) were killed and 360 of Abner's men were killed.

In II Samuel 3, Six sons are born to David in Hebron. There is a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David. The house of David grows stronger, and the house of Saul weakens, but Abner is making himself strong in the house of Saul. Ish-bosheth gets into a little to do with Abner, and Abner threatens to remove the kingdom from the house of Saul and establish the throne of David over Israel and Judah. Ish-bosheth is so frightened of Abner he makes no reply. So Abner goes to David with a deal. David welcomes him, and after their discussion, sends him away in peace. Joab, however, on his own, goes after Abner and kills him because Abner had killed Asahel, Joab's brother. David laments the passing of Abner "a prince and a great man...in Israel."

We begin this lesson with Chapter 4 of II Samuel. This is a rather tragic chapter. Instead of walking with his Lord, David has been playing power politics. Abner, the general of the northern ten tribes, has put the fourth son of Saul on the throne. Since Ish-bosheth is a very weak person, Abner makes maneuvers toward becoming king, but he finds it is not working properly, so he promises David he will deliver a power block, the ten northern tribes, to him. David makes a covenant with Abner. Even though David is now king of Judah, his troops are being fed and kept happy by allowing them to raid and bring back lots of spoil. Instead of settling down, reigning as king and teaching his troops to become normal citizens, he allows them to go out and do a little butchering under Joab. So on the one hand he has the unscrupulous general, Abner, who has deserted the king he put on the throne and offered to deliver the ten tribes of Israel to David, obviously, in turn for becoming leading general. On the other hand is his own general, Joab, who is also totally unscrupulous and who apparently has control of the army. So David, even though he is God's anointed king, because he is walking in the flesh, is a patsy for two generals.

Now Joab, David's general, slays Abner as vengeance for Abner's slaughter of his brother Asahel even though it was done in battle and in those days considered legal. Joab slew Abner during a truce situation and also in Hebron, a city of refuge, where you are not allowed to take vengeance without the pursued having had a trial, and David can't punish him. The result is anarchy. It is open season on leaders. Saul was killed by an Amalekite. Abner is slaughtered right there in Hebron, the capital city of David, and all David does is try to pass the buck. The tragic outfall, now, happens in chapter 4. You never sin as an island.

We pick up now with David as he existed in verse 39 of chapter 3.

II Samuel 3:39:

**I am weak today, though anointed king;** [He says this to his own confidential servants?] **and these men the sons of Zeruiah** [that is Joab, David's chief general, and his brother Asahel] **are too difficult for me.** [But not for God. But it doesn't seem to enter David's head that he should ask God about this] **May the Lord repay the evildoer according to his evil.** [But that is not much in the way of doing justice]

With that background, let's look at poor old Ish-bosheth, Saul's son.

II Samuel 4:1

**Now when Ishbosheth, Saul's son, heard that Abner had died in Hebron,** [Ishbosheth was the king of the ten northern tribes under Abner's authority. Abner really was the power behind the throne.] **he lost courage,**



**and all Israel was disturbed. And Saul's son [Ishbosheth] had two men who were commanders of bands; the name of the one was Baanah and the name of the other Rechab, sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, of the sons of Benjamin (for Beeroth is also considered part of Benjamin. and the Beerothites fled to Gittaim [which is over in Philistine territory] and have been aliens there until this day) Now Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son crippled in his feet. He was five years old when the report of Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel, and his nurse took him up and fled. And it happened that in her hurry to flee, he fell and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth.**

This sounds like a bunch of prattle but it sets an excellent background for us. Ishbosheth is the fourth and only remaining son of Saul. Although he is heir to the throne, he is on the throne at the grace of Abner. When Abner is slain by Joab and nothing is done about it, Ish-bosheth acquires the name Ish-bosheth which means "man of shame." Now all of Israel, the ten northern tribes, which have been held together as a power block by Abner, are at odds. They are each back in their own sandbox. Their leader is gone. Their king is called "man of shame," and the whole place is upset. Beyond that, Ishbosheth, this king who has no power, has two commanders from the tribe, or the nation, of Beeroth who are Hivites. They are not Jews. When Joshua came into the land, you will recall, he was told by God to make no covenants with anybody in the land. People far off yes, but people in the land were to be slaughtered, man, woman and child. He was to eliminate all inhabitants of the land. As they came in, Joshua began the elimination process. The Gibeonites and the Hivites, including the people from Beeroth, the Beerothites here, figured there was only one way to stay alive against 600,000 armed guerrilla warriors who had had all kinds of experience out in that wilderness. They were mean, lean and tough, and the Gibeonites figured they would surely lose any fight. So they dressed in ragged old clothes, took worn and mended wine skins that were popping leaks all over the place, scroungy old donkeys, stale and moldy bread and showed up on Joshua's doorstep pretending they had come from a great distance. Without inquiring of the Lord, Joshua made a covenant with them. Too late he discovered they happened to be the next two cities on his annihilation list. But he had made a covenant with them, and he had made it before Jehovah. He could not revoke it, and he could not kill them. So he made them slaves. That was part of the covenant. But in Chapter 21 of II Samuel, Saul in his zeal for Israel and Judah, not for the Lord, possibly in order to make more room for the people, tried to slaughter the Gibeonites and any Hivites who were involved with them, which included the Beerothites.

You can see the thoughts going through the head of Ish-bosheth's two commanders. "Abner has been killed in a vengeance slaying in a city of refuge and David has done nothing about it. Now, David's rival, with a rightful claim to the throne, is Ishbosheth, fourth son of Saul. The fifth claimant to the throne is Mephibosheth, not a son of Saul but a son of Jonathan Saul's firstborn, but he is a cripple. He can no longer actually act as king. So between David and the throne of all of Israel stands only one person, Ish-bosheth, and he is the son of Saul; Saul that fellow who tried to slaughter us in violation of the covenant we had with the Jews. So let's take a little vengeance: #1 by killing him and #2 by going to David and offering him the kingdom having removed his rival. We'll get blood vengeance on the murderer of our people, at least from his son, and we'll get ourselves a nice fat sinecure in the government of David." So, these two commanders, who are Hivites not Jews, decide to murder their king.

Here is where II Samuel 4:5 picks up. You can see the groundwork for this murder was laid by David when he refused to act like a king and deal summarily, properly and decisively with Joab who had violated the law of God. The law of God said you could not kill a person in a city of refuge until he had been tried by the elders. If the elders found him not guilty of deliberate and willful killing you could not touch him as long as he lived in the city of refuge. He could never depart from the city of refuge until the high priest died, but he could not be touched as long as he remained in that city. When the high priest died all bets were off. Everybody was redeemed, and they could go back to their own town. This was a picture of Jesus Christ obviously.

Joab killed Abner in a city of refuge. He violated the law of God, not the law of Judah or the law of David, but the law of God, and he went unpunished. David was king in name only. He was just like Ish-bosheth. That was all he was apart from Jesus Christ. Apart from Jehovah, Yahweh, he had no power. So he was a pawn in the hands of Joab, just as Ishbosheth was a pawn in the hands of Abner. The tragedy is that David was God's anointed to reign over all Israel. But in the flesh he had absolutely no ability to reign. He had no claim upon God. He had done nothing about a violation of the known will of God. So he had set the stage for what happened.

In verse 5 we pick up the tragedy that results.

II Samuel 4:5:

**So the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, departed and came to the house of Ish-bosheth in the heat of the day while he was taking his midday rest.** [This was way up east of the Jordan about half way up to Galilee at Mahanaim] **And they came to the middle of the house as if to get wheat, [They were officers of men, and since they were getting wheat for the people, it was very natural for them to go into the house of the king who was in charge of the wheat] and they struck him in the belly; and Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped. Now when they came into the house, as he was lying on his bed in his bedroom, they struck him and killed him and beheaded him. And they took his head and traveled by way of the Arabah [The valley of the Jordan] all night. Then they brought the head of Ish-bosheth to David at Hebron, and said to the king, "Behold, the head of Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, your enemy, [incidentally, also their enemy] who sought your life; [They are playing right into David's self-interest] thus the Lord has given my lord the king vengeance this day on Saul and his descendants."**

They brought Ishbosheth's head to David and pretended it was the Lord's doing, when actually it was their doing. However, the circumstances were such that it looked pretty good. Since David's last rival had been removed, they expected a nice reward. Their declaration was that God had given David vengeance upon his enemies. Actually what they had done was murder the king and make an excuse for it. There's a little self-interest here.

We see this type of thing many, many time in counseling. People come in and say, "It is the will of God that I leave my husband. He is too hard to live with," or "I had a vision," or "I talked to my friends" The bible says absolutely the opposite. It says you are to submit without a word to a husband who is nonpersuadable by the Word and win him by your life. Here is the known will of God, but we hear their circumstances, their friends, their feelings, their emotions, and they try to persuade us that this is the will of God for them. Their only basis for that statement is their own feelings or the quotes of their friends, who are biased and on their side anyway, and who haven't looked at the Word of God either. Probably the reason they got in this state is because they came to us first of all for premarital counseling, and they didn't pick up on it. They're two Christians that love one another and therefore they feel that this is it. Unfortunately the word "love" is really infatuation. They interpret all the circumstances as being the will of God. They don't want to wait to see whether or not it really is God's will or even to search the Scriptures. It just might not be his will, and if it isn't, they will lose one another. You can see it in their lives and their attitudes. They want to rush into a marriage just in case God might say no later on, and then they won't get each other. So, they come and tell us they are both Christians, and they love one another and therefore they know this is a godly match. You ask them to wait, and they panic. Why? It just might not be God's will, so they try to associate God with their own desires.

It is a very human thing these men have just done here. Problem is David has had it up to his ears with anarchy. I think this is the incident that finally opens his eyes. If he doesn't stop the anarchy of leaders right now and stop the assassination of those anarchist leaders, what is to stop them from killing David? If Joab, who is still a general of Judah, can murder Abner in a city of refuge in violation of the known will of God and go scot free, and if Ish-bosheth can be slain by his own commanders in his own home and have them not only get rewarded but go scot free, what is to stop the next possible step of Joab taking care of David? Joab has a lot of ideas about getting ahead. Joab is a nephew of David. He has royal blood in his veins, and he controls the army, my friends. He might just pull it off. Just as Abner controlled the army and did pull it off. So David moves very rapidly on this thing.

II Samuel 4:9:

**And David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, and said to them. "As the Lord lives, who has redeemed my life from all distress, [I do not need murderers to take care of my enemies] when one told me, saying, 'Behold, Saul is dead,'" and thought he was bringing good news, I seized him and killed him in Ziklag, which was the reward I gave him**

**for his news.**

Remember the Amalekite who came to David claiming he had slain Saul at Saul's request since Saul was badly wounded, literally was in cramps, and couldn't kill himself. He said Saul was afraid of falling alive into the hands of the Philistines who would torture and make sport of him, so he begged the Amalekite to kill him which the Amalekite did. Then the Amalekite came to David with the royal crown and the royal arm band and handed them over to David expecting a nice reward for his loyal actions. He had saved Saul from suffering and was also delivering to David the crown of all Israel. David slew him right on the spot for killing God's anointed. So the reward that this particular young man got was death. David can see right through these men from Israel. They are seeking reward too.

II Samuel 4:11:

How much more, when wicked men have killed a righteous man in his own house on his bed, shall I not now require his blood from your hand, and destroy you from the earth?

**David is indicating that, while the young Amalekite did kill the anointed of God and therefore had to be slain, at least he did do what Saul ask him to do. These men were murderers who killed a righteous man, not a man righteous before God necessarily, but one who was without crime. David recognized that Ish-bosheth was only a pawn and had only been on the throne because Abner put him there. David probably had some kindred feeling as he was kind of a pawn temporarily. So he puts it right to these two man, "If I had this Amalekite killed who was honoring the request of Saul, what will I do to wicked men who murder a righteous person?"**

II Samuel 4:12:

**Then David commanded the young men, and they killed them and cut off their hands and feet, and hung them up beside the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ishbosheth and buried it in the grave of Abner in Hebron.**

David takes very radical steps here. He had their hands and feet cut off. He probably cuts off their hands because they plunged the dagger. The feet were probably cut off because they ran down the valley. They ran all night with Ish-bosheth's head in their hands to get to David hoping for a reward. So what he did was probably symbolic. We don't know for sure, but even today in Islam it is not unusual for a Bedouin to lose a right hand as punishment for robbery. After he had the men killed, David hung their bodies up by the main pool in Hebron. You remember Deuteronomy says he that is hanged is accursed of God. David wanted to show these men were accursed of God. He took very violent, but effective, measures. He made a very strong proclamation that from then on murder and assassination were out. He indicated that from then on the laws of God would be obeyed. Next he gave Ish-bosheth, his so-called enemy, an honorable burial in the city of Hebron along with the other so-called enemy Abner. He honored the two murdered people and destroyed the murders.

In chapter 5 we'll see that when David finally deals with sin in the way a man after God's own heart should deal with it, God begins to move. The northern tribes are now without a general. They are without a king. The next king in the line, Mephibosheth, cannot rule because of his physical ailments. What David could not accomplish by playing politics, is now given to him by Yahweh, the Lord himself, in the Lord's time.

II Samuel 5:1:

**Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, "Behold, we are your bone and your flesh. [We are all out of the house of Jacob. We are all Jews. First requirement for a king of Israel was that he be a Jew, a brother. Second,] Previously, when Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel out and in. [Even back in the days when Saul was there, you were the uniting force of Israel." He was the general of all the armies of Saul. He was the uniting force and all Israel rejoiced. There were not 10 or 12 distinct tribes in those days; they were united behind one general who worked for Saul. Third,] And the Lord said to**

**you, 'You will shepherd My people Israel, and you will be a ruler [captain] over Israel.'** [You will both be a shepherd, literally one who puts them to pasture, and a civil ruler, and you will be captain of the army. You will be military and civil ruler in Israel, all of Israel. God had said so. Remember in Samuel 16, David was anointed king of all Israel. So the moment David begins to act like a king and uphold the law of God, the people come to him. He doesn't have to go to them. They come and make a covenant with him.] **So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David [he gets the title now] made a covenant with them before the Lord at Hebron; then they anointed David king over Israel.**

If you recall in the Abner situation, Abner was going to deliver a block of power to David, and then the power block would make a covenant with David. They were in the driver's seat, not David. Now with David walking as a man after God's own heart, David makes a covenant with them. David, as a type of Jesus Christ, is in charge. He makes the covenant. You don't dictate to Jesus Christ. You accept what Jesus Christ lays out for you. David acted like God's ruler and God's shepherd. He acted like a man of God. To be a man after God's own heart lays a heavy trip on David.

We have both a beautiful and a tragic picture here. David was thirty years old when he became king and he reigned 40 years, 7 years and 6 months over Judah and 33 years over Judah and Israel. He is a type of Christ. How old was Christ when he began his public ministry? Thirty years. The law of God said a priest could only be a priest at the age of 30. There was a restriction there. A prophet could be a prophet at any age. A king could be a king at any age at which he was accepted, but a priest had to be thirty years of age. He had to be at the height of his masculinity, at the height of his natural powers. He was to be God's man. David here is to become a king over a kingdom of priests. God promised Israel, "You behave yourselves and obey me, and I will not only exalt you, I will make you a kingdom of priests. You will all be priests." Priests are to be mediators between man and God. Now if the Jews were all to be priests, for whom were they to mediate? Who's left over? The gentiles. The whole world. God offered the Jew a ministry, a church membership, of the whole world. All God ask was total submission to him, a total walk of holiness before him in his strength and power, and he would make the Jews a kingdom of priests. He offered a ministry that would reach worldwide, an offer to mediate for the poor gentiles living in darkness which would bring them into the light of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, the Lord God Almighty. Can you imagine being offered a pastorate like that? And they blew it. But David is going to be a man after God's own heart. So God pictures this typology very carefully. David is the king of a nation of priests. Tragedy is he rules only Judah for seven years and six months.

Beyond the fact that Abner was playing power politics, why would the Israelites not accept David as their king right off the bat when Saul died? God had anointed David king over Israel. Everybody knew it by that time. Everybody! So why didn't they accept him as king over all of Israel? You say, "God hadn't opened the door." O.K., but why hadn't God opened the door? What had David done that slammed the door? Remember back a ways God had told David, "I want you to stay in Judah. I don't care if Saul is chasing you up one side of the hill and down the other. I have anointed you king over Israel. I have not anointed you to be slain by Saul, and I want you where you have to totally depend upon me and my protection. I want you to learn some lessons, to be stretched out on Jesus Christ, totally dependent upon him and watching as the Lord God Almighty, POW!, knocks the circumstances all to pot." What did David do instead? He ran to Gath, aligned himself with the Philistines, a godless uncircumcised people, enemies of the nation of God. He took the easy way out. Well remember who the Philistines were attacking at that point in time? Was it the Jews? No they were attacking the ten nations of Israel. David aligned himself with the enemy of the northern kingdom and was on his way to battle them when the Philistines threw him out. I don't know what he planned to do when he got up there.

Also, what probably set Abner off, beyond his own personal ambition? Abner was an oriental. What had David done to Abner? He couldn't do it to Saul, but what did David do to Abner? He totally humiliated him in front of all his troops. Abner was a great general, a formidable man of power, and you just don't go around doing that. Just two little fleshly trips and David slammed the door for seven years and six months on becoming king of all Israel. He alienated the ten northern tribes, and he also alienated a power house controlled by Abner who took over the throne, put his puppet on the throne, consolidated the tribes of Israel and, you read through the passage, began to take back the land of Israel. He was an extraordinary general. When the time came that he couldn't make it with Ish-bosheth, he still could have delivered the total nation of Israel to David which would have made David king of

all Judah and all Israel.

You do get what you sow. God does not stop the natural consequences of your actions. As a Christian you are an heir, a joint heir of Jesus Christ. You are mediators of the New Covenant. You are children of God, sons of God, but what you sow in the flesh God says you will reap according to the flesh. If you sow in the Spirit, you will reap according to the Spirit. David was anointed king over Israel and God said, "That's great, but David we have some natural consequences that have to work their way out. It is going to take seven years and six months and the murder of two men before you get the whole kingdom." But then he got 33 years as king over all of Israel and all of Judah.

Next time we'll pick up at II Samuel, chapter 5:6 thru chapter 6. Next time we hope to get through chapter 6 because the two tie together.

Father, we thank you for your Word. We just thank you for the way that you show us that we do not mock you. While we may be your chosen people, Father, we do reap in the flesh what we sow. So, Father, help us to be wise and to turn to you for everything and not try to do our own thing or to seek our own will or to rely on our own resources. So, Father, just teach us to day-by-day and moment-by-moment seek your will in our lives, allowing your power to live through our humanity that our lives might truly be in the Spirit and not in the flesh, that we might not have to reap those consequences, Father, which inevitably occur when we sow to the flesh even though we are children of God, sons of God, heirs of the New Covenant. Thank you, Father, for giving us this warning. Thank you, Father, for your love for us and that, in spite of the warning and in spite of our failures, we are still your children. Thank you, Father, for everything, in Jesus' name Amen.

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## Chapter Twenty-two

### David consolidates Kingdom

#### II Samuel 5

Today we'll look at II Samuel, Chapter 5. David is now king of all Israel with headquarters at Hebron, the capital of Judah. He wants to move his capital to Jerusalem, the city where, in Abraham's time, Melchizedek was king and God was the High Priest. This was brilliant thinking. It would eliminate the foreign wedge between the southern and northern tribes. At this time, though, the city was called Jebus and was partially held by the Jebusites, the local Canaanites. Jerusalem was a city of hills. Mt. Zion, the southern hill, was very high and had valleys on two sides so it needed defence on only one side. The Jebusites had built a citadel on that side and for 400 hundred years had successfully resisted the attempts of the Jews to displace them. At this time, the northern part of Jebus was inhabited by the Benjamites and the southern part by the Jebusites who were quite safe in their citadel. They had a water supply which had been provided by digging a 40 ft. shaft through rock down to the one perpetual spring in all of Jerusalem which was just outside of this hill.

They had access to the water through this shaft and could sit up there with an abundant supply of water. Incidentally, this is the same water source that Hezekiah accessed by digging a 1800' tunnel from the Pool of Siloam. You can walk through it today. This has been a source of water for Jerusalem for many years. It was very helpful during sieges. Outside Jerusalem there is nothing. Any invading army attempting a siege had to bring water from a long distance. It was quite a burden on them. Meanwhile the Jews could sit inside the city drinking bubbly, fresh, pure, spring water. At the time we are discussing here, so could the Jebusites. The place where God wanted to establish his name was a defiant force of Amorites. It was the ideal city for David to take. It did not belong to anybody yet, literally, that is. If he wanted to unite the tribes of Israel, instead of some city that would cause jealousy, here was a city in Benjamin, yet not really belonging to Benjamin, which had been unconquerable

for 400 years. It had real political implications. It would bring the tribes together in a neutral position, and, if he could take it, it would display David's remarkable ability to fight, to be their king, their leader, their captain. So his first move in attempting to consolidate his empire was to move against the Jebusites. He probably did it immediately because he had a large group of troops here which had gathered to make him king.

So we pick up in verse 6, now, as he begins moving against Jerusalem.

II Samuel 5:6:

**Now the king and his men went to Jerusalem [which was called Jebus then] against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, [they were local Canaanites] and they said to David, "You shall not come in here, but the blind and lame shall turn you away"; thinking, "David cannot enter here." Nevertheless, David captured the stronghold of Zion, that is the city of David. And David said on that day, "Whoever would strike the Jebusites, let him reach the lame and the blind, who are hated by David's soul, through the water tunnel." Therefore they say, [a proverb] "The blind or the lame shall not come into the house." So David lived in the stronghold, and called it the city of David. And David built and fortified all around from the Millo [which is the citadel] and inward.**

David has been engaging in guerrilla warfare for sometime now, and he knows all kinds of tricky and sneaky ways to avoid being captured. He understands fighting and, as a result, picks the one route that can get them into the citadel, up the water shaft. In I Chronicles 11, he issues a challenge, whoever is first up the water shaft and attacks the Jebusites shall be commander and captain of all Israel, and Joab does just that. Joab may be an unprincipled character but he is smart, and he is a good leader. He takes the gang up through the water shaft, breaks out into the city and takes the whole citadel.

He may have had in mind how the city of Babylon was taken. Babylon also was impregnable. It was designed to be self-sustaining with fields for growing food within its thick walls. With the Euphrates river running through the middle of it, all nature of crops, fruits, nuts, cereals, could be grown. It was fourteen miles on each side and had walls thick enough to race four horse chariots along the top rushing troops from place to place. Well, Darius, the Mede was pretty smart. When he wanted to take the city, which was down on the plain, up behind the hill he built a viaduct. Then one night, when he wanted to take the city, he collapsed the walls into the river thus making a dam and forcing the water down this viaduct and around the city. His troops, then, just followed the receding water down the river bed, walked under the city walls and slaughtered the inhabitants. This is very much akin to what Joab did. This could be where David got his idea of slipping up the shaft.

David takes the city now and calls it the "city of David."

II Samuel 5:10:

**And David became greater and greater, for the Lord God of hosts was with him.**

God wanted him to have that city. David was a type of Jesus Christ, and God wanted his king to be the one to take that city which was to be called the city of David, the city of God. So for 400 hundred years God preserved that city, right in the middle of Israel, just for David.

It is an intriguing thing to watch the sovereignty of God and how he preserves things for you. Did you ever dream that God might set something up just for you? Did you ever look upon someone who comes into your life as someone that, from all eternity, God has set apart just for you? It is very helpful in counseling, for example, to realize when you look at somebody who is totally bombed out and you have no idea what to say, "Hey, wait a minute. If I really believe the Scriptures, then from all eternity God has sent this person into my life at this time just for me, and I am God's ideal person for this situation. I don't know why yet, but there are no accidents in my life, and God has planned this from all eternity." So it makes this: my counselee, or your Bible class, or your witness to your neighbors, or the boss you've got, or the job you've got, whatever. It is exactly what God wants

you to have. It is uniquely yours, not anyone else's. It is your apple to pluck.

There had been attempts to take the city of Jerusalem for 400 hundred years, but all that had been taken was the northern part of it. Why? It was David's apple to pluck. It was to be the city of David (as a type of Jesus Christ), so God reserved it for him. For 400 hundred years it was a festering wound in the side of Israel but God delivered it to them right on schedule. The tragedy is that David gave away the chance to be the leader himself. Joab, as we know, is an unprincipled character and once more takes an opportunity to build another brick in the wall he is building for himself in the kingdom.

Then God gives David a second sign he has set this city aside for this king.

II Samuel 5:11:

**Then Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David with cedar trees [Cedar, by the way, was extremely desirable in the ancient near East for palaces. Cedar was the mark of an especially good palace. It really set you apart. So this was a very special gift from Hiram] and carpenters and stonemasons, and they built a house for David. And David realized that the Lord had established him as king over Israel, and that He had exalted his kingdom for the sake of His people Israel.**

David finally gets a house built, or rather a palace, a gorgeous thing built by a foreign king. It finally dawns on David that God has truly set him up to be the king of Israel, and God is going to exalt the nation of Israel for his children.

What is there about the history of the Promised Land, particularly from the patriarchal times, that might give David this concept? What did God make Abraham, Isaac and Jacob do while they were in the land? Hebrews 11, Genesis 12-21. God gave them the land. He said, "It's yours." From the Euphrates to Egypt, [eventually the exact distance of David's kingdom, by the way.] But what did he make the patriarchs do while in the land? Dwell in tents. Yes! He never gave them a city. They were never allowed to build a city. They were never allowed to take a piece of dirt and say, "This is my dirt. This is my city," and settle down. As Hebrews points out, they had to live as aliens, as foreigners, in the land of promise, the inheritance, which God had given them. David had the Abrahamic Covenant in his background. He knew it very well. Now God has had a foreign king build him a palace, a solid structure, in the midst of a city the Jews had never been able to take. It begins to dawn on David, now, that God is really moving to give him the kingdom which he promised under the Abrahamic Covenant. It is intriguing that when David got through, he not only had a palace in Jerusalem, but also the land of Canaan which stretches from the Euphrates all the way down to Egypt. He had the promised land under his authority. Part of it was under his direct jurisdiction, part of it as vassals, but he controlled from Egypt to the Euphrates, most of the eastern seaboard of the Mediterranean, the very land God had promised Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. So as God begins to allow him to do these things, David begins to see the hand of God at work.

Unfortunately he also sees something else. In the ancient near East, one of the signs that you were a really great king was the magnificent harem you had. The bigger the harem, the bigger the king, because generally you made alliances by marrying the daughters of other kingdoms. So David succumbed, unfortunately, to the very thing the nations around him were doing even though he was God's king.

II Samuel 5:13:

**Meanwhile David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem, after he came from Hebron; and more sons and daughters were born to David.**

Remember he had six wives, plus concubines, in Hebron. In Jerusalem he takes more wives and more concubines. He is building up this magnificent harem. He probably had a tally of ten wives. He had nineteen sons by his wives. We don't know how many concubines he had or how many children he had by them. They are not enumerated. He also had a number of daughters. The tragedy of the situation was that instead of breeding a family,

it bred competition. The lusts of David's heart and the desire of David's heart to be magnificent like the kings about him resulted in the destruction of the nation.

A member of the class indicated she always thought all of David's wives were Israelites.

These wives here are Israelite wives, as far as we can tell. We don't know anything about his concubines. All we know is that he had at least ten wives; we can't figure out the number of concubines. We can figure out that he had at least 19 sons, probably by his wives, since only the sons of wives are listed by name, [and many daughters], beyond that we can't tell.

He extends his borders up to the land of Canaan where he picks up some Semitic women, whether or not they are Israelites I don't know, but at least they are Semites, if he goes up to the Euphrates.

Where did his son Solomon get his idea of multiple wives and multiple concubines? From his dad. It worked for David. It will work for Solomon. Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines. You can imagine the number of children he had. What chance would there have been for a one-flesh relationship with even 10 wives and umpteen concubines? Absolutely none. Where in Scripture did God point out that marriage was to be a one-flesh relationship in Ephesians 5? No, Genesis 2. God was against plural marriages from the beginning of marriage. It was in the law of God and this law was to be read daily and memorized by the kings of Israel, one man, one woman, one-flesh forever. They knew it. But looking around they said, "Hey, by marrying here and marrying there, I can get powerful families on my side. I can get powerful nations on my side. I can make alliances here. I can make alliances there. I can save all kinds of trouble. By marrying the daughter of this king over here, no way will he come over and fight me when I have his grandchildren. His wife would cut him off at the knees." So David falls into this trap. Solomon falls into exactly the same trap. There are five basic rules that God had laid down for the kings of Israel to obey. There were also a couple the nation had to adhere to in choosing their king. He had to be an Israelite from among the brothers and he had to be God's choice, but then there were five things God demanded the king must choose to obey [found in Deuteronomy 17]. #1- He was not to multiply horses. He was not to trust in a standing army of chariots even though all the nations around him had them. "I'm going to fight your battles for you." #2- He was not to multiply wives lest they lead his heart astray from God. #3- He was not to multiply for himself gold and silver. He was not to make himself rich by being king. #4- He was to write down for himself a copy of the law of God, and he was to read it daily. He was to be a man of the Word of God. #5- He was not to lord it over his brothers. He was to be a servant, a brother. God was king and the king of Israel his vicar, his substitute, his visible representative.

A member of the class wondered if maybe God was injecting a certain compromise considering the cultural environment in which they were living, not insisting on one woman marriage, but considering the culture.

Let me change the word compromise. God makes no compromises. You will see that in the life of David. You are going to see tragedy in the life of David because of his "compromises." You are going to see it in the life of Solomon. He destroyed the kingdom with his compromises. Now God did, as it says in Acts 17, allow for the ignorance of the people, but David is still mightily with the Spirit of God, and I don't see that the Spirit of God is any less God in the Old Testament or in the New Testament. He is God! He is just as capable of illuminating the mind of an Old Testament person living in that culture not to "compromise" as he is in the New Testament. It is in the law of the Jews; a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife and they, the two, shall become one flesh. That started way way back. Since David is still mightily in the Spirit of God, if he were open to hear, he would be told. In other words, you don't have to be a victim of your culture.

Now God does allow for cultural habits or patterns. When the gospel moves into a new area, God does not upset the local culture. However, we do. We have done it many times. As I have mentioned to this class before, we have done it in Africa. We have put women into prostitution in the name of Jesus Christ. Multiple wives were normal in the tribes. We went into the tribes, won them to Christ, then laid down Western rules. "OK, you are allowed one wife only, and that is the first one. The rest of them have got to go." Well, in their culture there was no market for a used wife. So their only alternative was prostitution. In the name of Jesus Christ, we put women into



prostitution. We don't do that any more. We make missionaries take a course in cultural anthropology before we send them out. God changes the lives of the people, and then allows the changed lives to begin to change the culture. Jesus Christ never spoke against slavery. 1/2 to 2/3 of the Roman Empire consisted of slaves, animals, no rights. Christ said if you were a Christian slave, you were to be the best slave in town. I Peter says, even if your master was the worst person in town, a rotten guy; even if he hit you in the face with his fist, [literally in the Greek], it was pleasing to God if you served him faithfully and respectfully. Why? Because a pagan could not do that. They would be bitter and resentful and try to double deal in any way they could, but you are to be different. You are to serve an unkind master the very best you know how. He also said, "Master, remember you have a master in heaven. You are to treat your slaves with fairness and justice, since you are going to answer to me someday." And then he allowed the changed lives of the masters to begin releasing the slaves, and the changed lives of the slaves to begin converting the masters. So, when Onesimus ran away from his master Philemon and was converted, Paul sent him right back to his master. Oh, yes, he did send a letter with him in hopes that Philemon would release Onesimus, but he did not order it.

A member of the class asked, "Were slaves killed in that era?"

Yes, and tortured badly, too. You see the Romans were spread so thin that they couldn't stand any kind of uprising and, as a result, could be very brutal to slaves. Unless Philemon was a brother of Christ, he could kill Onesimus. He could torture him, imprison him, condemn him to fight beasts in the arena, expose him to die of starvation, or kill him, with or without cause. If a slave ran away and was caught he could be crucified. My point is Paul did not order Philemon to let Onesimus go. Instead Paul said, "Charge what is owed you to my account." He hoped that Philemon might decide to set Onesimus free, but he didn't order him to do so, and he sent Onesimus right back to his master. God is in the process of changing a whole culture. He's not interested in culture shock but culture change. He knows that, as the gospel spreads, it will change people and that, in turn, will change the culture.

A member of the class mentioned that God did make certain adjustments for certain times.

Yes, that's right. Divorce is an example. Through the Mosaic Law God gave the right of divorce because a woman, in those days, had no life outside of marriage or her father's house. Therefore, in order to set her free from marriage, she was given the writ of divorcement. But Christ cites that as an exception due to the hardness of their hearts. It was the lesser of two evils, and therefore God, for the woman's sake, allowed the lesser of two evils. He makes no fun about it; it is evil. God still hates divorce. But he also knows there is a culture out there which God is in the process of changing. The tragedy here is that David did not have to be a victim of culture.

You ask me if I think a believer could have the ability to judge right and wrong taken away from him. It seems David got to the point where he didn't know it was wrong to have multiple wives.

Well, we are going to see this in the tragedy of Michal in the very next chapter. She was David's first wife. Do you remember how David got his first wife? She was a gift from Saul primarily as a snare. "I want 100 foreskins of the Philistines. That is all I ask for a dowry, David." He wanted Michal, who loved David, to be a snare to get David killed by the Philistines. It didn't work though. David didn't love Michal, but David wanted Michal, because as a Princess, he would be married to one of the daughters of Saul. So, David went out and got 200 foreskins. He doubled his dowry, and he really sealed Saul into his promise. He got Michal, but it never says David loved Michal in Scripture. Michal saved David's life. When Saul was trying to kill him, he ran home, and Michal said, "Get out of town. I know, Daddy." She took her household god, an idol, which was big enough to simulate a body and put it in bed. She covered it over with clothes and put the goat hair thing on its head which was worn at night in those days. She, the Princess of Israel, has a household idol which is big enough to substitute for a body. She is an idolatress in the midst of Yahweh worshippers. She risked her life for David. Then, while David is gone ten years in the wilderness, Saul gives her to another man. David comes back into Hebron, but it is seven years before he takes her back and then it is only, as we saw in chapter 3, because Abner is moving in on the house of Saul by grabbing one of Saul's concubines. David is playing oneupsmanship with Abner, "I will make a covenant with you, sure, but I won't even talk to you until you deliver me Michal, Saul's daughter." He wasn't just talking.

He wanted the daughter of Saul back. Good politics! Unfortunately, David was a lousy husband.

So, getting back to verse 13, David, like the other kings, increased wives and concubines, violating the principles of God. Interestingly, even though God blesses David's building of the kingdom, he does not allow sin to go unpunished or the consequences of sin to go unrewarded. While David is expanding the kingdom and claiming the Abrahamic Covenant, he is sowing the seeds that will lead to the destruction of that kingdom in two generations. His son Solomon follows in his father's footsteps and even goes so far as to violate #5 rule for kings and become a tyrant. His kingdom splits with one part going to his son Rehoboam.

God is not mocked. Whatever a man sows he shall also reap. If he sows to the flesh, he will reap of the flesh corruption. If he sows to the Spirit, he will reap of the Spirit life everlasting. Two systems side-by-side right down here. David is both a beautiful example and a tragic example of both sides. Blessed by God on one hand and with the curse of sin on the other. Both of them go hand-in-hand as we walk through life; Here the blessing from God as we go in Christ, and over here the effect of sin we have allowed in our lives. God gives us the blessings and he allows the sin's effects along with it. You don't escape. Don't ever kid yourself; God is not mocked. He has no double standards, one for Christians and one for unbelievers, not even for David, a man after his own heart.

Now the Philistines heard David had been anointed king over Israel, verse 17. Remember the Philistines saw David as kind of a hostage, or at least a loyal vassal to Achish, king of Gath. While Abner tried to gather all of Israel under his domain, David was another man with a strong force. The kingdom was divided by Abner and David into two different spheres of influence. The Philistines weren't about to attack David as long as David could keep Abner from trying to regain all the territory the Philistines had taken. But now David is the uniting force. So, before he can reorganize and really get in the saddle, they want to move in and wipe him out.

And so II Samuel 5:17:

**When the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines went up to seek out David; and when David heard of it, he went down to the stronghold.** [This is the citadel he has. It worked for the Jebusites, and it will work for David] **Now the Philistines came and spread themselves out in the valley of Rephaim** [This is simply the valley right outside to the west of Jerusalem. They come right up to the city just over a little hill from the city. David got smart again] **Then David inquired of the Lord, saying, "Shall I go up against the Philistines? Wilt Thou give them into my hand?"** [Or shall I stay locked up here in the citadel?] **And the Lord said to David, "Go up, for I will certainly give the Philistines into your hand."** **So David came to Baal-perazim, and defeated them there;** [literally, he smote them there] **and he said, "The Lord has broken through my enemies before me like the breakthrough of waters."** **Therefore he named that place Baal-perazim.** [Lord of the breakthrough] **And they abandoned their idols there, so David and his men carried them away**

I Chronicles 14 indicates they burned the idols with fire. Deuteronomy 7 says any idol is contaminated. It should be treated as a contaminated piece. The Israelites were not to even take the gold or silver off of it. The whole idol was contaminated and should be totally destroyed by fire no matter how valuable or how precious it was. So they took the idols and burned them. Now this is a very important and interesting point for Chapter 6. It tells the Israelites the idols of the Philistines have no power whatsoever.

That was not true of the Ark of God. About 75 years earlier when Samuel was being sponsored by Eli and was just getting started in his prophetic ministry, the Philistines and Israel locked horns, and the Philistines won the first battle. The Israelites figured, "Since the Philistines bring their gods to battle, we'll bring our God to battle." So they got the Ark of the Covenant and brought it up to battle with a great shout. The earth shook and when the Philistines hear about the Israelite God coming into their camp, they were terrified. This was the God that destroyed the Egyptians. But one of their generals got smart and said, "OK, either we fight and win or they fight and win. Either we become their slaves or they become our slaves. You want to be slaves of Jews? You have a choice to make." So they went out and routed the Israelites slaughtering 30,000 of them. They took the Ark of the Covenant, destroyed the two priests who were with it and brought the Ark into their city. They had captured the

God of Israel. You can just feel their sense of triumph. They set up the Ark in the temple of Dagon, their god of fertility, one of their chief gods. When they go back the next morning, Dagon is lying flat on the ground prostrate before the Ark. That is kind of embarrassing to live with. They put Dagon back up again and next morning he is lying face down, his hands cut off, and his head rolled off. He was destroyed while the Ark just sat there. Meanwhile the city was struck by disease.

I Samuel says, "...He [God] ravaged them and smote them with tumors..." Since one of the results of bubonic plague is tumors and swollen lymph glands, a high fever and prostration, it could have been the bubonic plague. The city of Ashdod, where the Ark was situated, was being wiped out by God. So the Philistines decided to take the Ark to Gath. The plague swept Gath. It just followed the Ark right down the trail. And more hundreds died. The Philistines wouldn't give up the Ark, so they took it to Ekron. It swept through Ekron. Wherever the Ark of God went, it wiped out Philistines. After several months, the Philistine begin to suspect the Ark and this plague must go together. Remember the plagues of the Egyptians? And so they call in the diviners, the magicians, their astrologers, their religious leaders, "Let's cast out this God and get a little peace." They really have respect for the Ark now. They put it on a brand new cart, and, since they can't send it back without a guilt offering, they include five gold tumors and five gold mice. Then to make sure about this god, "We'll take two cows that have never had a yoke on them and who are also nursing their calves. We will take their calves away from them so they'll want to stay here, and then we'll point this Ark toward Israel and see what happens." Even with the calves back there screaming for momma, that Ark went "swoosh" right into Bethshemesh in Judah. The Philistines knew then that that was what that God wanted.

When Bethshemesh saw the Ark coming, the people all rejoiced. They slaughtered the cows, broke up the cart and made a great feast. However, in the midst of the rejoicing, some of the men were struck dead for looking into the Ark. "This God is impartial. No double standard here. He wipes out Philistines for irreverence. He wipes out Jews for irreverence." And all of a sudden the rejoicing turned to fear. So to get it away from them, they move the Ark to the nearest big city which was Kiriath-jearim, one of the Gibeonite league cities, that league of Canaanites cities that way back had tricked the Jews by saying they came from a long distance, remember. It is a Canaanite city, but they don't care. They just want to get the Ark of God out of Bethshemesh. It is intriguing. They put a Levite in charge of it, but except for a caretaker, it sits there for 75 years, at least, untouched and unused. They've got the tabernacle way over in Gibeon, without the Ark, and that is where they are doing their sacrifices. They don't go near the Ark; they are scared to death of it; it kills Jews as well as Gentiles. We want to remember that when we get into chapter 6.

I Samuel 5,22:

**Now the Philistines came up once again and spread themselves out in the valley of Rephaim.** [Exactly the same setup. The same exact circumstances. The same purpose in mind. Everything is the same. David is still wise. He still goes to the Lord] **And when David inquired of the Lord, He said, "You shall not go directly up; circle around behind them and come at them in front of the balsam trees.** [Don't make an outward assault. Go around behind and wait.] **And it shall be, when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, then you shall act promptly, for then the Lord will have gone out before you to strike the army of the Philistines.** [This time I am going to do the killing. I am going to do the assaulting.]

A member of the class asked, "When David asked, he got a direct answer. Do you think God deals with us that way, or are we in a different type of relationship?"

I believe he gives direct answers about 90% of the time. He hasn't "spoken" to me like to David, but I've been mulling over a problem, and while I'm studying a passage of Scripture that has nothing to do with my problem, I'm not looking for an answer, all of a sudden, "Pow," the answer just leaps out at me. We do have the Word of God, and it will leap out at you. There is only one catch. In John 5 the Lord told the Pharisees who were Old Testament scholars and who knew the Old Testament, [in fact the good solid Pharisees memorized the Old Testament; the mediocre ones only memorized the first five books of Moses] "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me: and you are unwilling to come

to Me, that you may have life." They didn't want that Jesus as their Messiah. They had a different Messiah in view. So even though they worked through all the Scriptures and knew them by heart, they never saw Jesus, because they didn't want to see Jesus. We go to the Bible many times when we are looking for an answer, but we really don't want to know the answer. We've got the answer we want, and we are trying to find a proof text that will fit it. Isn't it wonderful when you can find that proof text. The Bible is a tremendous thing if you want to twist it. Remember the famous example; three Scriptures; all of them scriptural; all of them the Word of God, "Judas went out and hung himself. Go thou and do likewise. What thou do, doest quickly." All of those are from the Word of God. They are all inspired by the Spirit of God. They are all part of the Word of God just as much as anything else. But simply out of context. With those Scriptures, I could justify killing someone. That's what we do. We play what I call "Sword drill." With the Bible in front of you and closed eyes, you jab your finger anywhere on the page. "There it is. That is the verse for the day." Then you can go out and do whatever you want. Problem is a text, without a context, is a pretext. You have to be willing to do God's will. The Lord said, "If you are willing to do My will, you shall know the teaching whether it be of God or man." The key of course is, "If you are willing to do My will." That is where it gets kind of tight doesn't it? I can have all kinds of desires for God, if he would only cooperate. In pre-marital counseling you ought to see the Scriptures people use when they want to get married. It is amazing what they say.

II Samuel 5:25:

**Then David did so, just as the Lord had commanded him,** [Instead of going out from the citadel and attacking as he did the first time, remember, he goes way around behind the Philistines and waits. So, what happens] **and struck down the Philistines from Geba** [That should be Gibeon literally, about 5 miles N.W. of Jerusalem] **as far as Gezer.**

David went out and hid in the bushes. God in some way disturbed the Philistines and struck them down. They began to flee northward and, of course, fled right past David in total rout. He chased them all the way from Gibeon to Gezer, all the way back to Philistine country, butchering them as he went. He didn't do a thing in that battle except chop up Philistines and rack up the spoils. First time he met them head on and won. The second time God did the job and David just collected the results. He was totally passive in the second encounter although the circumstances were the same. In other words, you cannot set God in a little box and say, "This is what God does. This is the way he is going to act." God wants you to bring every single item before him because he has some amazingly imaginative ways of dealing with your problem. Whoever thought God would run the Philistines right by the Jews who were waiting in ambush when just before he had David meet them head on? But he did, and they won, and David named the place "Lord of the Breakthrough."

God has different ways of fighting. Sometime it's a head-to-head confrontation with Satanic forces. At other times it may be an action-passive situation where you are totally helpless and hopeless, and yet your life radiates Jesus Christ. The Lord illustrates this. How did he handle Satan in the temptation in Luke 4? He came out of the wilderness being tempted by the devil [the tense there indicates for forty days he was being tempted] but the climax came when he fled temptation. How did he handle Satan? Yeah! A direct frontal assault. Satan says! Scripture says! How did he handle Satan at the cross? He went to his Father and told him, "If it be your will, Abba, Abba, let this cup pass from me, yet not my will but Thine be done." He didn't want to go to that cross. He was a very human person, as well as being God. How did Satan get clobbered at the cross? In Colossians 2 my Bible says that "Christ triumphed over him and made a public display of him leading him through the streets of heaven chained to his chariot hub caps [in the idiom]" reminiscent of a Roman conqueror who chained his defeated captives to the hub caps of his chariot and rode through Rome dragging these people with him. Those in front were allowed to return to their own territory to be trained by Romans and to rule under Roman authority. Those behind, who were considered dangerous, were going to the coliseum to be butchered. But all of them were dragged through town by the conquering general who approached the Emperor to receive the crown of victory. That is the exact idiom that is used in Colossians of Christ's victory over Satan at the cross. He exposed Satan for what he was. The Prince of the Power of the Air is vicious, mean, cruel and despotic. He cannot create but only destroy, twist and pervert the things of God. The Garden of Gethsemane was a desperate time, but the Father knew best.

Again I ask, "How did Christ win?" He allowed himself to be killed. When Peter pulled his sword to defend his Lord, Christ said, "Put away your sword. I could appeal to my Father and he would put twelve legions of angels at my disposal." A Roman legion was 6800 foot soldiers. 12 x 6800 is in the 80,000s. I submit to you Jesus didn't need any help from bumbling Peter. Anytime he wanted to he could have had 80,000 angels, any one of which could have destroyed the whole of the opposing forces. The singular angel of death wiped out all of the first born of Egypt in one night. No, he won a tremendous victory. The greatest victory of his whole ministry was won by giving himself up to a Father's will and being slain. He accomplished far more in his death than he ever did in his life. The total impact he had during his life was probably on 500 people and some of them were doubters. His ministry, as far as nose count, conversions, goes was a lousy ministry compared to, say, Billy Graham's. He had nobody at his trial. There were only 120 at Pentecost, and that was after 3-1/2 years of ministry. Billy Graham does better than that in one night. But when Christ died, he triumphed over Satan.

Fortunately David made the right choice, and it says in I Chronicles 14 that after that, "Then the fame of David went out into all the lands: and the Lord brought the fear of him on all the nations." When David butchered those Philistines, a magnificent army, a skilled fighting force who would never have been able to be thrown out of Palestine, all the way from Gibeon to Gezer, that's when the fear of God, the fear of David, fell upon all the other nations. Remember God did the smiting. David just followed up. Don't ever, ever put your God in a box. Don't ever get your God in a rut. He is beautifully imaginative. And I don't care if your circumstances are exactly the same, and something worked once before, don't ever assume he will use the same process again. Always go to the Lord and say, "Well, how do we do it this time?" Allow an imaginative God to give you some delightful surprises in how he does these things. And when you do, the fear of God will be manifest through you to those about you. They'll see a life they can't explain.

Let's look at chapter 6 next time, and see how quickly David forgets.

Father, we thank you, now ,for your Word and for the way it does show us how you operate and what a delightful and imaginative God you are, and how you delight in pleasing and surprising your children. Father, please teach us not to take away those chances for you to surprise us and our delight in seeing you triumph in many various ways. So teach us, Father, to go to you for each thing, no matter how similar the circumstances, and to trust you to work your perfect will in our lives, to deal with the Philistines as they come, and even though the same setup is exactly the same help us to realize that you are a God of amazing imagination and that you have an infinite number of ways of handling the enemy. Father, never let us get stale or in a rut but always to just rest in you and your refreshing ways of dealing with the problems of life. We thank you, Father, in Jesus' name. Amen

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## Chapter Twenty-three

### Ark brought to Jerusalem

#### II Samuel 6

Today we are looking at Chapter 6 of II Samuel. It is an interesting chapter. It is also interesting how quickly David forgets. As you know, there is often a parallel passage in Chronicles to some of the passages in II Samuel. One of these is here. I want to pick up the introduction to this particular chapter of II Samuel from I Chronicles.

I Chronicles, 13:1:

**Then David consulted with the captains of the thousands and the hundreds, even with every leader. And David said to all the assembly of Israel, "If it seems good to you, and if it is**

**from the Lord our God, let us send everywhere to our kinsmen who remain in all the land of Israel, also to the priests and Levites who are with them in their cities with pasture lands, that they may meet with us; and let us bring back the ark of our God to us, for we did not seek it in the days of Saul." Then all the assembly said that they would do so, for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people.**

Then something tragic happens. In verse 13 of Chapter 15, David makes this comment about having the Levites carry the ark:

I Chronicles 15: 13

**"Because you did not carry it at the first, the Lord our God made an outburst on us, for we did not seek Him according to the ordinance."**

First he said, "If it's all right with you people, and if it's all right with the Lord, let's do it." But then, without checking with the Lord, he uses only the will of the people and moves the ark.

II Samuel 6:1:

**Now David [this is after going through the Philistine battle] again gathered all the chosen men of Israel [and we just saw he talked it over with them all, including the priests and the Levites, according to the Old Testament and the rules and regulations laid out by God.] thirty thousand. And David arose and went with all the people who were with him to Baale-judah...**

Baale-judah is another name for Kiriath-jearim where the ark of the Lord had been for the last 75 years. Remember from last time, the Philistines captured the ark and brought it into Philistine country. God brought a plague on them, possibly the bubonic plague, which convinced them to get rid of the ark. They sent it to the people of Beth-shemesh, who were delighted to have it back. During their rejoicing at its return, however, some of them either didn't look at the ark properly or didn't rejoice when it came back, [we're not sure which] and God slew 70 of them. That scared them to death and they said, "Get this ark out of town." The nearest big city was Kiriath-jearim, so they sent it there. They put a Levite in charge of it, and left it there. Kiriath-jearim was a Canaanite town, not a Jewish town at all. As I Chronicles above indicates, "It wasn't used in the days of Saul," and it actually wasn't used very much in the days of Samuel either. The tabernacle, in the meantime, was over in Gibeon where they sacrificed on the brazen altar.

So here the ark of God has been sitting for 75 years in a Canaanite town not being used. Now David has a city. It's a city given to him by God, a capital city, the city of God, the city of David. God has also given him a nation to govern, and very naturally the king of that nation wants to have the ark, the presence of the God of that nation, his Boss, associated with him in his city. So he wants to bring the ark up, but how do you do that? He can do two things. He can use tradition or he can use Scripture. David chooses tradition. "Well, let's see, 75 years ago the Philistines put the ark of God on a brand new cart, had it driven by two milk cows who had never been yoked and sent little offerings along with it. It came directly out of Philistine country to Beth-shemesh. The Philistines were relieved of the plague, so obviously God blessed it. Well, we'll do exactly the same thing."

II Samuel 6:2:

**And David arose and went with all the people who were with him to Baale-judah [Kiriath-jearim], to bring up from there the ark of God which is called by the Name, the very name of the Lord of hosts who is enthroned above the cherubim. And they placed the ark of God on a new cart that they might bring it from the house of Abinadab [that was the Levite who was set aside to watch over the ark] which was on the hill; and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were leading the new cart. [These were Levites. They were men set aside to do this] So they brought it with the ark of God from the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill: and Ahio was walking ahead of the ark. [Apparently Uzzah was alongside the ark] Meanwhile, David and all the house of Israel were celebrating before the Lord with all kinds of instruments made of fir wood [literally cypress] and**

**with lyres, harps, tambourines, castanets and cymbals.**

They were rejoicing. They were worshipping. They were glorifying God and having a ball in front of the Lord. What is wrong with that? How had the written Word of God ordered the Jews to carry the ark of God? On their shoulders, and on the shoulders of the sons of Levi and specifically the sons of Kohath. Nobody else. Nobody was to touch the ark of God, or the sacred vessels, except the priests. After they touched it, they covered it so nobody could see it. Then, using the long staves that came out of the ark of God, the Kohathites, picked it up, put it on their shoulders, and carried God. God was sitting on top of the Israelites. He was not being led by the nose.

He was trying to show that he was a holy God, separate from sinners. To come into God's presence, you had to come by the route that God had prescribed. He didn't isolate himself. No, there was a route they could follow. They could deal with their daily sins at the bronze sacrificial altar that sat in front of the "tent of meeting." Once a year the high priest would come into the very presence of God in a certain ritual way that pictured the life and the death of Jesus Christ, bringing blood in for a sacrifice for first his own sins and then for the sins of the people. Once a year he could walk in the presence of God, but only once a year and only by a prescribed route. There were certain rituals he had to perform such as sprinkling the blood seven times. There were bells on the skirt of his robe which jingled as he sprinkled the blood. When he went into the Holy of Holies, he was letter perfect, and everybody outside was watching for him to come out. "One, two, three, four, five, six, seven; whew! he made it another year." God was very available to them. He lived with them and traveled with them, yet he was a God who was separate from them. He was holy. They were to be a separate people from the Gentiles and yet to be available to be a light unto the Gentiles. So we have this wonderful picture lesson of God's holiness. One of the picture lessons was, "I am never to be on a cart. You are to carry me on your shoulders. I am God and you are my people, and you are to wear my yoke."

God deliberately used that symbol. Sitting up high he was to be carried by the people. They were to bear the yoke of Yahweh. The Lord Jesus said the same thing in Matthew 11:20-30, remember. "Come unto me, all you who are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." How? "Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." But it is a yoke. If you want rest for your souls, you have to put on the yoke of Christ. In the context of that day it was a wooden cross bar with bows on either end that hooked you to another animal. Then you and your partner together dragged whatever was attached to you. It meant someone was totally in charge of you. This was the yoke of Yahweh, Jesus Christ of the Old Testament, which the nation of the people of God were to be under. It would be an easy yoke. It would be a light yoke. They would be given rest for their souls, but it was a yoke. There was to be one boss in Israel and that was not David. It was Yahweh. However, this God was dangerous. Wear his yoke you will have rest. Buck him and you do so at the peril of your soul.

Now in 75 years, with the ark in Kiriath-jearim, the Jews had been forgetting all about the holiness of God. Here is a strange dichotomy. The tabernacle in one place with continual sacrificing for forgiveness, and the ark, the presence of God, in another place just sitting there. So here they are rejoicing, worshipping, celebrating and yet sinning at the same time. Did it ever strike you that you can sin while worshipping even though you are sincere? Well, you can if you violate the principles of the Word of God. That is exactly what they were doing

God laid down some very specific rules in the Book of the Law, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, on exactly how to operate. Numbers 4 lays out as plain as can be exactly how to handle the ark, who is to carry it, how it is to be carried, etc. Then David, in the I Chronicles 13 passage, consulted the priests of the Levites as well as all the people, and said, "If it seems good to you and if it is from the Lord our God, let's do it." The only problem was no one bothered to check with God. All the people said, "They didn't do it in the days of Saul. Let's do it now," but by David's own admission, nobody bothered to check with God, and they had the first five books of Moses right there.

So, here they are rejoicing, worshipping, and honoring God, as far as they know, and yet see what God says about it.

## II Samuel 6:6:

**But when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah reached out toward the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen nearly upset it. And the anger of the Lord burned against Uzzah, and God struck him down there for his irreverence; and he died there by the ark of God.**

Here are the people rejoicing in the Lord when the ark, as it comes off the hill, starts to tilt. Uzzah in his love for the ark and his zeal and reverence for God reaches out to steady it. The minute he took hold of it he died. God made it very clear in the Scriptures that nobody was to touch the ark except the priests and then only when they moved it. "I am a separate and holy God, and I gave you principles on how to approach me. I will not accept any other way." Now the Philistines didn't know any better. So, God allowed them to lift the ark onto a new cart. They looked to what light they had which was astrologers and diviners, but the Israelites had written rules. So when Uzzah, even in total sincerity, violated the holiness of God, he died. The anger of God reached out and smote him.

This is a good picture of God's anger, or God's wrath. It is not an emotion. It is not a state of mind. The wrath of God, or the anger of God, is simply a settled state of hostility toward evil. Uzzah's motivation was right. He was worshipping God and trying his best to please God, but he died. He is probably home with Jesus right now, but he did die. God's wrath is much like the law of gravity. It is a settled state of hostility toward evil. If you commit evil in any form, such as violating the known will of God when it is available to you, you will pay, no matter what your motivation. God is not mad at you. You don't like the law of gravity? That is too bad, but step off the roof of this church and you are bound to get hurt. It's not because God is mad at you, but because that is the way it is. So, Uzzah paid with his life for violating the known will of God as written in the Scriptures. Uzzah was a Levite. The Levites were teachers of the law and were spread throughout Israel to be teachers of the law. The very law Uzzah should have been teaching told him exactly how to deal with the ark of God. He didn't do his homework. He didn't flunk, he died .

Now look at David. David did get angry. David did have an emotion. Our anger comes from ego. I am mad because I have been treated unfairly by someone. I get angry with God because, according to my standards, he has been unfair to me. But you see, God has no ego problem. Not only is God Mr. Big, but he knows he is Mr. Big. He doesn't have the slightest struggle with self-worth. He knows he is the only thing of value in the universe. All other things have value only as they relate to him. He is totally satisfied with himself. Jesus Christ had no struggle with self-worth. He knew he was God. He knew he was holy. He knew he was the Ultimate One, the source and the goal of all creation. So he didn't get mad. He did have wrath. Now with David it was different. Remember David was the runt of the litter. He had a real struggle with self-worth all of his life. Look at verse 8; it pops right out.

## II Samuel 6:8:

**And David became angry [He is not angry at the people, he is angry at God] because of the Lord's outburst against Uzzah, and that place is called Perez-uzzah to this day. [Break through Uzzah] So David was afraid of the Lord that day; and he said, "How can the ark of the Lord come to me?" And David was unwilling to move the ark of the Lord into the city of David with him; but David took it aside to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite [He is a Levite.] Thus the ark of the Lord remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months, and the Lord blessed Obed-edom and all his household.**

Here is David doing his best. He is organized. He is up front leading the crowd. They are all worshipping. Everything is going great and bang! this happens. Man, is he angry! God has not observed David's standards. So, when you get angry with God what happens to your relationship with God? You may not actually lose the relationship, but you sure lose the experience of it. Next step after anger is fear, "I might be next. I organized this thing. I'm the king." So David becomes afraid, and says, "Well, how can the ark of God come to me?" Here comes this gap between David and his God. The next step in his spiritual barrenness is his unwillingness to move the ark of God to Jerusalem.



And so David begins with anger against God because God isn't fair. Then he progresses to fear of that God because God is a scary guy and you don't mess with him. Pretty soon there's a distance between David and his God which results in David's unwillingness to reach out and grab hold of the promises of God. The tragedy is God wants the ark in Jerusalem. God has chosen that city for His Presence. He wants the king he has chosen to have the ark of the covenant right there. He wants that. The problem is not God. It is David.

These are the steps to spiritual barrenness All you have to do is start getting angry with God. Then pretty soon you will be fearful of God and next you will be unwilling to obey God. Then you will be down here making appointments for counseling. And we've got to take you right back to the bottom line, your anger against God because he doesn't conform to your standards. He conforms to the Word of God, though, and if you obey that you'll have no worries about the wrath of God or the anger of God.

Now, why do you suppose God blessed Obed-edom and all his household for three solid months? He gets rich over night. Everything he touches turns to gold. His crops grow like crazy, as do his sheep and his cattle. They have offspring like you wouldn't believe, twins all over the place. Everything he touches, as long as that ark is there, just blossoms. He doesn't fight with his wife. His kids behave themselves. The whole place is a paradise. What is God trying to do? Yes! He is trying to show David that he stills loves him. The Scripture teaches that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself not charging the sins against them." God begot the world, and he reconciled the world unto himself while it was yet sinful. What's more he didn't charge the sin against us. He is not mad at David. David is mad at him. So he is saying, "David, I'm not mad at you. Take a look at Obed-edom. I'm not mad at the Jewish people. I just want some respect for my holiness." And so he very graciously blesses Obed-edom, and David gets the message.

II Samuel 6:12:

**Now it was told King David, saying, "The Lord has blessed the house of Obed-edom and all that belongs to him, on account of the ark of God." And David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David with gladness.**

If you will notice in I Chronicles 15 he gets the Levites and the sons of Kohath, and he says, "Last time 'we did not seek Him according to the ordinance,' but this time you carry the ark. We are going to do it the right way," and he checks right out according to Numbers 4. Verse 13 of II Samuel I love.

II Samuel 6:13:

**And so it was, that when the bearers of the ark of the Lord had gone six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fatling.**

Why do you suppose David suddenly, after only six paces, sacrificed to God? What hasn't happened that he thought might happen? Whew! Yes! David is giving a thanksgiving offering. He did it right. God indicated that when nobody died. Now it is a blessed event.

II Samuel 6:14:

**And David was dancing before the Lord with all his might,** [total restoration. He feels free again before the Lord and he can express himself openly, abundantly, joyously without any inhibitions. No more fear. You notice he was dancing. Part of their worship in those days was dancing.] **and David was wearing a linen ephod** [This was the garment of the priests. Instead of being on the 50-yard line in a box seat as king, he is doing exactly as God says in Deuteronomy 17. The king was to be a servant among the people. He was not to lord it over his brothers. He was to be one of them. He realizes this is a kingdom of priests in a holy nation. So he puts on a priest's garment because he is bringing up the ark of God. The ephod is a shorty nightgown, if you remember. While he is dancing and whirling out there his underbritches are showing, and he humiliates and humbles himself in front of all the people as he is rejoicing in his Lord. Unfortunately Michal spots him.]

## II Samuel 6:16:

**Then it happened as the ark of the Lord came into the city of David that Michal the daughter of Saul** [She is not called the wife of David. Why? What is she acting like? Daddy!] **looked out of the window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord and despised him in her heart.**

That is a strong word. The man out there, making an ass of himself, is king. He ought to be wearing gorgeous robes which reach to the ground, sitting in a box seat with a spear in his hand having "eyes right" as the procession goes by. Instead he is in a short nighty, whirling around like crazy, rejoicing in the Lord. Michal is the daughter of a king and the wife of a king. She is royalty, and she despises him.

Have you ever noticed something about wives? A wife becomes one-flesh with her husband. That is really true. Your wife is both your severest critic and your staunchest backer, and she identifies with you. What you do she sees herself doing. How you act, she sees herself acting. You don't believe it? Check out what she tells you on the way home from dinner out with friends. She is either proud or embarrassed by your actions. Why? Because she sees herself identified with those actions. Now Michal is a good wife. She identifies with David. She sees herself out there being humiliated. Also, let us not forget that she has not had her husband for some seventeen or eighteen years. When David escaped into the wilderness, she lost her husband and was given to another man. David was gone about ten years and then was seven years in Hebron, taking six other wives, by the way. Michal comes back as wife number seven instead of wife number one. She comes back as a political pawn. She has deep insecurities. She doesn't know where she stands with David. She loves David. She once risked her life for him and she identifies with her love. She is humiliated because she thinks David is being humiliated. There is a protective instinct there. We are going to see the tragedy of David as a husband here in a minute.

## II Samuel 6:17

**So they brought in the ark of the Lord and set it in its place inside the tent which David had pitched for it; and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord. And when David had finished offering the burnt offering and the peace offering, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts. Further, he distributed to all the people, to all the multitude of Israel, both to men and women** [They are spiritual equals in worship] **a cake of bread and one of dates and one of raisins to each one. Then all the people departed each to his house.**

Interestingly enough David had two priests at this time. He had Zadok and Abiathar who were both descendants of Aaron but from two different lines. They were cousins. Zadok was in charge of the tabernacle in Gibeon where they had been offering sin offerings for years. Abiathar was in charge of the ark there in Jerusalem for which David had built a tent similar to the one in Gibeon. So he had two tabernacles at the moment, one in Jerusalem and one over in Gibeon.

If you read the I Chronicles 16 passage, David puts Asaph in charge of the choir. He composes a psalm for this celebration. And he has Asaph begin to have public praise worship. This is the first time in Scripture where there is public worship of praise involved in celebrating the Lord's presence. Asaph writes 12 Psalms. He is the choir master of David. He is a brilliant musician. He is also a prophet, a seer. This is the introduction of liturgy into the Jewish religion. This goes on into the temple and into the synagogue. So David, a musician himself, sees the place of music in worship, and the place of responsive praise on the part of the people. He begins to bring "Body Life" into the Jewish worship system, and it continued on until the time of the synagogue.

Now, having done that, II Samuel 6:20:

**But when David returned to bless his household,** [He had blessed the people. Now he wanted to bless his household] **Michal the daughter of Saul** [There's that nasty phrase again] **came out to meet David and said, "How the king of Israel distinguished himself today!** [Good old sarcasm] **He uncovered himself today in the eyes of his servants' maids as one of the foolish ones shamelessly uncovers himself!"** ["When you whirled out there, David, your linen britches stuck out all over town." She is

humiliated by this. Well, you would hope that a loving husband would sense the problem. This one doesn't] **So David said to Michal, "It was before the Lord, who chose me above your father [Stick it in your ear] and above all his house, [Stick it in your ear] to appoint me ruler over the people of the Lord, over Israel; therefore I will celebrate before the Lord**

"Whether you like it or not." Isn't that a wonderful response to a concerned wife. Exactly the opposite of I Peter 3:7. "You husbands likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way (in the context there if she is on a broomstick) as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life,..." Literally the word "grant her honor" is the word "treat her as precious," the same word that is used in "the precious blood of Jesus." I Peter 1:19. "Treat her as precious and as a joint heir of the grace of life. She needs grace and so do you, David. She is to be honored and loved and understood as the weaker vessel. She is wrapped up in her husband. What you do, she sees herself doing, and you just humiliated her in front of all her maids." David doesn't see that at all, and he comes back with.

II Samuel 6:22:

**And I will be more lightly esteemed than this [I am going to keep right on doing it] and will be humble in my own eyes, but with the maids of whom you have spoken, with them I will be distinguished."** [You don't give me respect, I'll get it from them. How to make friends and win people. The tragedy is..] **And Michal the daughter of Saul had no child to the day of her death.**

When I look at the commentators, I wonder about this sometimes. They all blame God for Michal's barrenness. That's not the context of this passage. David has a tendency to do this sort of thing, and whose fault is that? I think David denied her her connubial rights and cut her off. In II Samuel 20:3, David came back after being chased out of Jerusalem by his own son Absalom. He won the battle. Absalom was killed, but Absalom had violated his ten concubines who were left back in the palace. Remember in those days, as we have seen before, the one who took the concubines took the title deed to the kingdom. The concubines of a dead king, or a prior king, always went to his heir. So for Absalom to make sure that Jerusalem knew, and Israel knew, that he was now king, and he was going to be king, "You better make a choice," he took the ten concubines of his own father. He put a tent up on top of the palace and, in front of all Israel, violated them saying, "They are mine. I am king. And don't you forget it." Now the concubines had nothing to do with it. They didn't volunteer. They were taken.

II Samuel 20:3 says:

**Then David came to his house in Jerusalem, and the king took the ten women, the concubines whom he had left to keep the house, and placed them under guard and provided them with sustenance, but did not go in to them. So they were shut up until the day of their death, living as widows.**

David on an ego trip shuts ten women off from their connubial rights as wives instead of forgetting and forgiving and restoring them when they had done nothing wrong. For the rest of their lives the women were secluded and under guard because of the ego of one king.

I don't think God caused Michal to be without children until the day of her death. I think David did. Now it resulted in the same thing. But we shouldn't blame God for our own vindictiveness, our own shortsightedness, our own failure to be a husband. The tragedy of David is that having multiple wives he never really had a one-flesh relationship with anybody. You can only totally give yourself to one person. Once you have done that, there is not much left over. The next person gets a little less of you, and less of you, and less of you. After about 6 or 7 wives you are dealing with very small chunks. When you get ten wives and umpteen concubines, you are giving them pieces so tiny you are not giving them anything at all. The tragedy is that Michal is now #7 instead of #1. David doesn't "sanctify her with the washing of the water of the word" (Ephesians 5:26). He doesn't take her back to the Scriptures and show her, in love, that she has an attitude toward God which is wrong. He doesn't treat her as a woman, as a weaker vessel, governed by her emotions. She is insecure in David's love. She is insecure in

her place in the household. She was #1. She was the queen. She was the princess of Saul. Now she is #7.

He doesn't understand at all about her insecurities. I believe to top it all off, he says, "Stay in the house. That's it, kid. You've had it." This is the tragedy of being men. The flesh is always there. David in the beginning ignored the will of God, and I think in the end in this chapter David again ignores the will of God. We forget David was "filled mightily with the Spirit of God." This is the same Spirit of God that wrote I Peter 3:7 and was just as powerful and available to open David's eyes to relations with his wife then as he is now. I know I Peter 3:7 hadn't been written, but the author was indwelling David. I think it was a violation on David's part of what God had intended. I don't think God was mad at Michal. I think God was sorry for her and compassionate toward her. David is the villain. In Scripture the worst sin, as God would categorize sins, is pride. It destroys you. It destroys all those about you. It certainly is a tragedy here.

You asked me how concubines fit into the will of God?

They didn't, as far as his design for marriage, but this was part of the culture of that day, and God does not tear apart a culture in which women are caught up as innocent pawns and cast them aside. However, God particularly told his kings, "You are not to multiply wives." The kings of Israel were to be an example of God. They were not to multiply wives. However, David was trying to build a kingdom that would stretch from the Euphrates to Egypt, the covenant that was promised Abraham, and he did it with multiple wives. Culturally David could justify it, but biblically he could not. Deuteronomy 17 is very specific, "The king shall not multiply wives." Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines. Don't blame God for Solomon either.

Next week II Samuel 7.

Father, we just thank you so much for your word which shows us what we really are and doesn't gloss over our sins and yet shows us we are accepted in spite of the fact that we sin. Father, we know that David is going to end up a man after your own heart, we know he has great moments of intimacy with you as the Psalms bring out, and he also have great moments of lack of fellowship with you, but, Father, we thank you most of all that that is not your fault, but it is David's and our fault, that you are always willing to be reconciled, I shouldn't say that, you are always willing to reconcile us to yourself, even when we sin willfully and against light and do dumb things you will bless the house of Obed-edom the Gittite so that we might know what you want fellowship with us, restoration, so, Father, help us not to be blind to you, not to lay trips on you because of our own ego, not to consider you to be like us, inject our personalities into your infinite being. Father, help us to really see you are you are, love, infinite love, one who wants to reconcile the world unto himself and not charging any sin against us. Help us not to charge others sin against them. Thank you, Father, in Jesus' name.

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## Chapter Twenty-four

### David and a House for the Ark

#### II Samuel 7:1-7

In this chapter we find the beginning of what we call the "New Covenant." The passage in II Corinthians 3:2-6 is the classic passage on the New Covenant. This covenant is not some magic term we dreamed up at PBC. David

was living it 3,000 years ago. We have some kind of a strange idea that God wants us to do our best, to strive mightily and work like the dickens at being a Christian. Somehow we feel being sincere, zealous, dedicated, giving our uttermost for the highest pleases God. Scripture clearly teaches us exactly the opposite. It teaches that the flesh is incurably evil and that it can never please God, even when it is sincere, zealous, dedicated and giving its uttermost for the highest. Therefore germane to being pleasing to God must be God's life lived out in our humanity and through us. We are made in the image and likeness of God and not in the image and likeness of "Super Bob." I am not to do my best. It is not good enough. It will never be good enough. The flesh cannot please God; not won't, can't. I was made in the image and likeness of God that God might live his life in and through my humanity, my emotions, my intellect, my will, and my body so that God's image might be made manifest to a world that cannot see the invisible and God's life be demonstrated to a humanity that cannot see the invisible God. Everything coming from God and nothing coming from me should be the description of a Christian's life. Now that doesn't mean Christians are to end up as blobs who sit back and say, "Zap me, Lord." It does mean that we are to step out and do the normal, natural obvious thing that is right in front of us just quietly thanking the Lord that his indwelling life is living through our body, soul and spirit, our mind, emotions, intellect and will while by faith we rely on another's strength. That constitutes the New Covenant. The New Covenant is as old as man. It started in the Garden of Eden. That is exactly what Adam and Eve did before the fall. They did whatever was normal, natural and obvious in front of them relying on the indwelling life of God as their power source.

So we go back 3,000 years, now, and see that David had exactly the same theology on the New Covenant that we have today, that Paul has in II Corinthians. Very obviously David lived in the flesh at times, and very obviously he lived in the power of the Spirit at times. This passage is one that reveals David living in the power of the Spirit.

This chapter also contains the Davidic Covenant. God made covenants with the people. He made one with Abraham which is spelled out very clearly in Genesis. He promised Abraham a seed that would bless all the earth with all spiritual blessings. Jesus Christ is the answer to that, of course. He also promised Abraham's physical descendents a land which ran from Egypt all the way up to the Euphrates, ostensibly most of the eastern seaboard of the Mediterranean, that they would possess forever. This is the Promised Land the Jews are looking for. Now God makes a covenant with David which involves not only the physical children of Abraham, the Israelites, but also the spiritual children of Abraham. It has a twofold meaning. Interwoven in this covenant is both the picture of David's dynasty which he established on earth and also the picture of the eternal reign of the Son of David, Jesus Christ.

So let's take a look, now, at II Samuel 7: 1-7. It begins with David's desire to build a house for God. This is typical of humanity. We are what I call "Pendulum Petes." We seem to swing from side to side and have great difficulty kind of getting in the center. In the last chapter, the ark of God, turned out to be a vessel you didn't mess with. Now the ark of God is not God. It is not even God's dwelling place. It is the place where God meets man. In fact the "tent of meeting," which originally contained the ark, was called the tent of meeting because that is where God met man. God didn't dwell in that tent. God is everywhere. He is both transcendent and imminent. He is above and beyond the universe, yet he is directly involved within his universe. A little box, 4x2x2, even though it is gold and is made to his exact specifications, is not God's dwelling place. It is God's point of meeting. Now it is very easy to transfer a place where God meets his people to a place where God lives. We call these sacred places, and we tend to invest them with the attributes that belong to the Creator. As we have seen, this ark has been a dangerous thing, and consequently David was investing it with more than it really was, the meeting place of God with his people. So you see the necessity of the 2nd Commandment. The 1st is "Thou shall not have any Gods before me," and the 2nd is "Thou shall not make any graven image." We have an insatiable desire to see God, to see him in some way. It is hard to walk by faith. It is hard to talk to the air. And yet that is exactly what God requires. Somewhere along the line, if you want to become a Christian, you have to talk to the air. And that air, the person who lives in that air, when he comes into your life, becomes your Lord and your God and thereby your Savior. Thereafter you have to talk to that air as if you were carrying on a conversation with a person because there really is a person there. You need to obey what that air tells you through the Word or through circumstances or through the inner witness of the Spirit of God, but your conversation, your whole walk down here, your whole sojourn as a Christian, a pilgrim, is talking to an unseen person. That's kind of scary. It is other worldly. It is not very solid. So we have a desperate need to somehow put our God in a box that we can see. We do it with religious

articles, crucifixes, icons, relics, locations. People go to a certain place to get cured of all diseases. This type of thing. Why? There is something special there about God. He dwells there in a way he doesn't dwell any place else. We'll travel thousands of miles to go to a physical location to meet a God who is transcendent over the whole universe. Something is wrong! Or we erect big images on the top of our altars. We say we don't pray to them, but we sure do. We don't pray looking the other way. We always look there. Why? Because we have invested that image with some of the attributes of God. The tragedy is, of course, we have designed these images ourselves. We have molded them or chiselled them out ourselves. So we invest the images with the attributes we think God ought to have, what he ought to look like. This is a little bit of what David has slipped into here.

II Samuel 7:1-3:

**Now it came about when the king lived in his house,** [This, of course, is a great big beautiful cedar palace made by Hiram, king of Tyre.] **and the Lord had given him rest on every side from all his enemies,** [so things looked very good] **that the king said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar,** [typical palace of an oriental king] **but the ark of God dwells within tent curtains."** [It is still in that old skin tent ] **And Nathan said to the king, " Go, do all that is in your mind, for the Lord is with you."**

David, while living in a gorgeous palace built for him by a foreign king using skilled artisans, observed the ark sitting in a tent, just a skin tent. He began to think something was not quite right, "There is God in a skin tent while I'm in a palace," and the tent, although designed to be beautiful on the inside, was very ordinary on the outside. There is only one problem here. God was the one who specified the design of that tent. God told Moses, "This is exactly how I want you to build this thing. I want you to follow the directions exactly. I am giving you a beautiful picture here, a picture of reality. It is a symbol of the reality behind it. Therefore I want this to be a tent, and I want a tent that is ordinary on the outside but gorgeous on the inside." David typically did not check the Scriptures. He did call Nathan the Prophet however. To Nathan the prophet the idea seemed great. What could be more religious than for someone who is living in a gorgeous palace to want to build another gorgeous palace for his God? What problem do you see here? If you build another gorgeous palace for your God, you are equating your God with another you. You have reduced him to the level of living in a gorgeous palace as if that would please him. But it did seem right. Nathan, a prophet of God, said, "Go do all that is in your heart." He shot from the hip. This is the last time he ever does that, by the way. So, David departs with the idea of building a house for God. Now the motivation is not wrong from God's viewpoint. God is not a capricious God who demands you toe the mark and have no feelings. In I Chronicles 22 God inferred that he appreciated David's desire, but the trip was wrong.

So God doesn't leave David in error very long.

II Samuel 7:4:

**But it came about in the same night** [Yahweh corrects immediately] **that the word of the Lord came to Nathan saying,** [He doesn't come to David, now. Nathan is the prophet of God. Prophets are the outspokeners of God and Nathan should have known better. He makes Nathan go back and correct David and he is going to correct Nathan] **"God and say to My servant David, 'Thus says the Lord, "Are you the one who should build Me a house to dwell in?"** [By the way, the construction here indicates a "No" answer is expected] **For I have not dwelt in a house since the day I brought up the sons of Israel from Egypt, even to this day; but I have been moving about in a tent, even in a tabernacle. Wherever I have gone with all the sons of Israel, did I speak a word with one of the tribes of Israel, which I commanded to shepherd My people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?'**

God tells Nathan to go back and tell David there are some things wrong with what he wants to do. First one we don't pick up here, but it is implied in verse 5, "Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in?" And it expects a "No" answer. He tells David over in both I Chronicles 22 and 28 "Because you are a man of blood and a man of war, you cannot build my temple" You have too much blood on your hands. In fact he says, "You shed much blood." Most of David's life has been spilling other people's blood. He is a skilled spiller of blood, and that is not the kind of picture God wants from a king who is going to build his house, a place of rest. It's OK to bring my

people into the land of rest, but you are not a man of rest. During all of David's reign as a king he never really has a time of rest. Verse 1 above says, "God had given him rest from all his enemies." Well about two chapters down the road he winds up getting in trouble with Bathsheba and is told the sword will never depart from his house. Next chapter Amnon his #1 son, the heir apparent, rapes Tamar the sister of Absalom (David's #3 son) and Absalom kills him. Following that, #2 son Chileab apparently dies. Then #3 son Absalom chases his father out of town and gets killed in the rebellion. Finally #4 son, Adonijah tries to grab the reigns from Solomon and gets his head chopped off. There is one continual problem of unrest in the kingdom of David. So God indicates to David he is not the kind of man to build a temple for a God of rest. Of course you remember David, being the runt of the litter, had to fight for everything all of his life. He is, in a sense, a self-made man, by divine appointment it is true. But God doesn't want that kind of a person to build him a house. He wants a person that lives out of rest.

Then he says here in verse 6, "For I have not dwelt in a house since the day I brought up the sons of Israel from Egypt, even to this day; but I have been moving about in a tent, even in a tabernacle." God wanted them to live out of rest. So, he deliberately designed a tent, a temporary dwelling, to be used by the Jews as a symbol that they had not yet come into the place where God wanted them to be. During David's realm he did finally extend Israel's borders from Egypt to the Euphrates, but his own household was in constant rebellion, so there was no rest in the time of David. Now God does give David the exact plans for the temple and does allow him to accumulate the material for it, but Solomon, which means "peaceable," not David will actually build the temple. David's lifestyle is not at all what God wants pictured for the children of God. They are to live out of rest.

God does want this temple built, but he says it will be a place for my Name [II Samuel 7:13], a place where my name will be magnified, a symbolic place which says, "This is where God will meet with man." So God says it is a temple for my Name not for Me, for all that I stand for, yes, but not for my person. God wants to get them back to the fundamentals, the tent of the meeting, a place where man can meet God. Back in those days God used object lessons for theological infants. So God had an actual place of meeting, but that was not God's dwelling place. That was where God met man. God was far bigger than that, and so God calls it a place for his Name. God did want a temple built some day, something firm and established so that the people would know they were now in the place where God wanted them to be. God never wanted to give them the idea that the life they were leading, which was a life of constant disturbance and upheaval, constant conflict, within their own families even, was what he promised in the land of rest. Although Canaan is a picture of rest, it is not a picture of heaven. In Canaan, we are told, we are to have constant battle. We are to take the land by force. God has given it to us, but we are to go out there and take it by force using the strength of God. So Canaan cannot be a picture of heaven. But it is a picture of victory here.

You ask me, "When Christians are referred to as temples of God, is that, in a sense, the same thing?"

It signifies the meeting place of God with man. I may be the temple of the living God but obviously God is far bigger than me. Also I am not the only temple of the living God. Every believer is the temple of God, the place where the believer and God meet. God is really there, but God is also in the universe, in outer space, beyond outer space. So I don't contain God. That is the concept. But I do meet God right here in the temple. We come here to a church to have fellowship with one another where the saints, the temples of God, can get together and worship in a building, but this is not a temple. This is not a sanctuary. This is a building with a mortgage on it. Scripture is trying to get away from the idea that God is in a box, that God is in this place here or that place over there. He is not in this church anymore than he is in any other church where the truth is taught. He is even in churches where the truth is not taught. So there are times when, depending on what is being taught, there is an aroma of life unto life or death unto death. The problem here is God doesn't want a permanent building until there is a land of rest. David will never give him that. The sword will never depart from David's house throughout his whole life according to God. So there will never be rest for David, but there will be rest for his son Solomon whose name is peaceful. God's literal name for him is Jedidiah "Beloved of Yahweh." God named both Solomon and Jedidiah. God says, "Peaceful will build my house, and he will be beloved of me, but David you can't do it."

This is a picture for us. God wants us to live out of rest. In Hebrews 4 it talks about the coming of the sabbath rest of God. Hebrews 4 argues that God did not bring in the Sabbath rest of God by Moses or by Joshua. Even back

in Jeremiah these is talk about a rest for your soul and rest for the land. Hebrews 4-9-10 kind of sums it all up.

Hebrews 4:9-10:

**There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.**

What Hebrews is saying is whoever enters the rest of God acts exactly as God did. God created in six days and on the seventh day, he sat back, looked at his creation and said, "It is very good." He was satisfied with his work. Now he kept right on running the universe the seventh day, but the creative work of God was over, and he was satisfied with what he had done. He sat back and said, "I have created everything I am ever going to create. I am satisfied that it is perfect and complete and nothing needs to be added to it or subtracted from it. I am satisfied with what I have done."

Now, the question for every Christian is, "Are you satisfied with what God has done?" Can you rest in the midst of a strenuous life and say, "I know that God is sufficient, that he has done everything necessary for me to have victory? I believe that the finished work of Christ is totally adequate for whatever I need in whatever circumstance God puts me. In the midst of turmoil, fighting, striving, people coming apart at the seams, I can rest." The day I reach that point I enter into the Sabbath rest of God, Sabbatismos, a special Greek word used in the New Testament only here in Hebrews 4:9 and pointing the reader back to the 7th day when God rested mentioned in verse 4. I enjoy this rest by trusting in Christ's work as God rested from his work on the seventh day. That is the secret to Authentic Christianity.

You say to me you don't understand the rationale here. God allows the temple to be built by Solomon instead of David when David is called a "man after God's own heart" and Solomon falls into idolatry and later on God does raise up enemies against Solomon so he was certainly not a perfect type of rest.

That is right and man never will be a perfect picture of God. David was a man after God's own heart by God's own statement. However we have seen him as a man of vindictiveness and passion. He raped a woman. He wanted to kill off a whole family of males because someone insulted him. None of the symbols, and that's the point, will every be satisfactory. The ark is not a satisfactory symbol of God. The temple was not a satisfactory symbol of God. Solomon was not a satisfactory symbol of God The nation is split asunder in the next generation after him. He became a tyrant. Even though he is a symbol, he is not an entirely perfect symbol.

You are still asking me questions about the ark. Remember in the last chapter when David went to move the ark but didn't consult God's word and Uzzah died. He was so scared of the "symbol" that he dropped it on Obed-edom. Then God blessed the house of Obed-edom. So David finally checked the Scriptures and decided he was going to move the ark the right way this time. Remember how after six paces they sacrificed and, since nobody died, they knew they were doing it right. So they now go back to the word of God and find out how to deal with God. God wants them to do that because there is tremendous symbolic meaning there. Now symbols never take the place of reality, but they teach. We call them "object lessons" when teaching children. God is trying to teach these spiritual [theological] infants, who have not yet seen Jesus as we have, the deep truths of life. He is doing it with object lessons, theological truths of the New Testament. One of them is that God is a holy god, and you approach him by his route which according to the 14th chapter of John is Jesus Christ. "I am the way, the truth and the life and no one comes to the Father but by me."

God is telling those Jews back there, there is only one way to approach me, and don't kid yourselves, you will die if you try it any other way. When they came the wrong way, he killed them. God wants to demonstrate that. [And if you approach God apart from Jesus Christ in this day and age, you shall die. I will guarantee it. I will put it in writing.] Now the people that were killed didn't necessarily go to hell, but they did lose their physical life. Achan picked that wedge of gold out of Jericho and was destroyed by God. He made a full confession before he was slain. When you get to heaven you are going to see Achan up there. But God is trying to make one single point, "There is no other way to approach me except the way I lay down. I set the rules in this universe. It is my universe. I have some very strict rules in my universe and you disobey them at your peril." The most critical of all



of them is how we approach God. Our eternal destiny hangs on that. God will not accept anything else than exactly the way he lays down. Jesus Christ is Lord and God in my life and he thereby becomes my Savior. The Lord himself said that. And just as surely as those men died doing the wrong thing, we will die if we don't approach through Jesus Christ. So we are not playing games here. God is not being capricious or vicious; he is trying to shock people, "Hey, pay attention. You do not negotiate these terms." The shock factor was having its effect on his people, but he also wanted them to understand that he still loved them for he blessed the house of Obed-edom. "How you are approaching me is the problem." It is the same with our time down here.

Let's take a closer look now at II Samuel 7:7.

**Wherever I have gone with all the sons of Israel, did I speak a word with one of the tribes of Israel which I commanded to shepherd My people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?"**

God says, "Did I ever ask anybody to do this?" He wants to say, "I am the initiator, you are the responder. You do not initiate things with me. I do that." My Bible says that I am the bride of Christ, not the husband of Christ. That is what God is trying to bring out here. God wants to do all the initiating in every single instance and I am only to respond. This is very critical in the New Covenant. We have a, and I use the word theologically, damnable attitude toward God. It is a hellish attitude toward God. It is deadly. We see God as very busy. He has a huge universe out there. He has 4 billion people on our particular universe alone. He is judging myriads of angels. He is very busy. So I will handle all the little things in life, the trivia, and I will give God all the traumas. Why bother God with the little stuff. I'll initiate all the little things and let God handle the big ones. But you see, thanks to the grace of God, most of life is trivia not trauma. There are great periods when we don't have massive things in our lap. Now if I practice my little principle that sounds so religious and so right, as it did to Nathan, I don't get any practice for the traumas. The only practice I get for handling traumas in Christ is handling trivia through Christ. There is no way I can handle a trauma in Jesus Christ if I haven't been handling the trivia in Jesus Christ.

It takes practice to make perfect. We have talked about this before. Golf lessons, tennis lessons, whatever it is, you don't go to a pro, give him \$100 bucks and say, "Teach me golf." Say he gives you 25 points for a golf swing, and you say, "Fine, no problem. That's all I need." I go to the US Open the next week, and on the first tee with TV cameras rolling, 1,000,000 people watching, Jack Nicklaus as a playing partner, I step up to the ball and swing. I'll be lucky to hang on to the club never mind hit the ball. If I hit the ground I'll be doing well. No, you have to practice until it becomes habitual, a lifestyle. Traumas do not make appointments. Have you ever noticed that? I have yet to have a trauma come by and say, "Hey, Bob, tomorrow at ten o'clock I am going to show up and you are going to have one dickens of a time." No! Tomorrow at ten o'clock I am walking along doing my own thing and Pow! my wife backs into a sign and dents the fender. [I never do that.] How do I handle that? I'll never forget the true incident from one of our counseling sessions. Some woman got into a wreck. She called her husband from the hospital, and what do you think was the first thing he asked her? "What happened to the car?" Why did he ask her that? Because he hadn't been exercising the role of the husband for a long time. He had been doing his own thing which was self-centered, self-seeking, self-motivated, self-energized, selfish. And when the trauma hit, the first question over that telephone was, "What happened to the car?" She said, "Nothing, not too much, and by the way I'm not badly hurt either." That marriage has been on the rocks for a long time. He acted exactly the way he always acted. He had had no practice in trivia, so he had no practice in handling traumas.

God wants us to understand, "I am the initiator. I will initiate everything in your life. I want to help you get out of bed in the morning. I want to help you eat breakfast in the morning. I want to live my life through you, brush your teeth, comb your hair." Who does your wife see when you are shaving, you or Jesus Christ? Who do your grandkids see when they have a problem? How do you respond when Johnny comes over and, in the middle of your nice white livingroom carpet, knocks over a glass of iced tea? That's tannic acid in the middle of your room. Well, if Christ is in your life in all the little things, you just give it to Christ. God doesn't want help. He doesn't want an initiator. He wants responders in everything.

And lastly it doesn't say here but in I Chronicles it does; God has not yet given David rest. David thought he had rest, but there is a whole unrest within his own family. David has what I call a "fortress mentality." The Jebusites

had it. Remember they sat in that fortress on Mt. Zion for four hundred years and repelled the Jews. They felt totally secure when David came. They had always been secure, so it was going to stay secure. But David took it. Now David has the fortress, and he has enlarged it and made it even stronger. Now he sits in his fortress and he feels secure. He is at rest everywhere. He has conquered most of the people around him, and he has secured his fortress. The only problem is that the danger is inside his fortress. It is his sons. But as long as the walls are thick and high, he feels secure. He has a "fortress mentality." In WWII the French had the Maginot Line. It was a tremendous fortress. Only trouble was it quit too soon. No one wanted to insult the Belgians, so they did not build the fortresses along the Belgium border, just across the German border. So Germany just went around through Belgium and all those gorgeous concrete fortresses were worthless. We get a "fortress mentality." We get a security in things the way they are, and we trust in those things instead of trusting in God. I have had a little experience with that trauma. I worked for an 8 billion dollar company that had an annuity plan and a stock plan. That company is going to last a long time. They are a very paternal company. They pay well, and they have excellent benefits. They desire to keep you there. In order to become a pastor of this screwy church, I had to walk away from all that stuff. After 25 years of my fortress being a company with 8 billion dollars behind them, I am now stuck with the Lord God Almighty. The only security I have is Jesus Christ the Holy One of God. He is my annuity plan. He is my stock plan. Man, I've got real problems. Do you see how dumb that thinking is? It's that "fortress mentality," trusting in those things around you that look so solid. This is the beautiful picture that God paints. He lays out the problem that David is struggling with and then he presents the solution. Starting with verse 8 to the end of this chapter, we have the beautiful Davidic covenant. God gives this covenant without price, in grace, to the kind of a fellow we have just been describing. There is hope for us.

Father, we thank you so much because there really is hope for us that you see us exactly as we are, little children having wonderful desires at time to please you and yet pouring iced tea all over the middle of the rug. Father, it is just amazing what you put up with and yet you do it because we call you, Father. We are your children. We know that. You/We know from all eternity. You expect nothing more from us than childish actions, but you want us to grow up. You want us to let the adult Jesus Christ become our life in every area of our being, not in the trivia only, but in the trauma, and not in the trauma only, but in the trivia, every area. You are to be the initiator, the power source, the life source for every facet of our being. Father, help us to remember that we truly are the bride of Christ, the responder and not the husband of Christ the initiator. Teach us to rest in his finished work, trusting his power, his indwelling resurrection life to be all that we need to be in whatever circumstances you allow into our lives. We thank you in Jesus' name. Amen.

**Editor's Note:** Bob Roe's lesson on the last part of chapter 7, the Davidic Covenant, if not available. I summarize those verses here for continuity. [hd]

### Summary of II Samuel 7:8-29

The Lord tells Nathan the prophet to remind David that He, the Lord, picked David, a shepherd boy, to be ruler over His people Israel. Also that He has been with David wherever he has gone and has cut off all his enemies from before him. He promises David He will make him a great name on the earth and that He will appoint a place where His people Israel may live and not be disturbed. He also promises David He will raise up a descendant from the House of David whose kingdom and throne shall be established forever [This is known as the Davidic Covenant] David then prays a humble prayer of thanks to the Lord God for the future he has promised David and his house.

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## Chapter Twenty-five

### David and Mephibosheth

## II Samuel 8, 9,10

I know you all want to get to chapters 11 and 12, David and Bathsheba, but, theologically, David and Bathsheba doesn't start there. It starts here. How did David get so hardened that he could commit adultery with the wife of Uriah the Hittite, one of his most trusted friends, one of the top 30 out of 600,000 soldiers, a man who demonstrated his loyalty by sacrificing his life for his king, then try to hide his sin by murdering Uriah? On top of that, for at least a year he covered up the crime, went through the process of being king, led in the worship of Jehovah and supposedly led his people in righteousness and truth. It was probably at least a year because Bathsheba had to conceive a baby, bear that baby, and it had to become beloved of David, a man of war. So the child must have gotten big enough to be responsive to David, and you know most men don't go into rapture over things about so long that roll their eyes and wet their pants, but, when those eyes begin to focus on you, the heart is captured. So David's child, whom God took home as a disciplinary action, must have been big enough to capture David's heart. All this time David was a "hard" person. Now, how did he get that hard? The secrets are hidden in chapters 8, 9 and 10, in the victories of David. You are going to see a side of David that is not very nice. Failure in a Christian's life, as a famous theologian David Roper once said, is never a blow out; it is always a slow leak. It starts with some little thing you do not deal with when God puts your finger on it. Instead you rationalize it and rationalize it and rationalize it. Then all of a sudden that thing has you. You don't have it, it has you. Paul was terribly afraid of this himself. In I Corinthians 9, he made an interesting statement. The great apostle had a terrible fear of this very thing.

I Corinthians 9:24:

**Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things.** [They are put under 8 months of solid training, very strict diet, very strict regime, if you break one of the rules of that training, you are disqualified from the race. You don't even start.] **They then do it to receive a perishable wreath,** [either olive branches, or parsley or oak leaves, the "Stephanos" the crown of victory.] **but we an imperishable.** [crown] **Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I buffet my body** [the word literally is "bruise." The boxing gloves in those days were iron knuckles and leather thongs that when you hit a fellow you tore his face to ribbons. That is the word he uses here. He says, I rip my face to ribbons with a boxing glove] **and make it my slave,** [not me its slave] **lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.**

I can go out and have a wonderful ministry, preaching to people, seeing people come to know the Lord, and yet I myself, even while being used of the Lord, can go right down the tube and be disqualified. In Philippians, starting with verse 12, Paul, writing to the Philippian church while a prisoner in Rome, says an interesting thing.

Philippians 1:12ff:

**Now I want you to know, brethren,** [Philippians] **that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel, so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else,** [He is a prisoner of Nero in Rome under the praetorian guard, which was the personal body guard of Caesar. So he is chained to a Roman soldier, and he cannot get out and evangelize] **and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment,** [Paul can't do it, so they've got to do it. As a result, they step out with fear and trembling and do it] **have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear. Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will; the latter** [the good will ones] **do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; the former** [the envy and strife ones] **proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment.** [Paul is locked up and can't do it, so they go out and do a tremendous job of evangelizing to stick it to Paul, but the message is correct. The methodology is wrong, but the message is correct] **What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice.**

God can use a man who has terrible things in his life to reach people for Christ. He used Balaam the great prophet

in Numbers to prophesy for Israel when Balaam wanted to take money from the king of Moab to curse Israel. Instead God made him prophesy blessings for Israel, which all came true by the way. In John 11 Caiaphas prophesied for God without realizing it. Jesus caused quite a stir by raising Lazarus from the dead just 2 miles out of Jerusalem. Many people came to believe in him. The chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council and said, "If we let this man (Jesus) go on like this the Romans will come and take not only our place but also our nation." Caiaphas a Sadducee [who hated the Pharisees] said, "You know nothing at all. Don't you know it is expedient that one man should die for the people and that the whole nation should not perish." In his hatred and his enmity and his sarcasm and his back biting and his fighting with the Pharisees, he was used of God as a prophet. Usefulness, apparent fruitfulness, is not necessarily a sign of spirituality. God used Balaam's ass, a donkey, to rebuke the prophet Balaam.

As I have said before. I have a long nose, big ears and a stubborn will. God can even use an Irish ass. That does not in any way give me gold stars in heaven though it may bring people to Christ. I think I have mentioned that my first convert was somebody I was so angry with that I scared the living daylights out of her. I was a new Christian, and since my previous activities had been as "one of the boys," when I started to change, this little file clerk came waltzing up to me, "I'm a better Christian than you are, Naw, Naw, Naw." I got so mad at her I wanted to punch her out. Instead I told her, "You know there is only one problem. You say you are a better Christian than I am, but I have been born again and you haven't. I have the Spirit of God in me and you don't. If I die tonight, I will go to heaven. If you die tonight, you are going to hell." There was a real delicious taste in that. She went home that night and couldn't sleep. She was even afraid to go in her house. She got up first thing in the morning and went to her brother, a believer who had been praying for her for years. She was really distraught from the way I had slapped it to her. It was true, and she knew it. Her brother took her to his pastor. and she received the Lord at about 7 AM that morning. She came back to work a believer, a sister in Christ. That is the only salvation that came out of that whole darn thing. My first conversion was done in the flesh. I did it by hatred. I would have enjoyed seeing her go to hell I was that angry. In the long run, of course, no, but my anger at that moment was " go to hell." I was angry, and the Lord used it. There will be no brownie points in heaven for that one I can tell you. David and I really identify.

I was discussing in a pastor's seminar the other day about a very fine Bible teacher whose name you would all know if I mentioned it. He is an excellent Bible teacher, has a tremendous following, but he has a horrible root of bitterness. It is eating him alive. He is still teaching the word of God and people are being changed by it, while he is being eaten alive by a root of bitterness.

We will see in David that it is possible to be used of God while spiritually going down the tube.

When David became king of both Judah and Israel, his kingdom extended from the Brook of Egypt in the South to just opposite the city of Tyre in the north. On the east he held some territory east of the Jordan except for Ammon, Moab & Edom, and his territory extended to the Mediterranean on the west with the exception of the land of the Philistines.

When David finally established his kingdom, it reached from Egypt in the South to the Euphrates in the north, to the Mediterranean on the west and encompassed Moab, Edom and Ammon on the east. To accomplish this he had to take on the Philistines, the Moabites, the Edomites and the Syrians. Zobah and Hamath were David's chief rivals in the north. This was a very massive empire with two kings who were constantly at war with each other.

The Sidonians were already friends of David's. Remember Hiram king of Tyre built David's palace. He also gave presents and acknowledged his feudal relationship with David, so there is no fighting there.

Then Geshur, which was a principality on the east of the Jordan adjoining the north border of Hebrew territory, was ruled over by Talmi father of David's wife so, through marriage, David already had friends there.



Now I have searched and I cannot find where David had any rights to Edom, Moab or Ammon. In Deuteronomy, chapter 2, Moses laid out some



rules of the road. It was the law of God reiterated by Moses as he was about to depart and be with the Lord. As a final reminder to the Jewish nation before they crossed the Jordan River and entered the Land, he laid out the Second Law. This was to be what they were to obey. As you remember, Deuteronomy 17 admonished the king not to multiply horses to himself.

Deuteronomy 2:2

**And the Lord spoke to me saying,** [This was Moses speaking to the people of Israel] **"You have circled this mountain long enough. Now turn north,** [They has been running around down by Kadeshbarnea.] **and command the people saying, 'You will pass through the territory of your brothers the sons of Esau [Edom and Esau are the same] who live in Seir; and they will be afraid of you. So be very careful; do not provoke them, for I will not give you any of their land, even as little as a footstep because I have given Mount Seir to Esau as a possession.**

Esau and Edom were the same. The Jews were told they would never get even a footstep of Edom, and they were not even to attempt to provoke them into war. Edom belonged to Esau because Esau was the brother of Jacob who was the head of the 12 tribes of Israel. There was a family relationship.

Deuteronomy 2:9:

**Then the Lord said to me, "Do not harass Moab, nor provoke them to war, for I will not give you any of their land as a possession, because I have given Ar to the sons of Lot as a possession.**

Deuteronomy 2:17:

**...that the Lord spoke to me, saying, "You shall cross over Ar, the border of Moab, today. And when you come opposite the sons of Ammon, do not harass them nor provoke them, for I will not give you any of the land of the sons of Ammon as a possession, because I have given it to the sons of Lot as a possession.**

Lot, a righteous man according to II Peter 2, was the nephew of Abraham. He had two sons by incestuous relations with his daughters. One was Ben-ammi, father of the children of Ammon. and the other one was Moab. To the son of Lot, a righteous man related to God by the new birth and to Abraham by physical birth. God gave

Moab and Ammon and the Israelites were to have no part of their land.

I have never been able to track down anywhere in the Scriptures a time when God revoked those words. So the last order to Israel before they went into the land to possess it was they could not have Edom, Moab or Ammon. Now, Edom, Moab and Ammon were enemies of Israel much of the time so I don't quite know whether David was sinning or not when he took over these nations.

**Class question:** "How about Genesis 15 where God says to Abraham, "From the river of Egypt to the Euphrates?"

**Bob:** That is true, he did. But remember the Promised Land was west of the Jordan River. They were to cross over the Jordan from Moab. Moab, Edom and Ammon were on the east side of the Jordan what we call Transjordan.

Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh had great flocks and herds and, because of the gorgeous pasture land on the east side of the Jordan, requested their share on that side. Moses said, "O.K. you can have your share over there providing you cross over the Jordan and help fight for the side which God has given us." They did, but by remaining on the east of Jordan, they took second best. Over there they were surrounded by paganism and were the first to fall into idolatry. Ammon worshipped Molech in the form of a huge metal idol. They would sacrifice their babies on his outstretched red hot hands. Moab worshipped the God of sex Baal.

We are talking here, though, about the last orders God gave to Israel regarding Moab, Edom and Ammon; the last orders that I can find. There may be an override hidden somewhere in Scripture so I am not saying this is the word of God. I am saying I cannot find a change in these orders. To me it is very important. Ammon, Moab and Edom were all related to David which is kind of critical too.

Now, beginning with II Samuel 8, let's watch God give David the kingdom and watch how David acts. I am not going to read all of the passage; I just want to go through rather quickly and generalize for you.

II Samuel 8:1:

**Now after this it came about that David defeated the Philistines and subdued them; and David took control of the chief city [That is Gath] from the hand of the Philistines.**

The first thing David did was strike the enemies of God, the Philistines. He took their chief city and brought them into subjugation thus securing his coastal flank. He also gained control of the Via Maris, one of the two international trade routes between the Fertile Crescent and Egypt, which ran down the west side of Palestine. Incidentally before he was through, he also controlled the King's Highway, the other international trade route which ran through Damascus down the eastern side of the Jordan to the Gulf of Elath which was the right hand finger of the Red Sea.

II Samuel 8:2:

**And he defeated Moab, [Which as far as we know was never given it to him] and measured them with the line making them lie down on the ground; and he measured two lines to put to death and one full line to keep alive. And the Moabites became servants to David, bringing tribute.**

In order to secure his eastern flank also, he attacked the Moabite nation whose land he had not been given. After he conquered them, he laid the people, at least the warriors, in three lines and butchered the people in two of the lines. He left the third line alive to pay tribute. God allowed him to take the land, but God certainly didn't advocate the little butcher job.

II Samuel 8:3:

**Then David defeated Hadadezer, the son of Rehob king of Zobah, as he went to restore his rule at the River.**

With his coastal flank and his inland flank secured and the Ammonites friendly to him [Apparently there was a family migration from the Ammonites into Judah, and David's mother apparently married Nahash an Ammonite] David headed directly north to face up to Zobah, the great kingdom facing him up there, and God delivered them into David's hands.

II Samuel 8:4:

**And David captured from him 1,700 horsemen and 20,000 foot soldiers, and David hamstringed the chariot horses, but reserved enough of them for 100 chariots.**

He needed 2 horses per chariot plus relief. Remember one of the things God said the kings of Israel could not do? Multiply horses! Chariots were the Sherman tanks of that day, and God always wanted the Jews to be at the disadvantage of the enemy so that God would get the victory. God would get the glory. Intriguing enough David says in the 20th Psalm, which he writes about this time:

Psalm 20:7:

**Some boast in chariots, and some in horses; but we will boast in the name of the Lord, our God.**

Except for my hundred chariots just in case You don't show up. He violated the word of God again by keeping those chariots, just in case. A little bit of flesh, just in case.

When the Syrians of Damascus came to help, he beat them and pretty soon had all of Zobah and Syrian under his power. The little king of Geshur was already under his domain.

Now, it is a wonderful thing, he took all of the spoils [verse 7 through verse 12] from all these kings over to Jerusalem and dedicated them to the Lord, the gold, the silver and the bronze; the things they would need to build that temple. So he had moments of really walking with the Lord and thankfulness in the Lord and then he had those villainous moments of viciousness. His lack of trust and his brutality are unbelievable.

**Class comment:** Isn't that a lot like today. People sometimes go along doing what they want and then on Sunday give offerings to the Lord to kind of placate Him?

**Bob:** Well, I'm not sure David was doing that here. I think David was really giving gifts to the Lord in a great spirit of thanks. David was a pendulum. He went all this way either killing people like nothing you ever saw before, or he was out there worshipping the Lord like nothing you ever saw. He was the sweet Psalmist of Israel. I don't believe he was trying to buy off his God here. His prayer in the previous chapter was one of total grace, "Who am I, Lord, that you should do this thing for me. What is my lineage that you do it for me. You are doing this out of your purpose and your greatness, and, because you are the kind of God that you are, I am encouraged to pray this prayer. Confirm your covenant with me and bless me with all these blessing because of You." In chapter 7 his prior experience was of the total grace of God, so I think these are really thank offerings.

But what happens when you allow the flesh to live in your life? What happens to your spiritual acumen, your spiritual insight, your spiritual vision? You get blinded. A veil beings to come over your face. You begin to be blind to things as they really are. So here David lovingly and graciously, in a sense of rejoicing, brings to God the things of offering for his temple, things that he took by some very vicious methodology, and according to verse 12, things that he got from Syria, Moab and the sons of Ammon. Sadly he doesn't see the conflict. When Saul refused to get off the throne when God said, "No," and began to focus on killing God's anointed successor, these very nations sprang up in power. Again what does that say about the flesh and your victories over it? What happens when you have victories over the things of the flesh and then walk away and get your eyes off Jesus



Christ? You fall right on your face. Your victories over the flesh last just as long as you are walking with Jesus Christ and no longer. Don't ever kid yourself that, once having conquered the habitual thing that has gripped your soul, you can walk around in your own strength and continue to have victory over it. No you won't! It will grow like a cancer that wasn't completely eradicated and before long you will not only be back in the same condition but you will be worse off. Christ told the man at the Pool of Bethesda, "Go and sin no more lest a worse thing befall you." You allow the habits of the flesh to come back by taking your eyes off Jesus, and they will come back with a vengeance; and they did here.

Zobah is no mean critter and the tragedy is that this had all been done before, but when Saul departed from Jesus Christ, it all grew back up again. Now all this slaughter, all this killing, had to go on again.

Apparently while David was up north, Edom attacked in the Valley of Salt, which is the bottom of the Dead Sea, but out of their territory.

II Samuel 8:13:

**So David made a name for himself when he returned from killing 18,000 Arameans in the Valley of Salt. And he put garrisons in Edom. In all Edom he put garrisons, and all the Edomites became servants to David. And the Lord helped David wherever he went.**

There is that phrase again, "And the Lord helped David wherever he went." God used that phrase in verse 6 and now again in verse 14. Why do you think God used that phrase the second time? When the Hebrew wants to emphasize something it is always repeated. What may be beginning to slip into David's mind concerning his ability as a general, a ruler, a conqueror and a warrior as he begins to knock off these kingdoms? What generally happens when we have tremendous victory? Yeah! We begin to think, "Gee, the Lord is kind of lucky that I am on his side, isn't he?" When God begins to really use you, pray like the dickens and get your friends to pray, because the first thing that happens is we slip into this old self-assurance routine, "Hey, I am really useable. I am really a vessel. I am really something." God says, "No, you're not. I am really something. I can take an ass and make it prophesy. I can take an ass and rebuke my prophet with him. I can make sons of Abraham out of stones. I am something."

God said Edom was a much closer relative [than Moab or Ammon] for he and Jacob were brothers, twin brothers. Do you know what David did when he conquered Edom? I Kings 11 tells us. He spent 6 months trying to kill off all the males of Edom. Even if you figure just adult males, that is a monstrous thing to do when it flies in the face of the word of God according to Deuteronomy 23, but David deliberately defied God and tried to eliminate Edom. [God did let Hadad the king and his family escape to Egypt. They came back later and were a thorn in the side of Solomon.] So you see this hardening beginning to happen to David.

II Samuel 8:15:

**So David reigned over all Israel; and David administered justice and righteousness for all his people. And Joab the son of Zeruiah was over the army, and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder [That is the chief aide, executive secretary of David] And Zadok the son of Ahitub [was the priest at one location] and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar [was the priest at the other location. He has two rival lines of priests, one of which gets involved in the rebellion and is later on banished] were priests, and Seraiah was secretary. [that is the Secretary of State in their terminology] And Benaiah was son of Jehoiada was [king] over the Cherethites and the Pelethites; [Those were the personal bodyguards of David. They were Philistines]. and David's sons were chief ministers.**

Well, that looks pretty good on the surface. There is only one problem. What kind of a person was Joab the man David put in charge of all his army? Joab was David's nephew through his sister Zeruiah. He killed Abner, a general of Israel for two reasons. #1 to get even because Abner had killed his bother Asahel in battle, and #2 to eliminate a rival who might become the general of all Israel. It was Abner, remember, who delivered all of Israel, the northern part, into the hand of David who at the time was king of only Judah. In Hebron, which was a city of



refuge where you were not allowed to touch anybody even if you had the right of revenge, Joab murdered Abner. He would later on murder Uriah the Hittite for David and after that, to maintain his position, would murder Amasa, a nephew of David's from his other sister and also a general in Judah. Joab may have been brilliant. but he was a ruthless and totally immoral general. David was afraid of him. We don't know much about the chap who was the secretary, but we have Zadok and Ahimelech who were rival priests in two different locations. One of them later turned traitor. Then we have David's sons. He made his own sons chief ministers. Well #1 son, Ammon, we will find out, raped his half-sister, Tamar and in turn was murdered by his half-brother Absalom. #2 son Absalom chased daddy out of town, tried to take over the kingdom and wanted to kill daddy. He got killed in the process. #3 son Chileab apparently died some how. We don't know why or what. #4 son Adonijah tried to usurp the throne from Solomon after God had given it to Solomon through David and got killed for his actions. This was the kind of administration David set up.

Do you see the problem? He could not put a righteous general in charge of his army because of his fear of Joab. He had two rival priestly lines, a situation he didn't even try to settle and eventually lost one of them to Adonijah who wanted to usurp his throne.

As the kid who was the runt of the litter, was denied everything, was ridiculed and at the bottom of the heap, he wanted his children to have everything he didn't have. So as I Kings 1:6 says, "And his father [David] had never crossed him at any time by asking, 'Why have you done so?'" He never even questioned the things his sons did. They grow up totally spoiled brats. So David puts together an administration, part of which is holy but part of it unfortunately is not. He doesn't seem to realize what he is doing.

Next we have Chapter 9, Mephibosheth. This looks like a great deal on the surface too. Mephibosheth was the son of Jonathan. You will recall when Saul was killed by the Philistines, three of his sons died with him and with Ishbosheth gone, that wiped out the chain of command. The next young man in line was Mephibosheth. But in fleeing from the Philistines, who had killed his grandfather, his father and his uncles, the nurse dropped him. He was crippled, lame in both feet, and he therefore could not reign. He could not lead his people into battle, so he was no threat to the throne. David came back after his victories and asked, "Is there anyone left of the house of Saul to whom I can show favor for Jonathan's sake?" They find a servant of Saul's named Ziba who says, "There is still a son of Jonathan who is crippled in both feet." He wants to make sure David doesn't do what most oriental kings do and that is eliminate all of the line of a fallen king.

So, David sends for Mephibosheth who arrives expecting to be killed, but David says, "I will restore to you all the lands of your father Saul and you shall eat at my table regularly and Ziba and his children shall be your servants to take care of your property." Then the last verse in chapter 9 is, "Now he was lame in both feet."

As I have mentioned before, the Hebrew always expresses something twice for emphasis. "He was lame in both feet" appears in verse 3 and again in verse 13. What do you think God is trying to tell us about this wonderful gift of "love" that David gave to Mephibosheth? How much did it cost David? Think about it. When Jonathan made his covenant with David he was the heir apparent to the throne. With his dad on the throne threatening to kill David, all Jonathan had to do, by his own father's statement, was let Saul kill David and his ascendancy was secure. Jonathan in essence gave the throne to David. Jonathan said, "I'll protect you. I'll find out when Saul wants to kill you, and I will warn you. You are going to be king, and I am going to #2." It cost Jonathan a throne to make that covenant with David. Now David is trying to keep his side of the covenant. How much will this cost David? First: What about the lands of Israel? Who were the lands given to and for how long? When the Jews came into the land and Joshua divided it, one portion went to each of the tribes and within the tribes one portion went to each of the families. It was theirs forever. You could not take someone else's land from them. What David was giving back to Mephibosheth wasn't really his to give.

Secondly: What did it cost David to bring Mephibosheth into the court, protect him and treat him like a son? He was lame in both feet, no threat to David. Then there was David's shabby treatment of him later on. When David was chased out of town by his son Absalom, Mephibosheth wanted to follow him. Ziba, his servant assigned to him by David, saddled Mephibosheth's donkeys and took off with them himself. When David inquired about

Mephibosheth, Ziba said, "Behold, he is staying in Jerusalem for he said, 'Today the house of Israel will restore the kingdom of my father to me.'" Whereupon David countered with "Behold, all that belongs to Mephibosheth is yours." He announced this in public. When he returned after winning the battle he questioned Mephibosheth who came to meet him, in mourning by the way. He hadn't shaved, washed, changed his clothes from the day David departed until he came home in peace. All that time he was living in the camp of the enemy. He was in public mourning for the fleeing king and was risking his life by publicly demonstrating it. David asked Mephibosheth, "Why didn't you follow me?" Mephibosheth answered, "My servant tricked me and lied to me and lied to you." Well, David had already shot off his mouth in front of his troops, so to save face he said, "Well, I'll tell you what, we'll give half the land to you and half the land to Ziba," a traitorous, treacherous servant.. With no commitment there is no love. David in fulfilling his portion of the covenant with Jonathan does not have any love involved at all. It is really just a convenient way to solve an old problem.

**Class comment:** When David raised the question of whether there was anyone left of "the house of Saul," he didn't know the only one left was lame in both feet.

**Bob:** I don't question David's motive, only the lasting quality of David's altruism.

**Class response:** Yes, but there might have been someone left who was not lame.

**Bob:** True, but we don't know how David would have reacted in that event. The thing is that God repeats the phrase regarding Mephibosheth's lameness. If there is no risk, there is no profit to David. There's no real commitment, no real cost here, and it is the complete reversal of what Jonathan did for David when they made that covenant. Jonathan gave up the throne for David. David really didn't lose anything. There is a hardening setting in. His love relationship with Jonathan is even getting hardened. You would think the son of Jonathan would really elicit from David the desire to do everything in the world for a son of Jonathan, his beloved brother, his older brother who got him the kingdom. However, even that love is hardening, little by little. The word used is sclerosis. It is literally the word used for "hardening" in the Greek. It is gradual. You don't even see it. It is a scary word. David doesn't even know it but his love is quietly, slowly but surely hardening.

**Class comment:** Wasn't David's relationship with Jonathan purely on a taking basis. Wasn't Jonathan doing all the giving?

**Bob:** That is an excellent point. If you look back it was mostly Jonathan and not David on the giving end. Those days you might excuse David. He was scared to death and running for his life, but now he is king. There was a deep love relationship there. They did love each other as brothers, but that love is now beginning to harden.

Now to Chapter 10. This is probably the Scripture of one of the battles that occurred in chapter 8. I just want to go through it briefly.

First 5 verses. Nahash the king of the Ammonites, a friend of David's, died, and his son Hanun came to the throne. David in an attempt to express sorrow and comfort sent a group to him. He also wanted to establish a relationship with Hanun as he had with his father Nahash. The son was a young turk and was warned that David was coming to spy on him, "Look what he did to Moab." Moab and Ammon were brothers way back. They were related tribes. David had taken 2/3 of Moab's men, laid them in a line and shot them. He only let 1/3 live. These people were relatives of Ammon. He left himself wide open for the advisors of Hanun to say, "He is not coming here to do you honor or to give you comfort. He is coming here to spy us out. Look what he did to Moab." As a result they take the high court officials David sent to them and shave off half their beards, a devastating disgrace in that culture. It was similar to shaving a woman's head. They cut off their clothes from the waist down leaving them naked and sent them back to David. When you insult David, you are in big trouble. You do not cross David, my friend. When Edom attacked him, he tried to kill off all their males. When Nabal didn't receive his envoys hospitably, he was going to wipe out every male in Nabal's household. So, he began plotting. The Ammonites got rumblings of that, hired what Syrians were still around and went out to battle. They hid by their heavily fortified city of Rabbah. The Syrians, with a very mobile army of chariots and horsemen, came down and tried to put the Israelites in a pincer. The Ammonites were in front of the city and hidden 15 miles away were the Syrians with

their chariots and horsemen. Now old Joab may not be very moral, but he is no dummy. So instead of coming up to get the Ammonites where he would get cut off, he sneaks up and splits his troops. He puts himself between both Syria and Ammon so that if the battle goes this way, this group of troops can come this way, and if the battle goes that way, these troops can go that way. He cuts his enemies off from their own resources and puts them to flight. The defeat is severe enough to make Hadadezer king of Zobah and also the head of the vassal state of Syria and all the Syrian tribes on the other side of the Euphrates David's vassals. Therefore he has Ammon nicely isolated and nobody to help them. You can just see David licking his chops.

II Samuel 10:19-11:1:

**When all the kings, servants of Hadadezer, saw that they were defeated by Israel, [He had a whole coalition of his own vassal kings then] they made peace with Israel and served them. So the Arameans [Syrians] feared to help the sons of Ammon anymore. [He now has them isolated] Then it happened in the spring, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him and all Israel, and they destroyed the sons of Ammon [literally, they ravished the land] and besieged Rabbah**

They went through the land and literally destroyed it. In Chapter 12:26ff, Joab besieges the capitol city [Rabbah] takes the outer part of it and then calls David to take the inner citadel so "the name will go to you David not to me," the glory will go to you not to me. So David takes the inner part of the city, takes the crown off the king's head, puts it on his own head and then:

II Samuel 12:31:

**He also brought out the people who were in it, and set (literally cut) them under saws, sharp iron instruments, and iron axes, and made them pass through the brickkiln. And thus he did to all the cities of the sons of Ammon. Then David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.**

He butchered them in a shockingly cruel way. Another relative nation that he was not allowed to touch. This is our lovely Shepherd King who is king by the grace of God.

His kingdom extended the whole distance now. He had the 2 trade routes all locked in, and he was master of all Israel. But now where do you think David got this hardening of heart that allowed him to take his best friend's wife in adultery, slay his best friend to cover up the crime and go on living a lie while worshipping Jehovah and leading the nation of Israel? Where did he get this hardening?

**Class question:** Why was David so victorious?

**Bob:** That is my point. Fruitfulness or accomplishments or scalps on your belt from evangelism are not necessarily a sign of spirituality. As I mentioned before, the first person I brought to Christ was done in total anger. It was totally out of the will of God, as far as I was concerned, but totally doing the will of God as far as God was concerned. Sure she came to Christ and the next morning was a believer, but it was not what I did. It is the methodology that counts.

God wanted to give David this kingdom because he wanted Moab, Ammon and Edom to become brothers under his influence. He had some brothers. Hiram king of Tyre the Sidonians were friends of his. They built his palace. He didn't touch them. He married the daughter of Talmi king of Geshur which was right smack in the middle of this whole territory. He didn't touch them. Why couldn't he have handled the others the same way if he had been a godly man? Do you notice something missing in these three chapters? In three whole chapters he never once inquired of the Lord. Nowhere, even in the details of chapter 10, did he inquire of the Lord. Tremendous victories but spiritual hardness, spiritual blindness, a spiritual veil closed over his eyes. David continued in the flesh. Out of all the people he conquered to whom was he vicious and cruel? The three to whom he was related; those that should normally have been his nearest and dearest.

What is the mark of the flawed and fallen creatures of the last days who have denied the Lord or are hard in their sin? "Without natural affection." That is the mark of the pit. Do you see why David can kill Uriah, almost rape his wife, live a lie for a year and still be victorious? Don't ever kid yourself that what is happening on the outside is necessarily an indication of what is happening on the inside. You may be leading people to Christ all over the place or be a great Bible teacher and yet your core may be rotting away. Boy, chapters 8 through 10 scare the living daylights out of me.

Father, we just thank you so much for this warning in Scripture that you accomplish your purpose in spite of us, that even though you accomplish it through us we may be at enmity with you, we may be violating your very purpose for us, we may be down the tubes spiritually. There may be a sclerosis type of hardening so subtle and slipping in so easily that before we know it the veil will come right across our eyes and we won't even see it. Father, I pray that we do not fall into this trap and do not end up like David committing the greatest sin of his life but will heed this warning which you have given us here. In Jesus' name Amen.

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## Chapter Twenty-six

### David and Bathsheba - I

#### II Samuel 11

Today we will take a look at David and Bathsheba. According to God this is David's greatest sin. It is the ultimate result of a slow slippage, a fall from grace, if you will. It is not a loss of salvation. It is a loss of contact with God, experiential contact with God.

Back in Chapter 7, when God announced the Davidic covenant which promised David a throne forever, an heir on that throne forever and a king forever, David prayed a remarkable prayer which beautifully expressed his rejoicing in the Lord and all that the Lord meant to him, one of the finest prayers in the whole Bible. Then in chapters 8, 9 and 10, we saw his gradual slide. He couldn't seem to handle prosperity. The more he conquered, the more he gained, the more he seemed to rely upon his own resources, and he slowly but surely slipped away from reliance upon God. His ferocity, his butchery, his vindictiveness increased until he became a very cruel, harsh conqueror, particularly with regard to those related to him, nations God had forbidden the Jews to pursue, the Ammonites, the Moabites and the Edomites. It is more or less the end result of his gradual tendency to disregard the knowledge of God.

So let's begin Chapter 11 of II Samuel

II Samuel, 11:1:

**Then it happened in the spring, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him and all Israel, and they destroyed the sons of Ammon** [They ravished the land in other words according to I Chronicles] **and besieged Rabbah.** [the capital, a very heavily fortified city] **But David stayed at Jerusalem.**

As we saw last time, David had conquered territory all the way from the border of Egypt south to the Euphrates River north with one exception, Ammon. Now they have ravaged Ammon and are about to take Rabbah, it's the capital city, which was all they had left to take. So David, instead of being at the head of his armies, saw no need to show up and stayed back in Jerusalem doing nothing, idle. In the modern parlance, he had become fat and sassy. There is a statement in I Corinthians 10:12 that says, "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest

he fall." I think this is what happened to David here. He had conquered everything in sight. He had the whole Abrahamic covenant wherein God promised Abraham and his descendants a city "which has foundations whose architect and builder was God" and a land which stretched from Egypt all the way to the Euphrates River. David now had that. So he felt he had made the kingdom which God had promised, and he apparently was quite relaxed about it.

Unfortunately as you begin to relax, that is when you get into trouble. We Christians are a peculiar people. We hate tribulation, [as does everyone actually], but when we tribulate we know we can't handle life and, therefore, are very conscious of our need of God, our need of the Lord in our lives at all times. Yet when God eases off on the tribulation and gives us times of relaxation, we have a tendency to slough God off. Things are going smoothly, "I don't need God that much," and little-by-little we slip away. So, God has to bring tribulation back into our lives to get us to refocus on him. This is why Scripture says tribulation produces a perseverance, a hanging in there, because apart from tribulation we do not hang in there. We just slide. And David slides.

There is a beautiful picture here of God's attitude toward sexuality. There is an excellent article by a philosophy professor from South Western University on God's idea of sexuality. He points out that sexuality according to God has three distinct orders. One is the creative order, what God made it to be, what God designed it to be. It is an expression of the love of the Trinity for itself. God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness...And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female he created them." The husband-wife relationship, the sexual relationship including all that goes into that, the whole marriage relationship, is a picture in the physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual realm down here of what goes on in the Trinity; the love of the Father, for the Son, for the Spirit, for the Father. This, of course, is why God is so adamant about sexual immorality. It violates the picture of the Trinity; that beautiful intimacy which goes on within the Trinity itself. That is why he calls idolatry "a whoring," "going a whoring after other gods." because that is what it is, spiritual fornication. God created sex to be enjoyed thoroughly and completely but within the realm he defined. That is the realm of total commitment because that is the realm in which God enjoys it. The Trinity is committed totally to one another, the Father to the Son to the Spirit, a situation of total commitment. Only in a situation of total commitment can that kind of love be expressed, that kind of abandonment to one another. So God insists that in order to enjoy down here the same kind of abandonment to one another that the Trinity enjoys there has to be, as far as humanly possible, that same kind of total commitment to one another. True love is always a trinity. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is true love. The Lord, the husband and the wife is true love. It always includes a trinity, and it always includes at the center Jesus Christ as Lord. So God insists upon marriage as the only situation in which sex can be enjoyed or practiced in any form. It's not because he is a prude but because he knows that kind of commitment is all that can produce the kind of abandonment the Trinity enjoys. He wants you to experience, as far as you can humanly speaking, what the love of God is really like. That is what God created sex for. He thinks it is great, and His created order is that kind of sex. It is a system of worship. It is the closest thing we will ever experience in this life of two lives becoming one flesh. It is the deepest, the most intimate, the most ecstatic relationship possible between two human beings. But it must be done in the context of a trinitarian relationship; the Lord has to be central. That is the created order.

As part of this order, man was deliberately made to desire woman. Woman was deliberately made to be sensual and desirable to man. You know it inherently. You women know deep in your soul that one of your main desires in life is to produce beauty. One of the things you need most is the desire of your husband, the need of your husband, the love of your husband. God made you that way. God made men to respond to beautiful women or better yet lovely women. It doesn't have to be physical beauty. That is Venus. But God deliberately made you sensual to make a man respond physically, emotionally and spiritually to your sensuality. Sensuality was designed by God not by Playboy. So you two are designed to attract each other, and the woman is designed to draw the male the initiator in the relationship. She is to respond to him. That is holy, righteous, just and good, because that is how God made it when he said in Genesis 1, "It is very good." In the beginning David has this picture of a created order.

Then there is the fallen order. Because we are flawed and fallen creatures, we pervert what God has made for us. We take sexuality and use it to gratify our own needs without too much thought to the other person. It becomes a

self-centered rather than an outpouring thing. That is the flawed and fallen order of creation.

Then God has a redemptive order. As he changes lives in Jesus Christ, he begins to change us back to the outpouring, the self-giving. Only as you give of yourself can you ever get that responsive love that is a necessity in any fulfilling relationship.

We are going to see that pictured here. II Samuel 11 & 12 are a beautiful picture of the creative order of God for sexuality, the flawed and fallen order of God's order for sexuality and then the redemptiveness of God in sexuality.

In verse 1 of II Samuel 11, David was in Jerusalem. He was fat and sassy. He had become hardened by killing so life meant very little to him. He had become very brutal in his attitude toward human life. He was polygamous. At this time, he had probably 6 or 7 wives, maybe up to 10 eventually, plus a number of concubines, nineteen sons and umpteen daughters [They don't list the daughters]. So he was given over to licentiousness. In those days, as a mideastern monarch he could take what he wanted as long as it was available. He could not violate the word of God, but, in the culture of the day, a mideastern monarch could have concubines and also wives. This was not God's choice, but it was the culture of the day. God tries to lead a person out of the culture, but God does not smash the culture. So David was living in a culture that promoted licentiousness. David had become hardened to life itself, especially regarding anyone who opposed him, and he had become hardened to love itself. It had become license. He gratified his needs at the expense of people's lives, their bodies. So with this background let us see, now, what is happening to David.

II Samuel 11:2:

**Now when evening came David arose from his bed and walked around on the roof of the king's house, and from the roof he saw a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful in appearance.** [The Hebrew is far stronger than that. The Hebrew says "the woman was beautiful in appearance, very!" That is a "whistle" in Hebrew. She was something. She was not the brightest girl in all the world, as we see in I Kings, but she was beautiful.] **So David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, "Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" And David sent messengers and took her, and when she came to him, he lay with her; and when she had purified herself from her uncleanness, she returned to her house.**

First the created order. David is a male. God made him with certain drives, certain hormones, and they are God given. He is walking around on the roof of his palace, which is the highest point in the city, and he is looking down and sees Bathsheba taking a bath. She is pretty enough with clothes on; without them she is devastating. Now, nothing is wrong yet. As a male he is made sensuous by God. What he does with the sensuality is what counts. You men, I am a male. What do you do when you see a pretty woman? You can either glorify God or you can gratify the lust of the flesh, and just like that [a snap of the fingers]! I discovered a very interesting principle in my life. I see a beautiful woman, and I automatically look if she is pretty. There is nothing wrong with that. But what do I do when I look? Do I thank God for beautiful women and turn my eyes away, or do I take an inventory? One is God's created order and the other is the fallenness and flawedness of God's order. Each of us has to make that decision [especially if you work where I used to work] a dozen times a day. Each Tuesday, in order to eat with some "unbelieving" friends, I had to go into a part of town that was given over to license and vice. I discovered I had to walk up those streets looking up at the sky, down at the ground or at the Mercedes Benzs going by. I couldn't look at the billboards which were life-sized and nude or the women who were life-sized and nude or even at the hawkers on the street who were life-sized and not quite nude. It had to be eyes front, eyes up or eyes down. It is a wonder I didn't get killed crossing the street. I discovered I could get through there if I just kept looking up or down or at the cars and thanking the Lord for beautiful women, and thanking the Lord for beautiful women, and thanking the Lord for beautiful women and not doing what I wanted to do which was look. I was making choices not to violate God's created order. I couldn't stop the hormones. They were there. He put them there, but I could stop what I did with them.

Comment from class: I was listening to Billy Graham on a talk show the other day, and he was trying to explain this very concept to the host. The host was having a very hard time with it. What he seemed to be saying was he

didn't want anyone to take away his privilege to do what he wanted according to how he felt. At least that is how it came across to me. He really couldn't accept anything that was telling him he should have some check or some control on himself.

Bob's response: Sure. We are talking "Lordship" here. When Jesus is Lord, I do not have rights. We have to face up to that. When I say "Jesus is Lord," I have given up my rights. Lord is "kurios," slave-owner. Not only monarch and sovereign, but slave-owner. I become "doulos," the lowest slave in the Roman Empire. I am a two-legged animal with no rights, no protection under law, nothing. I can be killed, maimed, tortured, body and soul, whatever my master chooses to do. There was no SPCA for Roman slaves in the first century. The moment I say I am "doulos" and he is "kurios," I have made an irrevocable contract, and He is going to make sure that both of us live up to it. It can be either easy or hard. In this case it is the hard way. He doesn't violate my will. As "kurios" He still loves me, and lovers always get options. True love always gives the beloved options. Once I am his I can call him Lord, but at the same time I can choose not to let him be Lord. He allows that choice. Now the results can be very painful. He does not take away my choice, but he does not take away the consequences either. He really loves me even after I am a slave.

Comment from class: The only question I have is why didn't Bathsheba put up some kind of fight?

Bob's response: Now that is a good question, and I think Bathsheba was probably part of the problem. There are commentators that believe she deliberately enticed David. I don't know whether I can go that far. We don't know. We do know she didn't yell. The law of God said that if a woman was taken in adultery in the field, even if she was betrothed or married while the man was claiming she was not, she could cry out but no one would hear her. However, if she was taken in the city and she didn't yell, she could maybe still get taken, but she had better yell. If she didn't, they were both slain. By her silence she tacitly agreed to the situation whether she was betrothed or married, and she had to be slain along with the man. God has rough rules for chastity. He is really committed to it. Bathsheba didn't yell, so you can interpret it any way you want. I don't think she really meant to entice him, but I also don't think she fought very much. He was king. She was the wife of Uriah the Hittite who was one of the 30. Yes, he was a great warrior, but David was king. That is a lot better than a Lieutenant-Colonial. So I don't think she planned the whole thing, but I don't think she resisted too much either. She didn't cry out so she was guilty. This, of course, explains her plaintive plea, "'I am pregnant.' You had better do something about us, or we are going to be a pile of rocks outside of Jerusalem." So I don't know what went on in her mind. She didn't cry out.

He looked down and saw her bathing. She was very beautiful in appearance, "she was beautiful, very!", so he looked, and there was nothing wrong with that. You might even argue that in the culture of that day [even though the kings of Israel didn't have the right to unlimited concubines and wives] that sending to inquire about her may not yet have been sin. That is getting pretty close though. But once he sent and inquired and found out, "Is that not Bathsheba the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite," and, by the way, the granddaughter of Ahithophel his counselor, of all the women in all of Israel he should not have touched, she was the one.

Have you ever noticed that when you want to do your own thing, God goes first class either to bless you or to curse you? He never goes half way. If you want to step out of line, he is going to let you go first class all the way down the tube into the gutter, and it will be the dirtiest, guckiest, nastiest gutter you can find. Or if you want to obey him, he will bless you, cleanse you and make you holy and gorgeous, but God never stops halfway in the pendulum. He either takes you way over here to glory, or he takes you way over here to filth. You can't ever balance it out. Nowhere can you hit a nice neutral place with a little bit of glory and a little bit of dirt. God won't do it. Bathsheba was the daughter of Eliam, one of the 37 formidable warriors in Israel; David's most trusted men; his closest friends. She was the wife of Uriah the Hittite another member of the 30, another of his best friends. And she was the granddaughter of Ahithophel, David's counselor, the wisest man in Israel. [Incidentally, we are going to see Ahithophel come back and get his revenge later on.] David could not have picked a worse person to play footsies with than this girl. David had to make a choice. He had to either thank God and walk away or to follow through. He made the wrong choice, and God went first class and let him go down the tube.

II Samuel 11:4:

**And David sent messengers and took her, and when she came to him, he lay with her; and when she had purified herself from her uncleanness, she returned to her house.**

Isn't it amazing how religious we get in our sin? Under the Levitical law any issue out of a human body, such as pus, or menstrual fluid or seminal fluid made you unclean. You had to go through the ceremony of purification. David disobeyed both the tenth commandment which was "...You shall not covet your neighbor's wife..." and the seventh commandment which was "You shall not commit adultery," but they were very careful to go through the purification ceremony.

How we strain out the gnat while we swallow the camel. I love the Lord's imagery here. He has an ironic and beautiful sense of humor. He talks about removing the speck from your brother's eye while you have a beam in your own eye. The word for "speck" is the word "sliver." It is the same material as the beam. So here you are trying to get the sliver out of your brother's eye while you have this great big telephone pole protruding from your own eye, and you're beating his head against the wall while you are trying to reach him. You are knocking the fellow out trying to get that sliver out of his eye while the same material, only of magnificent size, is coming out of your own eye.

So they go through the ceremony of purification; everything is hunky-dory, and they go back to their houses as if nothing had happened.

There is only one problem. In the beginning David sent messengers to find out who Bathsheba was. He wasn't too quiet about it, and this was the palace. One of the things they love to do in palaces is gossip, and there were factions all over this place. Then he sent messengers and took her. He might as well have put up a neon sign, "I am committing adultery with Bathsheba." It is all over chapter 12 that one of the reasons God denounced David was because, "...by this deed you have given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme..." So it became well known everywhere. What David thought he was doing in secret, God was putting in a neon sign with a big arrow flashing on and off.

Now here is the tragedy. Once you yield to the depravity of the flesh, once you start your trip into sin, you are pulled deeper and deeper into sin. God goes first class either direction.

I Samuel 11:5:

**And the woman conceived; and she sent and told David, and said, "I am pregnant." Then David sent to Joab, saying, "Send me Uriah the Hittite." So Joab sent Uriah to David. When Uriah came to him, David asked concerning the welfare of Joab and the people and the state of the war. Then David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house, and wash your feet." [This is a Hebrew expression for "Relax and enjoy yourself." It is R&R, "Rest and Recreation." Go down to your house and have some rest and recreation. You know exactly what he wants Uriah to do.] **And Uriah went out of the king's house, and a present from the king was sent out after him.** [A little bit of guilt coming into Israel] **But** [Uriah is no dummy either. He has heard the word] **Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house.****

David started out with deceit. That was his first trip. He sent and asked Joab to send Uriah back with a report of the battle; Uriah, one of the commanders, one of his chief warriors. He needed that report like he needed another hole in the head. Then secondly, he made a choice not to confess his sin before God but to cover it, to rationalize it, to try and hide it. This began his downfall. When Uriah arrived David talked to him as two old warriors might talk; warriors who have been through a lot of bloodshed together, who have fought together and are "good ole buddies." He gives him the treatment, "How's the war going? How are the men doing? O.K., you are back, go on home and have a little R&R." Well, Uriah is no dummy. He gets the message. You don't send for one of your chief commanders to bring back a message. You have messengers to do that. He can smell a phony a mile off. Even with the present which David sends with him, he doesn't go down to his house but sleeps with the servants



of the lord which gives him all kinds of witnesses that he never went near his wife. Things are not quite so simple now, but you can see David's rationalization. He just figures, "Well, it really isn't that bad. After all I am getting Uriah a child, and it might even be a son [In fact it was a son, as we know.] So he will have the joy of another child. No one will know. No one will get hurt. Besides Uriah will have another child." Offspring were welcome in those days, particularly sons. Of course, David didn't know at the time that it was going to be a son. He could rationalize, though, "We really aren't hurting anybody. Uriah's going to have the joy of another offspring, and he'll never know. So, it's not that bad."

Then since that didn't work, he went from deceit into degeneracy. Things were getting a little tougher now, and David was looking out for number one. Now here comes the callousness, the hardness that has been building into his life, both toward women as objects of sex and towards friends who get in the way.

II Samuel 11:10:

**Now when they told David, saying, "Uriah did not go down to his house,"** [Apparently David inquired first thing in the morning] **David said to Uriah, "Have you not come from a journey? Why did you not go down to your house?"** [Well, he is really tipping his hand now. He is getting a little panicky] **And Uriah said to David,** [What a stinging rebuke] **"The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in temporary shelters,** [They are out in tents on the battlefield apparently taking the ark of God with them] **and my lord Joab** [the chief general] **and the servants of my lord are camping in the open field.** [They are fighting a war out there, David, for you!] **Shall I then go to my house to eat and to drink and to lie with my wife?** [He knows what David is after.] **By your life and the life of your soul, I will not do this thing.**" [That should have hit David right between the eyes. Here was a trusted friend really socking it to him. So what does he do?] **Then David said to Uriah, "Stay here today also, and tomorrow I will let you go." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. Now David called him, and he ate and drank before him, and he made him drunk; and in the evening he went out to lie on his bed with his lord's servants, but he did not go down to his house.**

You can see his reaction now, "Well, I really didn't want to do this to Bathsheba, but for both our sakes I have to do something, so I'll get this turkey drunk; I'll get his inhibitions removed and he'll go down there and simply rape his wife in a drunken orgy." How much love does he have for Bathsheba now? Probably about as much love as he ever had for her. He doesn't mind allowing a drunken man to go down there and use her as long as he keeps himself out of hot water.

It is helpful to be able to read the Bible alongside mideastern literature of the time. In those days, they never ever chronicled anything bad about a king. The chronicler would lose his head or be fried over a slow fire. Maybe they could write disparagingly about kings of other countries but their kings were splendid creatures. They made no mistakes. They had no sin. They never lost a battle, as a matter of fact. The only way you can tell who won a battle in those ancient histories is to figure out where the boundaries shifted. Archaeology tells you who moved into where because the culture changed. But when Egypt and Syria banged heads, they both had fabulous victories. They created huge steles, granite slabs, denoting all that happened and all they each conquered. The only problem is you discover the Syrian stele is way down in Egypt. So Egypt probably didn't win. Now, here we have God's best king, his highest king, a "man after God's own heart," and God is laying out, just as plain as can be, all of his weaknesses. God doesn't cover up anything. So, we see David with no attitude toward Bathsheba except what is obviously rationalization, "Really, it is for both our sakes." She would be stoned too, and so again he can rationalize away making use of her as a vehicle to hide their sin.

Comment from class: If he had not killed Uriah, and it had become obvious to everybody what he had done, would they have stoned a king?

Bob's response: God forgave him. That is the tragedy of it. We are going to discover that they didn't. Under law they should have, yes, but God makes the laws. David confesses, and he doesn't get stoned. But now he doesn't have any experience with his Lord any more. He has hardened himself and cut himself off from God, and God is way off there somewhere. All he can see is the harshness of the law, and it is pretty harsh. Take them both out and

stone them and raise up a pile of stones over them as a memorial. He doesn't really grasp the forgiveness of God until chapter 12. All he can see, being away from God, is the severity of the law, and it is pretty plain. It makes no exceptions for kings. Only God, who makes the law, can make exceptions to it, and David has no insurance that he is going to be an exception.

Well, when getting Uriah drunk doesn't work, poor Uriah signs his own death warrant. He doesn't realize that David has become so hardened he will kill anybody.

II Samuel 11: 14:

**Now it came about in the morning that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah. And he had written in the letter, saying, "Place Uriah in the front line of the fiercest battle and withdraw from him, so that he may be struck down and die." [Now this was one of his best friends. One of his greatest warriors. He has fought shoulder to shoulder with him for 20 long years] So it was as Joab kept watch on the city, that he put Uriah at the place where he knew there were valiant men. And the men of the city went out and fought against Joab, and some of the people among David's servants fell; and Uriah the Hittite also died.**

David figured, "All I want is to get Uriah killed, and he is forcing me to do it. I really don't want to do that, but he is forcing my hand. What kind of a scandal will rock the government when they find out what has happened. Isn't it expedient that the life of one man should be sacrificed lest the whole nation perish?" as Caiaphas said a thousand years later. So he writes this letter and then has the unmitigated gall to send that death warrant by the very man who is going to be killed. He says, "Throw him out in front and when he's out there, withdraw from him." Well, Joab is no dummy either. David is no dummy. Uriah is no dummy and Joab is sure no dummy. If he pulls back like that, he is obviously implicated in the plot. Though Joab cares little for human life, he does care about Joab and his power. You can imagine the thoughts going through his mind. Joab is a vicious killer. He is unscrupulous and unprincipled. He killed Abner in a city of refuge just to get even with him and also to remove him as a possible contender for the key generalship. But David is a very religious man, a very godly man, he is the writer of the Psalms. You can imagine what Joab is thinking, "David writes beautiful psalms on Sunday, but on Monday when he wants his dirty work done, while he may not like me, he always comes to Joab." David, as we know, is frightened of Joab and his hold over the army. So now what has David done? He has put himself completely in the power of this man he knows to be evil, unscrupulous and power hungry.

Comment from class: Isn't it interesting that Uriah was so trustworthy that David could trust him with his own death warrant knowing Uriah would not open that message even though he was a general and might have the privilege. It was addressed to Joab, and he could be trusted to carry that message.

Bob's response: Sure! Uriah was an honorable man. David was one of his best friends. He had tried to make David face up to what he was doing but David hadn't. After all the father of his wife was one of David's best friends. The grandfather of his wife was David's chief counselor. What would you think? "If there is anybody I can trust it is David. He is not very bright, and he did something odious but at least he is trustworthy."

So Joab is not going to withdraw. That would put him on the spot, "So, we lose a few more Israelites." He sends a band to assault the gate of the city. That is the strongest point and where the most valiant men always sit because it is the key point in taking the city. He doesn't send a very large force out, so the people come out of the city gates and chase the Israelites. The Israelites in turn chase the people back into the gates and that gets Uriah right up alongside the wall, up under the archers. Unfortunately getting Uriah up there meant not only Uriah but also the leader of the band and a whole group of Jews get killed, but it protects Joab. He doesn't care how many Jews get killed as long as he doesn't get hurt. David is now a multiple murderer.

See! we never sin as an island. A little thing like nobody getting hurt never works out that way. So now there are a whole group of new widows and fatherless children in Israel because David looked over a wall and didn't turn away and thank the Lord for beautiful women. He never dreamed that would happen when he took that first look, looked again, took an inventory, sent and inquired and finally took her. He didn't dream he would end up a

multiple murderer, but he did. And look at how hard he is.

## II Samuel 11:18

**Then Joab sent and reported to David all the events of the war. And he charged the messenger, saying, "When you have finished telling all the events of the war to the king, and if it happens that the king's wrath rises [Any fool knows you don't go near the archers. Any fool knows a skilled general never sends his troops against the wall where they can shoot down on you and you are helpless. So David ought to be real angry because that is a dumb move, but at least it isn't an obvious move] and he says to you, "Why did you go so near to the city to fight? Did you not know that they would shoot from the wall? Who struck down Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? Did not a woman throw an upper millstone on him from the wall so that he died at Thebez? [This is back in the book of Judges. Abimelech attacked the city. God had a judgment on him. He is slain. He got too close to the city and a woman up on the wall threw a millstone and crushed his skull, and when he was dying he had a young man kill him because it could not be said that he was killed by a woman, but he was. "Don't you remember your history, Joab, you dummy. You don't go near the wall. Even a woman can kill you from the wall." And Joab knows this, and he figures David is going to talk like this. So he says, "When David says this, when his wrath rises from my stupidity...] Why did you go so near the wall?" - then you shall say, "Your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also." [Joab knows his David. "That will buy his off. I did his dirty work for him, and he sure had better not say anything about my generalship. And that appraisal sheet had better not have any marks on it when it comes out next year. I've got him there and I am going keep him there." He does, by the way] So the messenger departed and came and reported to David all that Joab had sent him to tell. And the messenger said to David, "The men prevailed against us and came out against us in the field, but we pressed them as far as the entrance of the gate. Moreover, the archers shot at your servants from the wall; so some of the king's servants are dead, and your servant Uriah the Hittite is also dead." [The messenger doesn't follow orders. He is so afraid of David and the stupidity of this move that he wants it blurted out right away, "Hey, some got killed, but Uriah got killed also." He figures David is going to be madder than heck, and David is a very violent man. But look at old David. My how he has mellowed.] Then David said to the messenger, "Thus you shall say to Joab, 'Do not let this thing displease you, ["This dumb mistake of yours Joab, don't have guilt over it. Don't feel sorry that you did this stupid thing."] for the sword devours one as well as another; [c'est la guerre] make your battle against the city stronger and overthrow it;' and so encourage him." [Where is the sweet Psalmist of Israel? The flesh sure stinks, doesn't it? The spirit writes the psalms and the flesh just murders, callously murders. Then the result is hardening his heart against God. David is very religious even when he is evil.] Now when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband [Mourning period was seven days. David has a nine-month period to deal with. He has to get in a hurry here. People can count.] When the time of mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house and she became his wife; [At least in their eyes] then she bore him a son. But the thing that David had done was evil in the sight of the Lord.**

He not only sinned against man, he sinned against God. And that last verse says God can deal with it. See, David had actually done nothing more than any ordinary mideastern monarch would do. They had absolute power. If they wanted some woman, they took her, and if anyone got in the way they killed them. This was the right of kings. So he has done nothing more than any other normal, ordinary orient monarch would do. It was not that bad in the culture. What was the difference between David and any other ordinary normal oriental monarch? David was God's anointed. David was God's king. God had plans to reign through a physical king, and he made no bones about it back in Deuteronomy, "I choose the king, and I reign through the king, and this is what you do, king. Here are the rules you follow, king. And let us have an understanding about who is king in Israel." And God said he chose a "man after his own heart." This doesn't sound very godly does it? So god is going to make David a man after God's own heart. It is called the woodshed treatment.

**Comment from class:** I am just curious about Solomon who was a product of this union. Why, when this was an evil union in the first place, would God pick Solomon to reign after David?

**Bob's response:** I won't tell you until Chapter 12. Next week you will find out.

God lets the pagans, who are not anointed of him, not chosen of him, go their own way and just gives them up to

what they have chosen; but when God chooses somebody he never gives them up. He never lets them go. Now, God has chosen every believer in this room who names Jesus as Lord, and no matter what our culture is, we cannot do what the ordinary fellow does and get away with it. God is committed to making us a man or a woman after his own heart, and he will do anything necessary to make us exactly like he says "after his own heart." I cannot justify my actions by the culture about me. I must judge my actions by the word of God because that is how he judges them. That is his basis. Next week we'll see how he does it.

Father, we just thank you for the fact that you are a faithful God and that you are committed to us and we cannot pull the wool over your eyes even when we want to for we know from an eternal standpoint that is ridiculous. We would be throwing half of our life away, Father, if we could do that. So we thank you that you are firm enough, and you are harsh enough and, yes, even nasty enough, if necessary, in your loving way to bring us to our senses. You will hurt us badly, Father, if you have to, but we do not miss out on what you have for us, the image and likeness of Jesus Christ as our inheritance. So, Father, we just commit ourselves to you and thank you that you are that kind of a God. Father, we thank you in Jesus' name. Amen.

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## Chapter Twenty-seven

### David and Bathsheba - II

#### II Samuel 12

II Samuel, Chapter 12. We are now in the second part of David and Bathsheba, the redemptive part. We talked about this as a beautiful picture of God's order of sexuality. About His created order of sexuality, God said "It is very good." All that God created he said was "very good" and sexuality was part of that creation. The normal response of a male to a female is glorious. It is breathtaking. It is worship. It is just exactly what God wants for you. Women were made sensuous in order to attract men, to arouse them. God designed it that way. But the perimeters he set were within the bounds of a total commitment of marriage, and preferably, in order to experience the totality of what God had in mind, within the bounds of a Christian marriage in which Jesus Christ is Lord and life of both the husband and the wife. That is the created order.

When David walked across the roof of his house one evening, he saw a beautiful woman taking a bath, and his male hormones just responded naturally. That was not sin. He had not gone peeping, he was just looking. What he did afterward was the sin. That is the fallen order.

Now the question is, "What do you do with what God has created?" The fallen order, in this case, was to send for her. Then, having found out she was the wife of his best friend, the daughter of one of his best friends, the granddaughter of his chief counsel [the wisest man in his kingdom], of all the women in all of Israel he should have left alone, Bathsheba was the one. But God always goes first class. If you want to defy God, he will let you deteriorate first class. If you obey him, he will let you be glorified first class. He never goes half way. There is no such thing as a little sin, a little rebellion, a little disobedience. Remember that when you want to disobey. God always goes first class. It will always be monstrous disobedience, monstrous sin in the end. You cannot escape that principle of Scripture. Or it can be first class the other way.

**Comment from Class:** Does that hold for unbelievers to?

**Bob's response:** Yes, it does. Romans 1:18-32. They start out just defying God, and they end up in the deepest form of depravity, with a depraved mind utterly incapable of telling good from evil. What is more, they don't enjoy that evil unless they draw other people into it with them. They can't just enjoy destroying themselves any

more, they have to draw others into their evilness. It is a snowball down the tube. Don't ever kid yourself that God does not go first class either way. There is no such thing as a little bit of glory or a little bit of sin. That is what we discover here.

So David ends up murdering his best friend plus murdering a number of other Jews in order to cover up his crime. He never in the world thought that would happen when he looked over that parapet, saw this beautiful nude woman and didn't turn away thanking God for beautiful women. He never dreamed he would end up murdering Uriah. This is the one sin that God said is the greatest sin in David's life. This is the one sin that God will not forget. I Kings 15: 5 says, "...because David did what was right in the sight of the Lord, and had not turned aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, except in the case of Uriah the Hittite." Then read the genealogy of the Lord in the beginning of the New Testament, Matthew, Chapter 1. There are five women spelled out there. All of them have tainted characters, as the world sees it anyway, Tamar, Rahab the harlot, Ruth the Moabitess, the Virgin Mary who was considered a dissolute woman by the world, and then there is another woman who is not mentioned by name, "And to David was born Solomon by her *who had been the wife of Uriah.*" He won't name Bathsheba even in the genealogy of Jesus Christ. This is what God thinks about this one sin. And for all eternity, for this book will be available for all eternity, David will have to live with the record of this sin.

This is why this book is so obviously of God. Any other eastern literature builds up its kings. They have no faults. They have no sins. Write truthfully about them and you die. But God's book writes in intimate detail. He even writes about David trying to hide his sins. So David had a higher sense of morality than the kings about him because the kings about him would have done what he did with impunity.

But now God never leaves you there. He always give you an option out. He does it with David. So now we see the redemptive order of sexuality starting in II Samuel, chapter 12.

Between chapter 11 and chapter 12 was probably a little over a year. The child, conceived in chapter 11, was born and became ill in chapter 12. So we are talking about 9 months of pregnancy plus probably a number of months for the child to become big enough for David to become deeply attached to him. Psalm 32 is probably one of the psalms written about this period. Psalms 38, 6, 32 and 51 were all written about this time.

Psalm 32:1

**How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered! How blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit! When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer.** [Literally, my life juices were turned into the drought of summer.]

God just wrung him dry during this time. All this while he was sitting as king, judging men who had committed adultery, who had committed murder and having them killed. Also in his deceit he was still leading the worship of Yahweh. You can imagine the tension going on inside of him. In the depths of his soul he knew what he was like. He knew he was killing men who were doing something less evil than what he had done. He was the judge of Israel. So, during that time God just wrings him dry. He said God just squeezed out his life juices like a drought in summer. Now he is ready for God to change him.

II Samuel 12:1:

**Then the Lord sent Nathan to David. And he came to him, and said,** [This is a parable. David is going to be allowed to hang himself. God usually does that] **"There were two men in one city, the one rich and the other poor.** [I'll bet David identifies with that right off the bat. He was poor. He was the runt of the litter. He had no genealogy. He had come up the hard way, so he could identify with the poor man right off the bat] **The rich man had a great many flocks and herds. But the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb** [A little female. David was a shepherd. It was a common custom to have a pet lamb. It still is

today among the Arabs. David probably had his own little pet lamb. So he immediately identifies again with the poor man] **which he bought and nourished; and it grew up together with him and his children. It would eat of his bread and drink of his cup and lie in his bosom, and was like a daughter to him.** [That custom is still a practice among the bedouins today. They make a household pet of a little lamb.] **Now a traveler** [Someone who it was just a passing fancy, like a look over the parapet at a naked woman, no love, no commitment, just someone going by] **came to the rich man, and he was unwilling to take from his own flock or his own herd, to prepare for the wayfarer [just a passer by] who had come to him; rather he took the poor man's ewe lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him."** **Then David's anger burned greatly against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the Lord lives, surely the man who has done this deserves to die. And he must make restitution for the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing and had no compassion."**

You know there is a psychological principle here. The thing that bugs you about others is what is wrong inside you. David had stuffed this sin down inside himself for over a year, then all of a sudden here comes some fellow who has less compassion than David. Isn't it wonderful when you can find somebody who is worse than you? Isn't that delicious? You can vent upon them the spleen, the wrath, that you feel about yourself. That is exactly what David did. He had been a shepherd. He had had a little ewe lamb. He knew what it was all about. Then here was this totally calloused person, this rich man with flocks and herds, who grabbed this poor little ewe lamb, all the poor fellow had, and took it for a wayfarer, not even for his mother-in-law. David's anger burned greatly against him and he said, "As the Lord lives, this man deserves to die." He is pronouncing judgment on himself, and he doesn't even realize it. The law, by the way, does require restitution fourfold. "He must make restitution for the lamb fourfold because he did this thing and had no compassion." Interesting enough the law says nothing about compassion, but David's guilt is showing. It is interesting how strict David is about upholding the law when it doesn't apply to him.

II Samuel 11:7:

**Nathan then said to David, "You are the man!** [Watch God's personal pronouns here] **Thus says the Lord God of Israel, 'It is I who anointed you king over Israel and it is I who delivered you from the hand of Saul. I also gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your care,** [Remember the succeeding king got the harem of the prior king], **and I gave you the house of Israel and Judah; and if *that had been too little, I would have added to you many more things like these!*** [Any legitimate desire I would have given you. Notice the personal pronouns] **Why have you despised the word of the Lord by doing evil in His sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, have taken his wife to be your wife,** [He still doesn't name Bathsheba] **and have killed him with the sword of the sons of Ammon.** [He used treachery. He used deceit. He used pagan enemies and in a resulting battle he killed other Jews. He didn't just murder Uriah]

Now what do you see that sin as essentially against in that passage? David violated Bathsheba. He murdered Uriah. He sinned against Eliam, the father of Bathsheba. He sinned against Ahithophel, the grandfather of Bathsheba. He sinned against all the Jews who were killed when he had Uriah murdered, and he sinned against all the women and children whose men were lost in that battle, but what does it say here about who the sin was against? God! Why is that true? Why is it that sin, even though it only hurts other people, is always against God essentially? What is there about sin, missing the mark, transgression, willfulness, that makes it essentially against God, and therefore, makes it so abhorrent? Who or what is the standard of Sin? God! God is the standard of sin. So anything you do that is sinful is deliberately aimed at the person of God. It is His nature, His character, that determines or constitutes sin. Anything less than God is sin. It is just as simple as that. When you choose anything less than God, that is sin. You are choosing deliberately to do something that violates, or is less than, God's character. To the unbeliever he has given the option to receive Christ and become able to live the life of God. To the believer he has given the indwelling Holy Spirit to live a life that exhibits the character of God. So, when you sin, you choose not to let God be God. You deliberately choose to violate God not just Bathsheba.

**Comment from class:** I don't understand verse 8. Did God give him all those wives?

**Bob's response:** The harem of the king that was killed always went to the succeeding king. God was pointing

out that there was no lack of women available to David.

**Comment from class:** Didn't that violate God's law, God's will, all those women?

**Bob's response:** Well, sure. Any polygamous marriage violates God's basis intent for marriage, but polygamy was accepted in the culture of that day. God does not go down and radically violate a culture. He goes down and radically changes a person, and the person will then change the culture. When Jesus Christ walked this earth, he lived in a world that was one-half slave. He never spoke against slavery. He spoke against abusing slaves, or, through his apostle Peter, he spoke against being a poor slave, but he never spoke against slavery per se. He knew if he changed the hearts of slaves and masters, they would become brothers. He wasn't interested in the upheaval of a culture which was here today and changed tomorrow exhibiting another set of customs. He didn't go out and joust at windmills. He knows that only the human heart has eternal value, and that is what he wants to change. Once that is changed, the core of the problem is corrected and all the symptoms will adjust themselves. This is what we have to always remember. What do we do about petitions that circulate, for instance. Take them before the Lord, find out what the basic issue is and where we fit? Don't waste time jousting at symptoms, at windmills. God never does that. God goes right to the jugular vein, man's flawed and fallen nature, and he changes that. Then that adjusts all of society.

Now God doesn't approve of the effect of polygamy, and David is a perfect picture of those effects. Polygamy hardens and callouses a person against the love and the sexuality which, in his created order, God designed to be a manifestation and expression of the intimacy and ecstasy of the Trinity. But God also didn't throw out all the wives of a prior king when they had nobody to take care of them. They would wind up as "used wives," and as there was no market for used wives, they would end up as prostitutes or something similar. That is not how God operates. He changes the life of the husband. He changes the life of the wife, and in the process of time they will become monogamous. He didn't approve of what was happening here, but he wanted to change the core of the problem not just adjust the symptoms.

So God confronts David with the basic issue, "You despised the word of the Lord by doing evil in His sight." What was one of the main requirements of a king? What kind of man was he to be? Deuteronomy 17:18-20 remember? He was to be a man of the word of God. David violated three of God's ten commandments. Thou shall not commit murder (6). Thou shall not commit adultery (7) Thou shall not covet thy neighbor's wife (10). The ten biggies that anybody in Jerusalem ought to know, even the little kids from their catechism, were the ten commandments, and David as king violated three of them.

Now because there was fourfold restitution in the law of God, God required a fourfold retribution in the case of David. He was going to make David an example because David was to be God's example to the nation.

II Samuel 12:10:

**Now therefore, [#1] the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.**

The first problem was "you despised Me [the word of the Lord]," so [#1] "'The sword shall never depart from your house.' You are going to have bloodshed in your house the rest of your life, David." Probably the first four sons of David, the heirs to his throne, were all slain by the sword. Amnon was killed by his own bother when he committed incest with his brother's sister. Kileah was missing. We don't know what happened to him. He probably died in battle with his father David. Just like Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua died in battle alongside their father Saul. If you were the son of a king, you learned how to fight because as king, you would be a leader in battle. Absalom, David's favorite son, revolted against his father and was killed because of his revolt. The fourth son was Adonijah, of whom it was said, "David never ever told him no." In Adonijah's whole life daddy never said no. And so he tried to steal the kingdom from Solomon [I Kings 2] who was appointed by God himself to be king, and was killed by Solomon. So David's first four sons, the strength of his loins, all died by the sword.

II Samuel 12:11:

**Thus says the Lord** [#2], **"Behold, I will raise up evil against you from your own household;** [Absalom is going to revolt, throw his dad out and try to kill him. "Since I am not going to use the sword from the outside, I will have it spring up from within. Your whole household is rotten to the core, David. and that is what I am going to let come out"] [#3] **I will even take your wives before your eyes, and give them to your companion,** [Absalom his own son] **and he shall lie with your wives in broad daylight. Indeed you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and under the sun."**

When had David spotted Bathsheba? Yes, it was evening. He had taken a nice long nap, was walking around the roof of his palace probably just at twilight, and there she was. So the inquiries and taking of her were done at night. But instead of getting away with it as he thought, the enemies of the Lord were blaspheming the Lord because of it. As we all know, you are crazy to send messengers out from a palace because they will get the word around in nothing flat. What David thought he did secretly, God said, "I am going to do it publicly, in front of all Israel, and under the sun, in broad daylight." We will see that that is exactly what happened to the wives that he left behind as he fled from Absalom [II Samuel 16:22]

Now here is a beautiful example of why David is a man after God's own heart. We have seen much appalling stuff on one side of David, but, on the other side, when God puts the finger on him and says, "This is wrong," David doesn't rationalize.

II Samuel 12:13:

**Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord." And Nathan said to David, "The Lord also has taken away your sin; you shall not die. [#4] However, because by this deed you have given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born to you shall surely die." So Nathan went to his house.**

This is the end of the conversation. Now, what does David do when God puts the finger on him? Yes! He acknowledges. He confesses his sin. What is the penalty for murder? Death. what is the penalty for adultery? Death. David himself has put men to death for these two sins. This is an extraordinary stand on David's part. Under the law of God, the law which he is sworn to uphold, he lays himself wide open to be taken out and stoned. He lays himself wide open to the mercy of God, "I have sinned against the Lord." That's it! I have done exactly what you said. So he lays himself wide open to God. If God wants to kill him, that's O.K. Now we see the other side of David.

Nathan said to David, "The Lord also has taken away your sin; you shall not die." I John 1:9 worked way back in those days, my friend, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." In some cases God did require the physical death of the person involved. The confession cleanses you and sets thing straight between you and God, but it does not handle the problem of the sin and its consequences. Do not think you can go out and sin, claim I John 1:9 and get away with it even though God has forgiven you. You commit murder, and you go on trial for murder. Now you can confess your murder to God, have total fellowship with God and die a Christian, but you will die. This has happened. In the Midwest, sometime back, a man and his girl friend killed eight or nine people. He was finally caught, thrown in jail, put on trial for murder and got a death sentence. He was converted in prison and became a believer, but he died in the electric chair. He is with the Lord right now, but it didn't change the laws of the state. He still had to suffer the consequences of his sin. So, David fully confesses his sin and now it is totally up to the Lord as to what will happen to David. He can allow the law of the land to go ahead and take its course, or he can let David fulfill the purpose he has in mind. That is God's right. He is not under the law. He wrote the law. Therefore he can make adjustments as he sees fit.

So, David doesn't die. God is after something more than that. Witness verse 14, "However, because by this deed you have given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born to you shall surely die." One of the tragedies when believers sin is what? Why is a believer's sin so much worse than a



non-believer's? Class: It effects other people. Bob: True, but the sins of unbelievers effect other people too. Why is my sin so bad versus the sin of someone who is outside of Christ? Class: You know better. Bob: That is partly true also, but the unbeliever generally knows better too. There is something particularly heinous about the sin of a believer versus the sin of an unbeliever. When I sin, being a believer, I make the Holy Spirit of God a partner in that sin. Remember Paul's horror in I Corinthians 6 at the Corinthian Christians who went up to the temple of Aphrodite and cohabited with the prostitutes? They didn't lose their salvation since the Spirit of God was theirs forever, but what so horrified Paul was, "Do you not realize you are making the Holy Spirit of God one flesh with a prostitute?" When I sin, when you sin, if you name the name of Jesus Christ, you involve the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in that sin. You make them partners in your sin. You dirty them, if I can use the term reverently. Besides causing them to partake in our sin, what else do we do to them? Yes! We blaspheme the name of God. As Christians we open the way to, "Well, if he's a Christian and doing that, why should I be a Christian? He's no different than anybody else. That's what everyone does." There was a man sometime ago who was caught in some major frauds and sent to jail. It was all over the papers and all over the country, and by claiming to be a Christian, the name of Jesus Christ was blasphemed all over the country. This is what David has done.

Now, God said, "You are not going to die, David, but a substitute, your son, is going to die in your place." Do you see what God is doing in the life of David as he did in the life of Abraham when he made him sacrifice Isaac? God is on the way to making David a man after his own heart. What do you think David felt when God said, "I am not going to require it of you; I am going to require it of that little son of yours?" whom, in the passage here, David had obviously grown to love? Right! It would hurt him more than his own death would have. What is God the Father allowing David, in a far lesser sense but in some degree, to share with God the Father? Yes! The suffering of God the Father. My Bible says God the Father slew his Son as a substitute for our sins, not for His own sins but ours. We talk a lot about the suffering of Christ, but what about the suffering of God the Father? He killed His Son. Scripture says so. In Gethsemane the Lord begs not to go to the cross, but the Father sends him anyway, "Abba, Abba, you can do anything. Let this cup pass from me." He is sweating great drop of "blood" he is in such agony over the approaching event, "Yet not My will, but Thine be done." And poppa says, "Go!" It takes the Lord three times to confirm that stance. It is such agony because he knows there will be a separation. He knows the resurrection follows but before that there is the separation. He is in agony over that, and yet the Father says, "Go and die." What do you suppose was happening inside the Father as he watched his Son agonize out there? For the first time in his life David would probably rather die in someone else's place. God is squeezing him dry. His "life juices were turned into the drought of summer."

**Comment from class:** While the Lord was using this to chasten David and teach him a lesson, it was probably an act of mercy for the child who would have grown up marked by adultery and murder.

**Bob's response:** You are stealing my next line. Yes! I have a pet theory here about why this child was so special to David. David had a very distinguishing characteristic compared to most of the men in that culture and in that area. Do you remember what it was? He had red hair. Now, Scripture does not say this, but I'd bet my bottom dollar that this child also had red hair just like David. Consequently he would have grown up a marked man, a recognizable bastard in a society that condemned that. It was both an act of judgment against David, allowing him to realize what his sin had really caused, and it was also an act of mercy for the child, I believe. The child is home with the Lord. David had nineteen sons, but this one was really special

II Samuel 12 15b:

**Then the Lord struck the child that Uriah's widow** [Widow is not right. It is Uriah's "wife" still. God is not accepting Bathsheba as David's wife yet. Something has not happened yet. David has not yet "loved" his wife. He has not yet committed himself to her. He has married her because that took care of the problem, but she is not his wife] **bore to David, so that he was very sick. David therefore inquired of God for the child; and David fasted and went and lay all night on the ground. And the elders of his household stood beside him in order to raise him up from the ground, but he was unwilling and would not eat food with them. Then it happened on the seventh day that the child died. And the servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they said, "Behold, while the child was still alive, we spoke to him and he did not listen to our voice. How then can we**

*tell him that the child is dead, since he might do himself harm!"* [His burden of guilt is so strong that they are afraid David will commit suicide.]

Now, how much did David want this Child? How much did he feel the guilt over what he was doing to this child? He "lay all night on the ground." God is really bringing home to him the result of his sin. How long does he let David go through this? Seven days. What is familiar about the time period? There was another seven day period of mourning here, a pretty flippant one, "Do it because of ceremony. Get it over with so I can get on with hiding my sin." What was the mourning period for Uriah the Hittite? Seven days. That was standard procedure. That was the custom. That was the culture. So they brushed off old Uriah with a quick seven day memorial, and David immediately married Bathsheba to cover his sin, he thought. That was the extent of his concern over Uriah. So God allowed him seven days of real mourning; seven days to feel what it was like to lose someone he really loved. All the while, of course, the child was dying. That had yet to dawn on David. So David was really mourning hoping God didn't mean what he said and trying everything he could in the way of repentance and mourning to get God to change his mind. Fortunately God didn't do that.

II Samuel 12:19:

**But when David saw that his servants were whispering together, David perceived that the child was dead; so David said to his servants, "Is the child dead?" And they said, "He is dead." So David arose from the ground, washed, anointed himself, and changed his clothes; and he came into the house of the Lord and worshiped. Then he came to his own house, and when he requested, they set food before him and he ate. Then his servants said to him, "What is this thing that you have done? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept; but when the child died, you arose and ate food." [You've got it backwards.] And he said, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept for I said, 'Who knows, the Lord may be gracious to me, that the child may live.' But now he has died, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me."**

Did David accept the discipline of God? Yes. When God took the child after seven days of begging, pleading, humbling himself, fasting and mourning and God said, "No!" what did David do? He quietly accepted God's judgment, got up, dressed, anointed himself, shaved, worshiped, went in and had breakfast. He accepted the discipline of God.

Hebrews 12 speaks to this. "All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness." "Gymnasium" is actually the word for training. It is the Greek word for nakedness. The Greeks stripped down to the nude to go into the gymnasium and work themselves into a sweat. The Greeks had to sign an eight month contract which they could not break without forfeiting any chance to participate in the games. They lived under very harsh dietary rules, but after shaping and molding their bodies under very harsh discipline, they were allowed to run in the races. That is exactly the term used here for training. God puts you in the "gymnasium." He strips you naked, and then he begins to shape you and mold you. There is no facade, no clothing, nothing to hide you. It is a long process, and it requires a commitment of the will. It says, "No discipline for the moment seems to be joyful, rather sorrowful." God knows that. He doesn't say, "Hallelujah" when you have cancer. But he says, "You allow me to discipline you and afterward, when I have finished "gymnasiuming" you, you will produce the peaceful fruit of righteousness, and you will share my holiness. That is what I am doing it for"

So David understood that back in the Old Testament. Then after seven days, God said, "That's it, the baby goes," David accepted God's discipline, got up and went about his business. The servants think, "Well, this is crazy. When the baby was dying we were afraid you were going to kill yourself. Now he's dead and gone and you get up, shave, eat breakfast and go about your business. Now is when your mourning should start not back then." But if David beat his breast, tore his clothes, lay on the ground and fasted now, what would that have indicated between him and God? It would have meant he had never really accepted God's discipline. He understood he was not to mourn, that this was God's discipline and that it was God's right and that it was right. So he accepted it. He got up, rejected the customary mourning and went about his business. God was making David a man after his

own heart. He had just put him through a course in "gymnasium." The result of that is verse 24:

II Samuel 12:24:

**Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba,** [The first time God has called Bathsheba his wife and the first time he has named her, as a matter of fact. Apparently the guilt and the crushing of the loss of the child has broken David and their common loss has brought love into his life for her, a commitment to her. He goes in and comforts her] **and went in to her and lay with her; and she gave birth to a son, and he named him Solomon.** [We know from I Chronicles that God gave that name to David. He said, "You are to call him Solomon, which means "peaceful" because he is to be a man of peace and he is to build my temple." God even named him as David's successor, and he was actually way down the line of succession.]

**Comment from class:** Don't you think maybe the fact that Bathsheba is called David's wife here and Uriah's wife before has to do with the fact that Uriah was still alive when David committed his sin with her but now she is his wife?

**Bob's response:** I think what happened was a change of David's heart. Up to now Bathsheba has been either a desire to gratify his lust or a problem. She has not been an object of love. David has had a real problem with her. Now the child that came out of that union really captured David's heart. When the child was taken, he was crushed. The shell was cracked and smashed, and of course, Bathsheba was crushed also. This was her firstborn, as far as we know. We don't know for sure. It may not be, but it was her child. It was the crushing of David that produced the sweet aroma of love. So he comforted his wife now. And the first time he comforts her she is called "his wife" and the name Bathsheba is mentioned.

Then God names their child Solomon, "peaceful," because his reign would be peaceful. Also, "he is to build My temple," we are told in I Chronicles 22. More than that we are told in the latter part of verse 24.

II Samuel 12:24b:

**Now the Lord loved him and sent word through Nathan the prophet, and he named him Jedidiah [Beloved of the Lord] for the Lord's sake."**

Why do you think God gave Solomon a second name? David has been a murderer, an adulterer, a coveter, a deceiver, you name it, and when he has a second son, God deliberately sends Nathan to tell him "Jehovah sent me because he wants a second name given to that child "The beloved of Jehovah." What does that indicate to David? Acceptance! The issue is closed as far as God is concerned. The consequences will go on. He has promised that, but as far as God is concerned the issue is closed. David has been disciplined. David has accepted the discipline, and God has said, "The issue is closed." It is reassurance to David that he is totally clean, totally available, totally usable. God always goes first class.

The tragedy is what became of Solomon. He had 700 first class wives, 300 concubines, a life that was far away from Jehovah, and he died a tyrant. Peaceful Solomon, the man who was "beloved of Jehovah" died a tyrant and away from Jehovah. Where were those seeds sown in the life of Solomon and by whom were they sown? David, a man after God's own heart. Don't ever mess with God. David was totally forgiven. David was totally cleansed. David was totally restored, and he was God's man again. But he had sown some seeds, and they were going to produce. The seeds were wild oats, and they were going to produce wild oats. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man sows he shall also reap." David sowed to the flesh and of the flesh reaped corruption. If you sow to the Spirit, you reap of the Spirit life everlasting. It was true of David 3,000 years ago, and it is true of us right down here today. God goes first class in BOTH directions. God help us to go in the right one.

Father, we just thank you so much for the fact that you are a first class guy, that you love us enough that you will hurt us desperately and badly if necessary to bring us back, that you will not let us stay in our sin, that you will do whatever is necessary to get our attention and turn us around because you love us not because you are trying to get even. Thank you, Father, when we do turn

you will glorify us first class also, that at the end of David's life you, yourself, state that he is a man after your own heart. We don't understand that kind of grace, that kind of love, Father. When we look at the record of David and then look at our own record, we don't understand that either. Father, thank you for being a gracious, loving God. Thank you for being a faithful, committed God. We know because of You and Your faithfulness and Your love, we are going to make it. Easy or hard we are going to make it. We shall be sons of the living God and experience his love and position. We thank you in Jesus' name. Amen.

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## Chapter Twenty-eight

### David's Repentance Part I

#### II Psalm 51:1-9

Today we are beginning a look at Psalm 51. Last week we left our hero having been confronted about his sins by God through Nathan the prophet. He fully confessed them saying, "I have sinned against the Lord." [II Samuel 12:13] Then Nathan said to him, "The Lord also has taken away your sin; you shall not die. However, because this deed has given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child that is born to you shall surely die." Then the Lord strikes the child will illness and David begins his prayer of repentance, of seeking the grace of God. It is probably right here, hopefully to convince the Lord the child should not die, that our lesson today fits.

There are really four or five pleas in this Psalm. Verses 1 through 4 are a plea for forgiveness. David has just been confronted by his sin. As you recall, he has been hiding it for over a year. During that time he has been wrung dry because of that and because of his guilt. His life has been pretty miserable even though he has kept up a facade and kept up the leadership of the country, condemning men to death for the same crimes he committed. He has also led the worship of Yahweh knowing all the while there is unconfessed sin in his life. During this time God just quietly squeezed him, so when it came time for God to put the finger on him, he was a broken man. So his first plea, of course, is for forgiveness.

As you know, Hebrew poetry is repetitive. It contains parallelism. One line says something and the next line may repeat the same idea with a different nuance or expand on the idea of maybe even give a contrast to the idea. So you will see parallelism here throughout. Each verse has two lines.

Psalm 51:1:

**For the choir director. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.**

**Be gracious to me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Thy compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. For I know [am conscious of] my transgressions, [literally: my rebelling, willful sin] And my sin is ever before me. Against Thee, Thee only, I have sinned, And done what is evil in Thy sight, So that Thou art justified when Thou dost speak, And blameless when Thou dost judge.**

His plea for forgiveness starts out "Be gracious to me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Thy compassion blot out my transgressions." Why doesn't he plead for God's justice? [*Loud laughter from the class*] Right! He is a dead man, and he knows it. He has violated the 6th, 7th and 10th commandments along with some others plus a little hypocrisy, and he is dead. Apart from the grace of God he is through. He has had it. Even though he is the king, there is no provision in the ten commandments for kings to sin and order other

people to be killed. So David knows that apart from the grace, the mercy, the lovingkindness of God, [which has the idea of pity] compassion of God, [which has the idea of sympathy] he isn't going to make it. So he first appeals to God's character. He knows his God is a God of lovingkindness, a God of compassion. He is not a God like the pagan gods around him. His God really loves his creatures. He is going to incarnate himself in a human body, soul and spirit and will be an experiential God. David senses way back then that the God he has is a God who really understands human beings. So David appeals to the compassion, the mercy of this God. He knows, as far as he is concerned, he doesn't have a leg to stand on.

Interestingly enough he acknowledges these are transgressions. They are not just sins. They are not things that happened in ignorance. These are willful. The word could be translated "rebellious." He is a deliberate rebel against the known will of God, and he knows it. So he wants his rebellion blotted out. The Mosaic law has no sacrifice for sins of willfulness, or sins of the high hand [lifting your hand against Jehovah.] There is no covering for those sins, so he doesn't ask for that. He asks that God might "blot them out." God always goes first class. So David sees way back in those days that if his heart is really going to be free from guilt and cleansed from rebellion, God has to do a complete blotting out job. With an unclean heart he cannot go through the rituals that speak symbolically of a cleansed heart.

Notice David says he wants to blot it out thoroughly. Why thoroughly? "Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin." What has David learned about sin that makes him want to be totally clean with not one little speck left? How did David start out to become an adulterer, a murderer, a liar and a hypocrite? Class: One look. Bob: Right. Just one little dinky bit of lust! That's all. That was all it took to start the whole snowball down into the pit. He realizes now, "I don't want just a washing job, I want a thorough washing and cleansing on every spot on me. I can't trust me."

Then he also realizes that this blotting out has to be done by a "washing and a cleansing." He is dirty. He feels guilty. He has felt guilt for some time. It is getting dirtier and dirtier, and the dirtier he feels, the more estranged and alienated he feels from a God who is Holy. The primary attribute of God, as revealed in the Scriptures, is not love. It is not grace. It is not mercy. It is holiness. The word of God to mankind is, "Be ye holy for I am holy." Now it does not say God is lopsided. It does say, however, that the fact that God is a holy God is over and above all others the issue in dealing with mankind. God cannot deal with us on any other basis than his holiness. He does not wink at sin. He cannot wink at sin. He says, "I cannot deny myself." He is not like the pagan gods who do anything. Our God is constrained by his character. And the chief attribute of his character as he reveals it is holiness. So everything that God does must be done in the context of his holiness. If he is to have mercy, lovingkindness, compassion and grace toward David, he must first deal with his holiness. So David realizes there has to be a washing and a cleansing of him by God or he is a dead man.

**Comment from class:** I have thought very often on the theory of God and the only way I can even approach getting a handle on it is through my own transgressions or what's wrong in my life. How do you approach it?

**Bob's response:** Same feeling. There is no way I can describe God except as God describes himself. He "...dwells in unapproachable light whom no man has seen or can see." That is describing Jesus Christ in context of I Timothy 6:16. I think of light as being bright; it is clean; it exposes; it reveals. There are no shadows in it. That's how I think of God's holiness. It is an infinite light, everything wide open, nothing concealed, totally penetrating every nook and cranny of my being and laying it out for what it is. There is no hiding. I can't turn down the light. I kind of think of it in that way.

To try and put the purity and holiness of God in human terms is a bit difficult. But he does describe his Son as dwelling in light that is unapproachable whom no man has seen or can see. As flawed and fallen creatures, there is no way we can be in that kind of a presence. It would destroy us! In the day of laser beams it makes more sense to us. We better understand how light can destroy now. So that is kind of how I picture God's purity and holiness. God has no flaws in his character, so he wants himself totally revealed.

The whole of the Bible is the revelation of God. God's very name of Yahweh means I AM THAT I AM and also

the composition that I WILL BE THAT I SHALL BE or WILL BE. That little verb has the idea "I am the God who eternally exists, who is increasingly coming to be in the sense of increasingly revealing myself." That is the covenant name of God, Yahweh. He is a God who has no flaws, no dark places. He wants to be totally exposed to mankind that we might see what God really wants for man. So God is willing to expose himself totally and utterly up to becoming incarnate and going through the same birth and growing process that man does, all the while displaying his purity and his holiness in impure circumstances amongst impure people. So God wants us to know him totally as far as the finite mind is able to. God knows us totally as far as an infinite mind does. That is why Hebrews 4:15-16 says we are to come "boldly [or literally with free speech] to the throne of grace" when we sin "that we might receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need." because we have a high priest "...who has been tempted in all things as *we are yet* without sin." We have an experiential God who can literally understand us. He has been revealing himself, and he wants us to reveal ourselves. That is why the Christian life is a life of transparency. We ought to be a transparent people.

That is why we try to encourage things like body life, but it is difficult. We tend to hide our tremendous needs behind a facade because we don't want to let on how needy we really are. That is exactly the opposite of God. God just displays himself in the Scriptures, and that is what God wants from us.

That is what he is doing with David here. He is making David reveal himself. He has squeezed David dry that David might reveal himself. I often think how nice it would have been to have lived back in those days. Then I think again; No it wouldn't. David for the rest of his eternal existence will be displayed by God in the Scriptures. When we get upstairs God is not going to erase 1st and 2nd Samuel and Psalm 51. So I am glad I didn't live during the writing of the Scriptures. I don't think I have a track record I would want exhibited there.

**Comment from class:** Bob, is it possible God brought about Bathsheba's conception to put David through all this. Because of the conception, it couldn't be hidden.

**Bob's response:** God probably picked the most fertile time in Bathsheba's whole cycle and that was no accident. God wanted this revealed. David was the king, God's anointed ruler, the example to all Israel. Priests, prophets and kings were God's men; God's vicars; God's substitutes for God. They were the visible manifestation of God in the kingdom of Israel. You were to look at David and see God. You were to look at Nathan and see God. You were to look at Abimelech or Zadok, the high priests, and see God. They were like pastors, elders. They were example Christians. And when God deals with example Christians, he goes first class because they are supposed to be first class. When David sinned he went first class and God dealt with him first class.

Then we have "For I know my transgressions. [I am conscious of my rebellions] and my sin is ever before me." David wants them blotted out. He can't handle his guilt. It is squeezing him dry, and it is doing it night and day. What is one of the basic problems of sin? I can't forget it. I can have remorse and shame and even repentance, but I can't forget the sin. Now God will forget it [speaking anthropomorphically, in human terms] but I don't forget it. So the next time I look God in the face, there is a barrier of my shame and humiliation. My ego has been crushed. I have done something you wouldn't believe, and I can't believe that God has forgotten and blotted it out, even though he says so. So there comes an alienation from God that is not from God. It is from me. I have been forgiven. I have been cleansed but I still have a sense of shame and humiliation. I don't really feel clean. I John 1:9 says, "If you confess your sin, [If you agree with God about your sin] he is faithful and righteous to forgive your sin and to cleanse you from ALL unrighteousness." Why do you feel dirty five minutes later? Because of shame.

Secondly, sin also produces a new chink in your armor. That snowball as it gains mass also gains inertia, resistance to change. The more I say "yes" to sin, the easier it becomes to say "yes" to sin and the more difficult it becomes to say "no." So David knows he has to have this thing dealt with. He does it by facing up to his responsibility.

Verse 4: "Against Thee, Thee only, I have sinned, and done what is evil in Thy sight. So that [for the purpose; this confession is for the purpose that] Thou [God] art justified when Thou dost speak, [in the context of "judgment"] and blameless when Thou dost judge." David goes right back and points out that his basic sin was against God.

Why would that be true? Why is it that any sin, no matter what, is essentially against God? That is true for Christians. But even for non-Christians sin is still against God. What determines if something is sin? Who is the standard of sin? God. Anything that is less than God's character or violates God's will or in any way his creative order is sinful, whether society recognizes it or not. God did not design a sinful world, "...As through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.." [Rom 5:12] is the Scripture. God designed a world that was perfect [at least in the endemic area] and was to be perfect through the creative and responsible ruling of man as he went out in God's power to carry out God's assignment. So when we sin we violate God's moral order.

When we sin, we deliberately tell God, "Stick it in your ear." So true confession does what? What did it do here? David confessed for the purpose that God might be what, "...justified when Thou dost speak, and blameless when Thou dost judge." True repentance says, "You are right and I am wrong. Whatever you choose to do, you are right. You are just." False repentance justifies me. We rationalize, "You really shouldn't punish me totally, God. I am an Irishman. A violent temper goes with my race. We are known for tempers, for getting in fights. That is just part of me." or "I have a strong sensual nature, God, and you shouldn't blame me for Bathsheba. I am a Latin Jew." Rationalization does not justify God, it justifies me, "You don't have the right to punish me all the way, God. It wasn't really all my fault." On the other hand, true repentance says, "Against Thee, Thee only, I have sinned...and done what is evil in Thy sight." In that way I am choosing to justify God instead of myself.

When I justify myself, I am not asking God to forgive my sin, I am asking him to excuse it. I can find no place in all of Scripture where God has made provision for excusing sin. However, there is total provision for forgiveness of sin. So God is not being mean and trying to win the argument when he demands that you justify him. That is the only way to forgiveness.

Then in verses 5 through 9 David makes a plea for spiritual healing. First he sought forgiveness, and now he wants to be made whole again.

Psalm 51:5-9:

**Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me. Behold, Thou dost desire truth in the innermost being, And in the hidden part Thou wilt make me know wisdom [Notice the parallelism going through here] Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness, Let the bones which Thou hast broken rejoice. Hide Thy face from my sins, And blot out all me iniquities.**

What does verse 5 indicate is the first step in becoming whole again? "Behold I was brought forth in iniquity [twisted]" What kind of a character did David have when he came out of his mother's womb? Class: Sinful. Bob: Yes! A twisted nature. David sinned because he was a sinner. Adam sinned to become a sinner, but everyone else sins because they are sinners. That is the natural fruit. That little "blossom" that you are just letting grow into a beautiful flower ends up a stinkweed before you know it because we are all born flawed. That is what he is saying here, "And in sin my mother conceived me." That doesn't necessarily mean he was conceived out of wedlock, but in sin his mother brought him forth because she was a sinner. Like produces like. So babies have three strikes on them when they are born. They are born sinners. Doubt me? Who taught your child to bellow his lungs out in the middle of the night for "chow now?" You have had a horrible day with this little savage and daddy has had a rotten day at the office, but junior runs the house, all 18" of him. Now who taught him to be totally self-centered? When he gets to the point where he has a rational mind and can choose, what piece of cake does he choose; the small one, the lowest place? Hardly, he belts little sister in the face and grabs the biggest piece. You trained him to do that did you? No, that is his natural little self.

There is another side to the coin though. Yes, I was born in iniquity and in sin my mother conceived me. I was born with a twisted, flawed and fallen nature, but there is an opposite, Jesus Christ. In exchange for my twisted nature I can have the nature of God.

So the first thing David does is acknowledge he is lost. He could promise God all he wanted that he would never

do it again, but he knows he can't. The next time temptation comes along, he may fall. So he tells God, "I can't solve my own problem." He can't move. He can't change jobs. He can't change wives. He can't change anything. Besides what is the problem with trying any of these things? The problem is that I go with them, and I am the problem. Remember the famous theologian Pogo, "We have met the enemy, and he is us." If I try to kid myself that I am not the problem, I can spend my whole life running around to different jobs, different locations, different environments, different wives, different husbands, whatever, but unfortunately the problem goes right with me. The day I face up to the fact that I am a twisted, flawed and fallen creature and that I am the problem, healing begins.

We can see this in verse 6, "Behold," he says, "Thou dost desire truth in the innermost being [he had been living in deceit] and in the hidden part Thou will make me know wisdom." How does he know this is true? What does the Old Testament state is one of the requirements as king [Deut. 17:14-20]? He is to be a man of the word. God's purpose in making man is written right in the Old Testament. God made us "in his image and in his likeness." It doubles it in intensity. God made me to be a godly person.

David knows he was not designed to be an adulterer and a murderer. He was designed to have truth in his innermost being and for his hidden parts to know wisdom. The word for "wisdom" is the word to discern good from evil. God did not design David to be this way. David has made some bad choices. So he says, "Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." He pleads with God to cleanse him. He uses an interesting term with hyssop. Hyssop was the little bush they used to dip in the blood and sprinkle things in the ceremony of cleansing. One of the things they would sprinkle was a cleansed leper. Once the leprosy had been dealt with and was no longer infectious, the leper could go to a priest and go through a ceremonial cleansing. The priest would dip the hyssop in blood and sprinkle him with blood seven times. It was symbolic that he was clean before God. Scarred, yes. He may have the leper's complete whiteness. He may have lost fingers, but he was clean before God. David compared to the purity of God sees himself kind of as a leper, but he knows even a scarred leper when he is clean is accepted.

**Comment from class:** Did that ever happen?

**Bob's response:** Oh, yes! There is Miriam. When Miriam and Aaron, brother and sister of Moses, chose to dishonor Moses by saying, "How come you get to be the big shot? We're of the same blood. We're the same family. In fact Aaron is your mouthpiece." God called the three of them out in the tent of meeting [Numbers 12]. He said, "How dare you speak about Moses like that? To others I speak in dreams and visions, but to Moses I speak face-to-face. How dare you talk to him like that!" Immediately Miriam became leprous; white as snow. Aaron pleaded with Moses to intercede with God, but God said for her to stay outside the camp for seven days and then he cleansed her. God, in his grace, did cleanse lepers, but one of the things recognizable in the Old Testament was any cleansing of leprosy was a gift of God. Only God could do it. There was no other way they could cleanse lepers. That is what Christ was telling them when he cleansed the lepers. He was saying, "Hey! God is here." The Jews of all people knew leprosy could only be cleansed by God, and Christ was all over the place cleansing lepers

A cleansed leper would still be a scarred person. A cleansed David is still a scarred person, and he sees himself as a leper here. He says, "Make me to hear joy and gladness. Let the bones which Thou hast broken rejoice." He wants to be out from under the crushing weight of sin and guilt and back singing joyfully to the Lord. His words are a beautiful illustration of the mark of true repentance. God has so crushed him with guilt that he says here, "Let the bones which THOU hast broken rejoice," as well as saying, "Make me to hear joy and gladness."

A truly repentant person exhibits thankfulness with no resentment or bitterness. They justify God. They agree with God, "That was necessary in my life," knowing that God only does what is necessary to accomplish his purpose. David is that way. He has been promised by God that the sword will never depart from his house, that his own wives will be raped in front of all of Israel. He is going to have nothing but tumult for the rest of his reign. The child born of this illicit union is going to die. God has told him all these things and has also given him the squeeze



for at least one whole year, and he knows it is from God, "The bones which YOU have broken."

Lastly, "Hide Thy face from my sins, And blot out all my iniquities." He seeks the ultimate of spiritual healing which is eyeball-to-eyeball with a Holy God with no sense of shame, and he knows there is no possibility in the law to have that kind of healing.

That is one of the hardest thing to get across to people. I do not care what your sin is, if you truly confess it, you can look eyeball-to-eyeball with you God, "who is a Holy God who dwells in light unapproachable and who no man has seen or ever can see" and have no sense of shame. He really means it, my friends, when he says, "if you confess your sins [if you agree with God, that is what it says, if you justify God and not excuse yourself] he will not only forgive your sin, but he will cleanse you from all unrighteousness." A murderer, adulterer, hypocrite for over a year, a man who sent men to their death for the very thing he had done, who led worship while knowing he was hiding sin, if he confesses his sin, God says, "You can look me in the face, eyeball-to-eyeball. I will hide my face from your sins and blot out your iniquities." This is the figure used. It doesn't say God is going to forget them. God can't throw away his mind, but he can give you the ability to grasp what he has done in your life, and you can look eyeball-to-eyeball at him and have no sense of shame for what you have done. He expresses that cleansing here as blotting it out, hiding it from his face, or putting it behind his back in the depths of the sea. God again goes first class. When he forgives, he forgets [These are human terms] and from that point on there should never ever be any shame between you and God over a truly confessed sin no matter what it was.

**Comment from class:** I asked awhile back about why Solomon was allowed to reign. Is that the answer, once it's over and David is forgiven, that is it?

**Bob's response:** God deliberately chooses the next child of that union because why? What had David done about the union? He went to his wife and comforted her. He began to love her as a woman, as a wife. Up to now she has been a useful object to satisfy his lust or a problem to get rid of. But when God broke him, he went to her and comforted her, and she shifted from "Uriah's wife" to "his wife." Because he had already confessed when Bathsheba conceived Solomon, he was a child of a godly marriage. Yes, the marriage came about by adultery and murder, but it was cleansed so they could actually have a godly marriage. So God said, "Call him Solomon. He is going to build my temple, David. And more than that, call him Jedidiah, 'beloved of Yahweh.' That is how thoroughly I have cleansed you from sin and forgotten it. You do not have to look me in the eye with shame at all."

We'll get verses 10-19 of Psalm 51 and then in chapter 13 of II Samuel, we will begin to see the wages of sin worked out in the life of the family of David. This gorgeous Psalm does not stop the consequences of David's sin. He has total fellowship, eyeball-to-eyeball, with a Holy God, but the consequences of that sin continue to work themselves out. It is a tragic thing.

Father, we just thank you so much for the cleansing and forgiveness that we get from you. We who are born twisted and choose twistedness, Father, and by confession to you have full forgiveness and full cleansing. We your creatures can look you right in the eye even though you dwell in light unapproachable who no man has seen nor can see you are so holy, pure and yet we can look at you with no shame, no sense of guilt, totally as if we had never sinned because of the work of Jesus Christ our Lord and our God in whose name we pray. Amen.

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## Chapter Twenty-nine

### David's Repentance Part II

## Psalm 51:10-19

We are now looking at David's famous psalm of repentance. It probably dates somewhere between Nathan the prophet putting the finger on David and the Lord taking home the baby which Bathsheba had conceived. It is one of the best prayers I have ever seen for dealing with the problem of guilt.

The tragedy of guilt plagues us all. It is a most destructive emotion. It robs us of our fellowship with God and our fellowship with others. It also destroys our self-worth. This prayer gives us a practical way to deal with the problem of guilt.

As we saw, David started out in verses 1 through 4 with a plea for forgiveness. He depended entirely on God's character not upon anything he had to offer. He did not rationalize in anyway. He did not try to excuse his sin in anyway. He ask God to forgive him. He fully confessed that he was wrong and God was right. He justified God. There is no forgiveness for sin as long as there is rationalization. As we saw last time, God has made absolutely no provision anywhere in Scripture for excusing sin. Even the sins of ignorance have to be paid for by the blood of Jesus Christ. The Day of Atonement was the day each year that all of Israel came before God to sacrifice for the sins of ignorance. First the High Priest took the blood into the Holy of Holies to sacrifice for his own sins. Next he took the blood into the Holy of Holies to sacrifice for the sins of the people. God never ever excuses sin whether it be of ignorance or willful rebellion or whatever. So if I excuse sin, I slam the door on forgiveness. I cannot have justification of Roe and justification of God. I cannot have excuses and rationalization for Roe and forgiveness from God. There is no provision for that in Scripture. So David didn't even try it. He just quietly said, "I'm wrong. You're right." He totally justified God and received forgiveness.

Then he sought more. Just forgiveness was not enough. When we sin, we scar ourselves, and it takes time for those scars to heal. So, in the next section, 5 through 9, David asked that he might have spiritual healing. True, the moment he justified God at the expense of himself, he was totally forgiven and cleansed from ALL unrighteousness. In Jeremiah 31 and Hebrews 10, God says he forgets the sin, so there is nothing between David and God. However, there are consequences of sin. They are evident both in his spiritual walk and in the fact that chinks in his armor have been opened making him more vulnerable to Satan. So he prays for a healing, a spiritual healing.

Today we come to verse 10. It is the next step in the process of healing real guilt. David enters a plea for a restoration of fellowship with God. For a year now he has been playing the hypocrite and, as we saw in Psalm 32, has been wrung dry. He longs to have fellowship with his God restored. Apart from this active intercourse with God, there is no enjoyment, no spiritual victory, no walk with the Lord.

In 10-13 then we pick up this plea for restoration of fellowship.

Psalm 51:10:

**Create in me a clean heart, O God; And renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Thy presence; And do not take Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; And sustain me with a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors Thy ways; And sinners will be converted to Thee.**

First plea to God is, "Create in me a clean heart." Up to now he has had a "dirty" heart, and he knows it. He wants a desire for righteousness, and he knows he cannot produce it in himself. He has just had one year of self-righteousness which is all he of himself can ever produce. So he starts right off with a plea for access to godliness which he knows will have to come from God. You notice there is no defensiveness about him. He does not try to defend himself along with his asking. His track record speaks so loudly that God wouldn't hear what he was saying anyway.

Then more than that he wants God to "Renew a steadfast spirit within me," a spirit that will hang in there. He wants a spirit that, when it is enticed by sin, will say "no" instead of "yes." He knows apart from God that is not

possible either.

Have you ever tried to say "no" to sin in your own strength, tough it out, hang in there, "I am not going to do this. I am not going to think those thoughts?" The more determined I am not to think them, the more I reinforce the fact that the thoughts are there. Try as I might I cannot escape that memory. By my deliberate pressure I only emphasize the thing I am trying to forget; I reinforce the very sin I am trying to get rid of. Trying harder will not blot it out. It is only when in helplessness I throw myself on God and ask him in his power to blot out that sin from my thought life that it will happen.

God has a very special two step program; Romans 6:6 and Romans 6:11ff. The key to victory is that second step. Verse 6 tells you you have been crucified with Christ so your "Old Man" has literally been rendered inoperative. It doesn't have to live any longer. Then verse 11 says to reckon that to be true. Act like it is true. How? Stop going on yielding the members of your body to sin as weapons of unrighteousness. Stop doing something you are already doing, letting this stuff come into your life. Say "no" to it. Why? Because God says you can say "no" to it. You have been crucified with Christ. You have been identified in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. You are a dead man to that "Old Man," and dead men don't respond any longer. Have you ever been up to Alta Mesa Memorial Park? I've had funerals up there, and no matter what you do there, no matter what you say, there is no response, absolutely none! Why? They are dead. God says that is literally true in a Christian's life. You have died to the "Old Man." so, you can say "no." You can stop yielding your members to sin as weapons of unrighteousness. In the name of Jesus Christ say "no." but don't stop there. Immediately "present yourself to God as those alive from the dead and your members *as* instruments of righteousness [weapons of righteousness] to God, for sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace."

You are to take the same instrument used for unrighteousness and give it to God in thanksgiving to be used now as a weapon of righteousness. Just two steps. It will work every time if you take that second step. Faith is exercised first by saying "no" in the name of Jesus Christ, but faith fills the vacuum the second time by saying "yes" to God. "Here, God, you take it. Fill that void with something righteous." I cannot say this often enough. If you stop with saying "no," you will only reinforce the sin. You must claim that what God says is true and that you are not only dead to sin but that God is alive in you. You present yourself to God as one alive from the dead. You are beyond the grave. Old Adam is on the wrong side of the tomb. You need to present that member, the mind, the eye, the ear, whatever is the invasion route, to God as a weapon of righteousness, My Friend, you practice that, and you will have victory over sin as you have never had victory in your life. Practice that, and it will become a habit. Now, your flesh will not change; the attacks will not change; the lust will not change, but you'll remember you are dead to them, and that is called victory. That is called freedom.

So David issues this heartfelt plea for a spirit that is steadfast, that will say "no" when enticed by sin.

His next plea is almost a cry of anguish, verse 11, "Do not cast me away from Thy presence, And do not take Thy Holy Spirit from me." He knows there is no possibility of a clean heart and steadfast spirit if God withdraws his presence or his spirit of godliness. What alarming example does David have of what happens when God withdraws his Spirit? Saul! Saul was God's anointed king over Israel. God did not set him up to fail, you will remember. He was set up to reign, and God promised him, "If you obey me, Saul, I will establish your dynasty forever." God doesn't lie and God doesn't play games, so Saul had the opportunity for an everlasting dynasty. He chose instead to deliberately rebel against God, against light. So God first took away his dynasty but left him the throne. Then God even took away his throne. He said, "I have replaced you with another, your neighbor who is better than you." How did Saul respond to that, repentance? No, he said, "No way!" and continued to hang onto the throne in spite of Jehovah. Now look at David. What was his sin? Exactly the same as Saul's, rebellion against Yahweh. When God removed the control of the Holy Spirit of God from Saul, what happened to Saul? Whose control took over? Demons, demonic power.

We are not talking, now, about losing salvation. We're dealing with an Old Testament passage. We are talking about control of the Spirit. The Spirit came mightily on Saul as king. The Spirit left Saul as king. It was empowerment. It was what we call the "filling of the Spirit," Ephesians 5. The word is probably better translated

control.

**Comment from Class:** Isn't that like our nation today with the moral problems we have and the gradual moving away from God?

**Bob's response:** Sure we're open to the same demonic powers they were. However, I don't think our country has ever been under the actual control of the Spirit. Some of our founding fathers were more Unitarian than Christian. Some were Christians. Some were not. We are a nation under God, yes, but we are not necessarily a nation under Christ. I think we tend to read much into our founding fathers that is not really there. They were godly men in the sense that many of them were Christians, but then, on the other hand, many of them were not. This nation has never been a theocracy. It has always been a democracy. But [Israel] at Saul's time was a theocracy. It acknowledged that God was its king. So when the king stepped out of line, God set him aside and delivered him over to demonic powers. Remember David was the one who strummed the harp when Saul was insane. He had a very close personal view of what happened too a man of God who chose to go his own way. He was there. He almost got pinned to the wall two times by this maniac. So with this background he is terrified. He has just been through a year's experience of grieving the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God has not been taken away, but it sure has been grieved, and David has been through hell on earth.

So his plea here is "Do not cast me away from Thy presence, Don't take Thy Holy Spirit from me." He's aware of the tragedy of Saul, God's anointed, who before he died consulted not God but a Medium, a demon. He went to the depths. He never consulted God during the last days of his life. He went right to the source, the demonic powers controlling him.

Don't ever kid yourself that you can dabble in the occult with impunity. Whether you're Christian or non-Christian, never ever play with the occult. It is just deadly. I watched a movie one night that I knew I shouldn't be watching [I don't remember the name of it]. Deborah Kerr played in it and did a beautiful job. It was about two children, a son and a daughter, and an illicit love affair of two servants in a big household. It was absolutely chilling. It is demonic. The first time I saw it, I remember, this little tune they played went through my head and through my head and through my head. [By the way my son had that tune go through his head for a year. It was the most haunting melody you ever heard.] Years later the movie came by again. I remembered it had terrified me, but it was a tremendous play so I started watching it anyway. The Spirit of God said, "Stop it!" Well, I rationalized, "Oh, for goodness sakes it is only a movie, and Deborah Kerr is doing an extraordinary job. The acting is superb," and it was. The two little children were delightful. I watched that movie in defiance of the Spirit of God. By the time it was over and I went to bed, I was in the worst depression of my life. It is a demonic movie. It is brilliantly acted but it is about demonic possession. When God said, "Stop!" I didn't. I've got news for you; when it comes back again, I am not about to watch it. That night scared the living daylights out of me. I was in a battle the whole night long, and half way through the night I was afraid of losing the fight. Never ever mess with that stuff.

**Comment from class:** What do you think David was thinking? David knew all about Saul during this year he was rebelling against God. Do you think he just rationalized?

**Bob's response:** Sure, I was rationalizing myself. "So this doesn't please God, so we have a little drying up of our experiential relationship." The problem is the drier the relationship gets the less you want to be involved with the person. When you know deep inside you are not pleasing someone, you have no desire to be intimately involved with them. So little by little you get drier and drier, and turn more and more away from God toward the things that will at least gratify, TV, sports, business, whatever. Then somewhere down the road you suddenly realize, "I haven't read by Bible in a week." The problem is you haven't even missed it. Likewise you haven't been doing any praying. I have had Christians tell me that. Not very long ago a Christian told me they didn't pray at all and never read their Bible. Well, how do you get to that place? By just quietly leaving God out, disobeying God, until it is just as natural as breathing to leave God out. From both a spiritual and emotional standpoint, this person's life displayed that. In the beginning David realized he was disobedient, but you can sear your conscience until it gets harder and harder. Eventually you don't even realize you are leaving God out. It is just your natural lifestyle. When some calamity hits you though, you suddenly realize, as this person did, that you haven't read the

Bible and prayed in a long time.

So David is desperately afraid now that this might happen to him because his sin is exactly the same as Saul's. So he says, verse 12, "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; And sustain me with a willing spirit." He realizes that the experience of God's presence can only come from God himself. There is no way he can have joy apart from God. You have experienced that and so have I. My Bible says in I John 3, "He that is born of God can no longer settle down and make his home in sin because he is born of God." Because I am indwelt by the living God, I cannot go back to the old life. Sure, I can go back and try, but it is kind of frightening. There is no joy in the old life anymore. There sure was when I was a non-believer. Probably "happiness" is a better word. By the way, the fruit of the Spirit is never happiness. It is "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness faithfulness" [Galatians 5:22]. It is not happiness. Happiness depends upon your circumstances. Joy depends on the indwelling salvation of the Lord. You can have joy and cancer, but you can't have happiness.

I discovered an astonishing thing one day after I came to Christ. I walked with the Lord a little bit, and then one day I said, "Aw, the heck with it. I'm going back." I found I couldn't go back. My old friends didn't seem quite so friendly. That nice bar that looked so great before didn't look quite so good anymore. The people weren't quite so wonderful. There didn't seem to be those stimulating conversations on great books and politics and religion anymore. Those wonderful people weren't quite so wonderful now. Mostly they were caging drinks. It was a pretty scary experience. I suddenly realized, "I have made a contract that I cannot break. I can't go back. I have to go forward." Well, I wasn't going forward, and I couldn't enjoy the past, and I wasn't enjoying the present with Jesus Christ. I was most miserable.

David discovered this. so he longs for God to "Restore to me the joy of Thy salvation, And sustain me with a willing spirit." He wants the spirit that is willing to be godly, that will step out and be God's man.

Then he moves into verse 13, "Then I will teach transgressors Thy ways; And sinners will be converted to Thee." I love this passage. It tells us how to evangelize. When I am walking in obedience to my Lord, when I am experiencing the joy of my salvation, I do not have to worry about the four spiritual laws and witnessing to one person a day. When people see a life lived out in obedience to Jesus Christ, supernatural power above and beyond circumstances, joy of the Lord in the midst of circumstances, they will want that. Jesus Christ didn't have to ring doorbells. He just walked down the street and was surrounded by crowds. When people see that Jesus Christ lives in me and I am possessed by him, they will come to me.. So "sinners will be converted to you." I will not convert anybody. God will convert people through me. It takes the pressure off.

I can remember when I first became a Christian. They didn't say as much, but the implication was that being a Christian meant going to church 4 times on Sunday, Sunday school, church, Christian Endeavor and church at night, prayer meeting on Wednesday night, witnessing to one person a day, reading your Bible everyday and praying. If your witnessing wasn't up to snuff at the end of the day, you'd better collar someone before you got home, or you hadn't met your daily quota. It was a miserable life. Now they didn't tell me to do that, but I watched the people and that was their lifestyle. Not all of them obviously, but vast numbers of Christians were doing exactly that. The quota system was nothing new to me. We had it where I used to work. However, when you walk with your Lord, sinners will be converted unto God as you share what Jesus Christ has done for you. God will do the converting. D. L. Moody had this down pat. He realized he was only a mouthpiece for God. He did not convert anybody. He ran into one of his "converts" on the streets of Chicago one day. The fellow was a panhandling drunk. He announced, "Hey, Dr. Moody, I'm one of your converts." Dr Moody said, "You sure must be. If you were Jesus Christ's convert, you wouldn't be like this." He understood the difference between winning a person to Christ by your own efforts and, on the other hand, allowing the life of Jesus Christ to reach out and convert others and pull them into the kingdom by that irresistible charge called Jesus Christ.

So David finally understands that he will be a tremendous vehicle for God. Sinners will be able to see, by the life of Jesus in David, that they can come to the same holy God in the midst of their sins. Romans 8:28 says, "All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose." God will take sin and make it work for righteousness. [That doesn't mean you get credit for your sin.] David understood

that God could take his sin and demonstrate to the Jewish people that Yahweh would accept all sinners if they came to him on HIS terms. On that basis, even a willful rebellious sinner like David could walk in the presence of God and be totally forgiven. That was a tremendous truth. The gods around the Israelites were certainly not like that. They required constant payment, child sacrifice, sexual worship. And even with that you had no security as to where you stood. You had to buy their affection. You had to make yourself right for them. You couldn't go to them as you were and expect them to accept you and cleanse you and make you as they were.

Psalm 51:14

***Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation; Then my tongue will joyfully sing of Thy righteousness. O Lord, open my lips, That my mouth may declare Thy praise, For Thou dost not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; Thou art not pleased with burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.***

Verse 14, "Deliver me from bloodguiltiness." That has the idea of blood violently shed."

"O God, Thou God of my salvation." Even as David asks for deliverance from bloodguiltiness, he knows that God has given him salvation. He has the possession of that, and he is secure in it.

"Then my tongue will joyfully sing of THY righteousness." Have you ever noticed that when you are out of fellowship with God that the doctrine of the righteousness of God, a wholly pure, totally righteous God who will not wink at any sin, is terrifying? Living in sin and thinking of a righteous God, a God of wrath, a God of thunderbolts, is pretty scary. Why? Because he is righteous. Because he has an inflexible standard. Because he has no favorites. Because he will not lower his standards one iota. I have no right to feel safe if I am living in sin, known sin, unrepentant sin. However, when I am obeying God, that same righteousness that can be so scary is one of the most wonderful things in my life. If my God is absolutely righteous and has an inflexible standard, he will accept nothing unless it is paid for in full. So I am totally secure. Jesus Christ could not have risen from that grave unless ALL my sins had been dealt with. God's standard makes no allowance for almost all. The proof that I am absolutely saved, totally saved, forever saved is that Christ rose from the grave. Whether I love God's righteousness or fear it, depends upon whether I am obeying or disobeying.

So David is saying that as soon as he gets rid of his bloodguiltiness, he will love the righteousness of God.

Verse 15. "O Lord, open my lips, That my mouth may declare Thy praise." David realizes that apart from the Spirit of God opening his lips he will never get back to a state of praising. We don't know how to pray, and we don't know how to praise either. My Bible says I don't know how to pray as I should, but it also says the Spirit of God takes my prayers and conforms them to the will of God. I know I should pray when I am hurting, but I don't always know what to pray for. However, as I begin to pray the Spirit will help me in my weakness. [Romans 8-26ff] The word literally means 'pick up a part of the table,' a part of the load. That will not occur, however, until I begin praying, but the moment I feel my dependence, sink to my knees and begin praying, the Spirit of God will pick up the front end of the table and take it straight to the will of God.

David sees that here. He wants to have worship that is acceptable to God. For one year he has been mouthing pat phrases, none of which have been worship. So he wants God to "Open my lips, That my mouth may declare Thy praise."

Verse 16. "For Thou dost not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; Thou art not pleased with burnt offering." There is no provision in the Old Testament for sins of willfulness. "I have nothing I can offer you, Lord. Even if I did I couldn't offer it because my heart hasn't been right. I sure couldn't offer you a burnt offering which pictures one totally consumed with the Father's will because for a whole year I haven't been there either. Under the Mosaic system I have nothing to offer you at all. All I have is me, just as I am, and that I willingly offer to you."

Verse 17. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite [crushed] heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." "What you really want is not the ritual, which has no value apart from commitment, but a fellow who has a crushed heart and a broken spirit." When we sin we are playing God. When we know something is wrong, and God has said it is wrong, but we do it anyway, we are choosing to sin. We are choosing to play God. We are putting our will in opposition to His will. Since God has died for my sin, it frees a holy God to lay down whatever terms he chooses for my salvation or restoration. His holiness has been satisfied. Now, for salvation or restoration, God's terms are my will returned to him by its own choice. Those are the terms he has laid down, and they are inflexible. David sees that here, and that is why he offers himself, "I have nothing to offer you except exactly what you want. You don't want the blood of goats. You want me. So I offer you me." And he understands that God accepts that.

Then he asks for one more thing. We never sin as an island. We always hurt others. So in 18 and 19 he pleads for forgiveness of the effect his sin has had on his people. David's sin was known, you remember, and the enemies of God blasphemed Yahweh because of it. Apparently the people had also become kind of sloppy because their king was leading them in worship while in unrepentant sin; adultery, murder, covetousness, etc. "If God accepts him, then God will accept us in a kind of sloppy way too." So little by little they began to slide away. So David pleads for them in verse 18:

Psalm 51:18:

**By Thy favor do good to Zion; Build the walls of Jerusalem.**

"By Thy favor," by your grace, restore them. It is interesting that although David was the cause of their becoming sloppy, he says, "They had a choice they could have made too. Yes, I am at fault in presenting them the opportunity to sin, but they could have chosen righteousness." So he asks God to be gracious on their behalf. They have no excuse either, but he wants his people, the ones he had caused to stumble, to be restored now too.

Psalm 51:19:

**Then Thou wilt delight in righteous sacrifices, In burnt offering and whole burnt offering;  
Then young bulls will be offered on Thine altar.**

When they become right with God, then their sacrifices become righteous. It is not the other way around. My sacrifices do not make me righteous. My righteousness makes my sacrifices righteous. In modern terms, my going to church, praying on my knees at five in the morning, giving my all to the ministry, memorizing Scripture do not make me righteous. They are simply religious rituals if they are not done with the right spirit. But if I come before God with a broken spirit and a broken and contrite heart, my commitment, my attitude toward my God will make all my actions righteous. We are not just talking about my prayer life, my Bible study, my giving, but also my business, my recreation, my family life, anything I do will become a sweet incense in the nostrils of God. "Then you will delight in righteous sacrifices, in burnt offering and whole burnt offering." It depends entirely upon me. That is what is so fascinating about it.

And the proof? I love the last line, "Then young bulls will be offered on Thine altar." You know the law in Leviticus 1 for offerings. There are a whole series of options. The most expensive was the bull. Then you could sacrifice a goat or a ram. They were also pretty expensive. Then you came down to birds, turtledoves, pigeons. Apparently as the people began to slide in their worship of God and their love affair with him, they began to offer the cheaper sacrifices, and maybe some with a blemish rather than unblemished. "When they get back to righteous sacrifices, they are going to start offering young bulls again." Why? What happens from your standpoint when you get to walking with your Lord again?

**Class:** You give your best.

**Bob:** Yes, and why do you give your best? Why would you offer a young bull to Jesus Christ rather than a goat or a lamb or even a bird? Let me ask you another question? When you got engaged to your wife, why did you go

in hock for the next twenty years for that engagement ring? You didn't go down and buy some little chip that fell off the jeweler's table onto the floor. Why did you buy something you knew you couldn't afford? Yeah! Your heart was with your fiancée. You were in love with her. You wanted the best for her. David sees that here. When his people fall in love with their Lord again, and they repent and come back to Him, there is going to be a shortage in the bull market.

This is a beautiful psalm of repentance. How do you get rid of guilt? You go to God for forgiveness, take your spiritual scars for healing and get a restoration of fellowship with him. Then you will have acceptable worship, a heart with a desire to praise God, and a deep longing to reach out to others that they might experience what you are experiencing. Then you will understand what it means to be forgiven, cleansed and with sins forgotten.

Next week, II Samuel 13. Back to the soap opera.

David committed two sins, adultery and murder. God says there are going to be consequences of those two sins. Watch when you read 13 and 14 how parallel the sins are. You do not sin with impunity.

Father, we thank you so much for your word and for the way it opens up the heart of God and let's us see inside you and what you really want. How it gives us an opportunity, Father, to be part of you and really understand your mind and your will and your actions and really get to know you and love you. Father, how wonderful it is to read a psalm like 51 and know the background of it. We may be adulterers, murders, coveters, hypocrites, Father, no matter what we are you are ready, willing and able to save us, ready, willing and able to restore us, forgive, forget. All it takes is our desire to be back in love with you no matter what it costs us. Thank you, Father, for this marvelous provision for our needs in such a glorious manner in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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## Chapter Thirty

### Amnon and Tamar

#### II Samuel 13

Today we're looking at Chapter 13 of II Samuel, the beginning of one of the sordid stages of David's life. One of the things we have talked about before is that God does not hide things. He lays out the truth cold whether he's referring to one of his greatest kings or to one of the least of his men. David was one of the greatest kings of Israel, if not the greatest, but he had a tragic side to him.

We are going to start our study this morning by going back to Exodus, Chapter 20 and the first 2 commandments because they are important in what happens to David.

Exodus 20:3

**#1-You shall have no other gods before Me. #2-You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the Lord Your God, am a jealous God, visiting iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.**

Those are not threats. They are commandments and statements of fact. God is telling us what we can expect if



we disobey His commandments. He says, "There are two alternatives. You can "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind and your neighbor as yourself," the two great commandments upon which "depend the whole Law and Prophets (the Old Testament)," as the Lord himself said. Or you can do your own thing and serve yourself, your flesh, another god, whatever you want to serve, and you will inevitably reap the consequences. When you serve the Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ, you reap the consequences which are Christlikeness and walking in freedom from yourself and from bondage to sin. When you serve yourself or your other gods, whatever they may be [In David's case lust and the privilege of being king and doing his own thing], then you reap the consequences of that god. Unfortunately those consequences not only affect you, but affect generations to come.

Now this is not a God who hates kids and visits upon unborn babies the sins of the fathers. The Jews accused God of that one time and were carried into captivity by the Assyrians and the Babylonians. They had said, "The fathers eat the sour grapes, But the children's teeth are set on edge," and God indicated to the Jews, "No way. The sons shall not die for the sins of the fathers nor the fathers for the sins of the sons but each for his own. You are just as culpable for your own actions toward Me as your forefathers were. Your being carried into captivity is simply a culmination of a long series of rebellions against Me for which I have warned you and warned you and warned you with prophet, after prophet, after prophet. Don't you ever use that idiom on Me.

There is a principle here though. It is that, when you sow to the flesh, you reap according to the flesh, and you reap it not only in your own life, but as you are a model for your children, they unfortunately begin reaping also. It is the result of being born with a fallen nature. I am born lost. I am born a sinner, and but for the blood of Jesus Christ, I would be dead. I am born with a curve on me. I am not a straight ball, but a twisted one. When that ball was thrown from the womb, it was twisted, and it twists every work of mine. Fortunately God hasn't left me in that state. He made ample provision for me through Jesus Christ. So each generation is accountable for its response to the Lord Jesus Christ. When they respond affirmatively, they begin the journey toward Christlikeness, the freedom from parental background and modeling, the freedom from the bondage to the flesh, etc. but God says, "When you don't have the Lord Jesus Christ, your kids also, through your modeling, tend to reap what you have sown."

We see it graphically pictured when, in a moment of lust, David, the great king of Israel, sowed to the flesh and ended up a murderer. This is not God punishing David. He even said that, "'Your sins are forgiven. You shall not die.' but the consequences of the 2nd commandment will work out in the lives of your family." David, as we have seen, was a very poor father. He never denied his kid anything, according to a note in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament. He was denied all kinds of things when he was a small child. so, "All that I didn't get, they are going to have." And as a result these sweet little wild flowers grew up to be poison oaks. So this began way, way back in David's life.

Secondly, David is a polygamist. He had a very strong sensual desire which he catered to. As king he could cater to it with magnificent regal splendor. He had probably at least 10 wives, as near as we can figure, and unnumbered concubines. Under the law of that day, what the king saw he took, unless she was married. So David acted like the other kings of the earth instead of like God's king. As a result, his household consisted of a series of wives all competing for his affections, as Leah and Rachel did back in Jacob's time. There was no family unit, and the kids grew up competing with one another. They lived in separate houses. Each wanted to be king, so each looked with a jaundiced eye on the first born above him. Amnon was the first born, Chileab was the second born, but apparently by now he has been slain in battle, which moves Absalom up to number two. We are going to see that Absalom is not above a little self-interest when revenging his sister's violation. He wants to be king, but Amnon the first born is standing in his way. So, we have brothers Amnon and Absalom in

competition with one another because of the household that David himself set up in defiance of Deuteronomy 17. This is where we are at the beginning of Chapter 13.

There is some thought that about this time David was inflicted with some very tough disease. Psalm 41 and Psalm 55 seem to elude to that. It may be true. We don't know for sure.

We do know that David sexually violated Bathsheba and murdered Uriah the Hittite, and watch now how the consequences work themselves out.

II Samuel 13:1

**Now it was after this that Absalom** [second in line now] **the son of David had a beautiful sister whose name was Tamar**, [Palm Tree, glorious creature, lithesome like a palm tree] **and Amnon the son of David loved her.** [Better translation "lusted for her"] **And Amnon was so frustrated because of his sister Tamar that he made himself ill, for she was a virgin, and it seemed hard to Amnon to do anything to her.**

Amnon falls in love with his step-sister, but in actuality his feeling is lust. He doesn't know what true love is. He has never seen it. There was no true love in his family. You recall Bathsheba was not loved by David. She was violated by David. She was not loved until a year or so after their child was born and died. Finally David comforted her after the loss of that child broke him, and only then did God begin to call Bathsheba his wife. It is probable that after he had lain with her he had all the disgust and self-loathing and guilt that goes with something like that. That is the model of love Amnon witnessed.

So Amnon lusts after his step-sister Tamar who is a beautiful girl. The law of God says if a half-sister and a half-brother marry, they were both to be slain. If a half-brother violated a half-sister, he should be slain. An incestuous relationship even as close as a half-brother and half-sister was totally illegal under the law of God. What does Amnon care. Big daddy not only committed adultery, which violated that law, but also murdered the woman's husband, which violated that law, also the 6th, 7th and 10th commandments and got away with it. Why should Amnon observe the law of God?

By constantly dwelling on his desire and feeding the flames of that desire and not being able to satisfy it, he becomes so frustrated he actually makes himself ill. He can't bring himself to violate her, not yet anyway, because she is a virgin and apparently acts like a virgin. She is a very chaste person. But Amnon has a friend. And as like seems to attract like, we get a little hint of Amnon's character here by the friends he has.

II Samuel 13:3:

**But Amnon had a friend whose name was Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David's brother;** [In other words, cousin] **and Jonadab was a very shrewd** [cunning] **man.** [Good translation, "wicked and ambitious"] **And he** [Jonadab] **said to him** [Amnon], **"O son of the king, why are you so depressed morning after morning? Will you not tell me?"** [Apparently Amnon dwells on and fantasizes over this lust and dreams of it all night long. In the morning he wakes up twice as frustrated as when he went to bed. The thing is consuming him. He started out playing around with it, but now he cannot let go.] **Then Amnon said to him, "I am in love with Tamar, the sister of my brother Absalom."** [He knows exactly the relationship and exactly the law of God involved] **Jonadab then said to him, "Lie down on your bed and pretend to be ill;** [With his depressed and haggard look and lack of sleep, he did look sick] **when your father comes to you,** [which he will because he loves you] **say to him, "Please let my sister Tamar come and give me some food to eat, and let her prepare the food in my sight, that I may see it and eat from her hand."** So Amnon lay down and pretended to be ill; when the king came to see him, Amnon said to the king, **"Please let my sister Tamar come and make me a couple of cakes in my sight, that I may eat from her hand."** [When people are sick they get kind of peculiar desires for food,] **Then David**

sent to the house for Tamar, saying, "Go now to your brother Amnon's house, and prepare food for him."

It is interesting, Jonadab does not suggest marriage. He knows that is illegal. He does suggest a way that will force David's hand. David indeed indulges and loves that first born, the strength of his loins. So if Amnon rapes Tamar, the only thing David can do to alleviate the problem is to use the law of the violated virgin. [Deut. 22:28] Tamar is not engaged, therefore, it will not be adultery. If a virgin is violated by a man under Jewish law, the man must pay fifty shekels of silver to her father, marry her and can never divorce her. In the Jewish culture a non-virgin was a very hard person to marry off. There was stigma attached to her. In fact if she was found to be a non-virgin by the man who married her, she was to be stoned. But Jonadab could trap David. If Amnon raped Tamar, David was faced with either putting his son to death or marrying the two. It was circumventing the law, but, in a sense, accomplishing it and probably buying off the wrath of God and the wrath of the people. So here is the kind of reasoning that went on in the palace, understandable perhaps considering the way they were brought up. Intriguingly enough Jonadab doesn't seem to be at all worried that David will find out whose idea this was. Where did David lose his authority to uphold the law of God? why can't he put the fear of God into Jonadab's heart?

Comment from class: Because for a year he has been disobeying.

Bob's response. Yeah! Do you see that God is disciplining David by not punishing him according to the law of the land. God is very unique. He is very imaginative. He fits the circumstances to the crime. He could have slain David, since David violated the law of murder, the law of adultery, the law of covetousness, but that would have destroyed his purpose for David. It would have destroyed this beautiful model of how God operates. It would have destroyed the whole teaching of the 2nd commandment. So, by his grace, God let David off, but what did it do to David's authority over his family and as king over the land? He has none. He has all kinds of authority according to the law, but no real authority because of his character. So, the people under him just ignore him. God is teaching David you cannot be king unless you are above reproach. Your authority comes from a godly character, the life of God seen in the life of the king. It does not come from you position and your spear. Israel was a theocracy. The king was simply the visible representation of the invisible God Yahweh. David's authority was not from being king or the rules of the road or the spear in his hand or the number of bodyguards behind him. It came from his character as a godly man. God is teaching him a harsh lesson here. He has no authority. Now, verse 8, here comes the tragedy.

II Samuel 13:8

**So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house, and he was lying down. And she took dough, kneaded it, made cakes in his sight, and baked the cakes. And she took the pan and dished them out before him, but he refused to eat. And Amnon said, "Have everyone go out from me." So everyone went out from him. Then Amnon said to Tamar, "Bring the food into the bedroom, that I may eat from your hand." So Tamar took the cakes which she had made and brought them into the bedroom to her brother Amnon. When she brought them to him to eat, he took hold of her and said to her, "Come, lie with me, my sister." [He knows exactly what he is doing and doesn't care.] But she answered him, "No, my brother, do not violate me, for such a thing is not done in Israel; [It would send me to death, as a matter of fact] do not do this disgraceful thing! As for me, where could I get rid of my reproach? [There is no way a non-virgin could get married in Israel. "There is no way that David can offer me, a princess of the nation of Israel a non-virgin to some other king or other prince when I am not pure"] And as for you, you will be like one of the fools in Israel. [You are the first born, the heir apparent to the throne, yet you want to disgrace us?] Now therefore, please speak to the king, for he will not withhold me from you." [She has sensed also that in spite of the law that you cannot marry a half-brother and half-sister that David would cater to Amnon's desire and would marry them. At least a marriage is better than violation] However, he would not listen to her; since he was stronger than she, he violated her and lay with**

**her.** [Following in daddy's own footsteps]

Amnon being the first born and heir apparent to the throne, was a well trained warrior. He had been with daddy in battles and was a tough battle-hardened veteran. It was typical in those days, particularly in the Ancient Mideast, that when you won a battle, you raped the women. You took what you desired. Israel was not allowed to do that. When they walked with the Lord, they didn't do it. If they desired a foreign woman for physical intercourse, they had to make her their wife. She had to be taken into their household. She had to shave her hair, pare her nails, strip away marks of the old life, mourn her father and mother for a month and then she was to be married. Then, and only then, could they have her. If she didn't turn out to be what they wanted, they could never sell her or discard her. They had to give her her freedom. She was to be treated as a free woman in Israel. Israelites were not allowed the rights of invaders and captors that other nations were allowed. If you wanted a woman, the only way you got her was marriage. Apparently Amnon had not been observing that rule. Many of them probably didn't in those days, and he is quite hardened to it. He just took her, violated her and did what his daddy did, "That is what you do, that is what I do."

Don't ever kid yourself that what daddy does doesn't rub off on his kids. I always figured I was a pretty godly man, but one day I was shocked by my oldest son. He was talking to me about how he used to brag about his violent temper. He had a violent temper. Why, because daddy had a violent temper. He would go around smacking things. Why? Because daddy went around smacking things. I had more bruised knuckles than you can believe. It felt good to hit the wall when I was angry. It is rather foolish though when all you get is bruised knuckles. I had one friend who put his hand right through a wall panel. All those little splinters just ripped his hand to shreds. Worse yet, he had to pull the hand back out again. It had to be bandaged, of course, and for several months he was obliged to explain to people why his hand was all wrapped up. I won't name him, but he was a pastor.

Now we see the tragedy of intercourse without love.

II Samuel 13:15:

**Then Amnon hated her with a very great hatred; for the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her. And Amnon said to her, "Get up, go away!" But she said to him, "No, because this wrong in sending me away is greater than the other that you have done to me!" Yet he would not listen to her. Then he called his young man who attended him and said, "Now throw this woman out of my presence, and lock the door behind her." Now she had on a long-sleeved garment; for in this manner the virgin daughters of the king dressed themselves in robes. Then his attendant took her out and locked the door behind her. And Tamar put ashes on her head, [the sign of grief] and tore her long-sleeved garment which was on her; [Because she was no longer a virgin, she ripped away her virginity as it had been taken from her] and she put her hand on her head [that is the way they indicated a deep burden because they carried things on their heads in those days] and went away, crying aloud as she went.**

The first thing that happened to Amnon was one of the first things that happened to David with Bathsheba; self-loathing, disgust with himself and then, of course, hatred of the object that is making him feel guilty and causing him to loathe and be disgusted with himself. The desire to transfer our feelings and put blame on someone else is common to all of us. Tamar is no longer his beloved sister. Now she is "that woman." He just wants to get her out of his sight. He even has her thrown out of the room. and when she appeals to him with the one thing that could save his life, "Marry me, you have violated me, marry me." [the law for a violated virgin which we talked about], he totally rejects her. He seals his own death warrant with that. Since she has been thrown out of the room, the word spreads all though the palace. Putting ashes on her head and ripping her garment, publicly proclaims what has happened to her, not to mention the hand to the head indicating a terrible

burden.

Now Absalom, the next in line, sees his chance.

**Comment from class:** Couldn't Tamar have applied the rules about maidens being raped. Couldn't she have screamed in that situation?

**Bob's response:** That is why Amnon sent everyone out of the room.

**Comment from class:** Then how about trying to reason with him?

**Bob's response:** She was trying to reason with him as sister to brother, but you see that didn't work. Amnon was smart enough to get all the people out so that she couldn't do any yelling. He knew the rules.

**Comment from class:** Wouldn't that have made her free then?

Bob's response: Sure. The trouble was she was no longer a virgin, and she was a princess. Princesses married princes or kings. One of the things that had to be produced after the marriage night was a sign of the bride's virginity. So Tamar is a desolate woman. This is why God made the provision that the man was not to be slain when a virgin was violated. The man must marry her. The woman involved had a life ahead of her. In the culture of the Hebrews, the woman needed a husband to support her, protect her and provide for her. So God didn't let the man off with a quick death, as he would an adulterer where the woman was already betrothed or married. No, he was required to marry her, stay married forever and also pay a heavy fine to her father, a "dowry," the same process he would go through if he was courting her. God is a very strong protector of women in the Old Testament.

Amnon is no fool. He gets everybody out, gets the door shut, and has her where she can't cry out. When Tamar offers him the one way out for a violated virgin, he refuses, and it will cost him his life.

**Comment from class:** I would like to hitchhike here on what you are saying. Apparently Tamar knew the law or at least she knew the customs. She uses them in her argument. Then she uses the argument that, "Why don't we talk to the king. He'll not withhold me from you." She is choosing this in desperation, undoubtedly. And so Amnon knowing she is using that in desperation and knowing that the king wouldn't marry then since it is illegal, wouldn't listen to her.

**Bob's response:** I think David would have married them. I think Amnon didn't want to go through a marriage. He just wanted to violate her. I think he knows the king would marry them. I think Tamar knows it too. As a matter of fact, we are going to see here in a minute the king would have listened. David has absolutely no fatherly authority left in this family. It is gone. God's greatest Israeli king, next to Jesus Christ, is destroyed within his family. You do not win respect from your children by indulging their desires. David is a fine example of that. Any child psychologist will tell you that children want discipline. They want the security of knowing you care enough to discipline them.

II Samuel 13:20:

**Then Absalom her brother said to her, "Has Amnon your brother been with you? But now keep silent, my sister, he is your brother; do not take this matter to heart." [How nice. Just take it easy. Absalom has plans not only for Amnon but for the throne.] So Tamar remained and was desolate in her brother Absalom's house.**

**Now when King David heard of all these matters, he was very angry.** [Now isn't that wonderful.]

**Comment from class:** Wasn't there any law that she could resort to?

**Bob's response:** Not when David is king. If the king won't enforce the law, where are you to go? Incidentally, that is exactly what Absalom is going to use against David down the road apiece, "Oh, that there was a just judge in Israel. Oh, that I were judge, and I would give you justice," and it makes points. Why? Because Israel has an unjust king who doesn't bother to fulfill the law.

This is the wrath of God. The terrifying part about God's wrath is it is not a lightning bolt from heaven. It is just a quiet giving you over to what you choose and the resulting consequences. That is the most frightening thing in all the world. Have you ever thought of the consequences of the things God lets you have? The alarming thing to me about the wrath of God is not Sodom and Gomorrah, or the Noahic flood, not those cataclysmic wraths of God. No, it is the quiet giving over by God leading to the wrath of God. That is the one that terrifies me. That goes on every moment of every day, whether you are a believer or an unbeliever. You are given over to your choices, and you are either being hardened toward God or softened toward Christ. It is a quiet thing. It doesn't shout at you. That is what is so scary. Lightning bolts are quick and obvious. This isn't.

II Samuel 13:22:

**But Absalom did not speak to Amnon either good or bad; for Absalom hated Amnon because he had violated his sister Tamar. Now it came about after two full years**

Absalom has been quietly brooding and biding his time. Where did he get that kind of vindictiveness? What did David do to the Edomites, his brothers? He spent six months hunting down every male in Edom. What did he do to the Ammonites, his relatives, when he conquered them? He tortured them with instruments of iron. What did he do to the Moabites, also related to him through Lot? He laid them in three lines, then killed off two of the lines and let the other line live. You don't cross David. It may take six months, but he will hunt you down and get you. Where did Absalom get this ability to sit and plot for two years? From daddy, dear old daddy.

II Samuel 13:23:

**Now it came about after two full years that Absalom had sheepshearers in Baal-hazor, which is near Ephraim, and Absalom invited all the king's sons.**

I'm running out of time here so I'll summarize. Harvest time was festival time in Israel. To celebrate God's grace in giving them a bountiful harvest, they would have a big feast and invite all their friends and relatives for a joyous celebration. So Absalom is smart and invites all the king's sons, not just one, understand, but all the king's sons. He wants to make sure that Amnon shows up. Then to throw off suspicion, he invites David and all of David's court. He knows full well David is not going to bring a mob of people down there which would be a tremendous expense for his son. And David doesn't. He explains it would be way too much of a burden on Absalom. David blesses him and thanks him for the thought and says, "No." Absalom says, "Well, I would like to have Amnon anyway." David says, "Why Amnon?" Even after two years it looks a little suspicious. But Absalom convinces David, and because he has invited all the king's sons at the same time, it kind of throws David off the track, so he let's Amnon go.

II Samuel 13:28:

**And Absalom commanded his servants, saying, "See now, when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and**

**when I say to you, 'Strike Amnon,' then put him to death. Do not fear; have not I myself commanded you? Be courageous and be valiant.**" [I'm behind you all the way---waaaaay behind you. Amnon, of course, being the first born, is a seasoned warrior, and in hand-to-hand combat nobody can mess with him. Absalom wants to be king, but he doesn't want to be skewered. So he has his servants take care of Amnon.] **And the servants of Absalom did to Amnon just as Absalom had commanded. Then all the king's sons arose and each mounted his mule and fled.**

Now the report comes to King David that Absalom has struck down all of the king's sons. That seemed very logical because, typical of the Ancient Mideast culture, you wiped out all your opposition. All the other kings around did that very thing. Any aspirant to the throne was a fool to leave any relative alive that might be a threat. So David assumes that is what has happened. But what he doesn't do is pursue Absalom. He is told by Jonadab, this wonderful friend of Amnon's, that this has been in Absalom's heart ever since the day Amnon violated Tamar. So Jonadab has known all along Amnon is facing the death penalty and hasn't bothered to warn him. Jonadab figured, "Absalom is on his way up. I can ingratiate myself with David by biding my time and when it happens, I'll tell David all about it." So he tells David, "Don't sweat it. It's not all your sons. It's just Amnon." So he comforts the king and makes a few points. What a delightful friend

II Samuel 13:37:

**Now Absalom fled and went to Talmai the son of Ammihud, the king of Geshur. And David mourned for his son every day. So Absalom had fled and gone to Geshur, and was there three years. And the heart of King David longed to go out to Absalom; for he was comforted concerning Amnon, since he was dead.**

Absalom flees to his grandfather. Remember he was the son of a Syrian princess. Geshur was a little Syrian country east of Galilee up in the middle of David's sphere of influence. David didn't conquer it because he married into the family. It was within the boundaries of Israel, although it was a separate kingdom. He could easily have taken it if he had wanted to, but he didn't.

**Comment from class:** Had any of David's family had any religious training? They act like morons.

**Bob's response:** That is right. The tragedy is that in the culture of that day what Absalom did to Amnon would be looked upon by the people as an heroic deed. His avenging of an insult warranting death was considered normal and to be done. In failing to make Amnon marry Tamar, David caused the death of Amnon. Absalom would never have killed him had he been married to Tamar. Now the people see Absalom as a hero. The law of vengeance was very strong in those days. Even God recognized the right of vengeance. The cities of refuge were God's system to take the right of vengeance and channel it into legal channels. When you killed somebody, you fled to a city of refuge before the avengers, the family of the murdered person, could get to you. The cities were all Levite cities. There the Levites, the teachers of the law, would put you on trial, and if you had not committed a premeditated murder, you would be allowed to live in that city of refuge until the High Priest died, a picture of Jesus Christ setting you free. Then you could go free, and the avenger of blood could not touch you. In fact if he touched you within the boundaries of that city, he was a murderer and was killed. However if he caught you outside the boundaries of that city before the High Priest died, he could slay you. If you had committed premeditated murder, you were delivered into his hands to be slaughtered. That was the right of vengeance. God recognized that as being totally within their culture. He just channeled it into a legal channel. So, in the eyes of the people, Absalom was a hero. He had done only what any red-blooded Israelite would do if his sister had been violated. So by not bringing Absalom back as a common criminal, David promoted him into a hero. By not punishing Absalom, David begins sowing the seeds of the rebellion of his own son, the loss of his kingdom and a horrible war that slaughters thousands of Jews.

So, what happens when you don't discipline your kiddies when they are little? Not really very much. You just lose them when they are big; innocent people get slaughtered; you lose all authority as a father; you lost all authority as a king; your nation goes down the tube. I would submit to you that God needs the 2nd commandment. He is not a jealous God who is jealous for himself. He is a jealous God, jealous for us. He is totally Holy. He doesn't need obedience to make himself feel good. He is God. He is jealous for us, "If you don't listen to me, if I am not the only God in your life, if you are not totally sold out to me, you will build into your kids perversions or hang-ups that will produce repulsive fruit later on. I don't want that to happen you. I love you. I am jealous for you. Listen to me!"

We will see the further proof next week.

Father, we do thank you for your desperate, in a sense, and jealous love for us, using strong human language to describe how much you deeply desire us not to get hurt. And, Father, we just thank you that you care that much. You care enough to discipline us like a father should, that you do not want us to go down the tube. You do not want our children to go down the tube or our children's children or their children's children, but you want us to walk with you in obedience in the freedom and the wholeness that goes with being totally sold out to Jesus Christ, totally in bondage to His will, and therefore not in bondage to anything else. Thank you, Father, for your inexorable love that pursues us and will not let us go, that is relentless in its mercy and grace that will take us the whole trip and hurt as much as you have to hurt us in order to redeem us and make us yours. Thanks you, Father, in Jesus' name. Amen.

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## **Chapter Thirty-one**

### **Absalom Revolts - I**

#### **II Samuel 14, 15, 16**

Beginning today we will look at the faithfulness of God in two different ways. God is very faithful to love us and perfect us. He is also very faithful to discipline us. Absalom's revolt against his father David is a picture of God's faithfulness both ways. This week we will see a picture of God's faithfulness in disciplining us. He will not just let us go. He will always take us through difficulties and deliver us out the other side a different person. This morning we will see the faithfulness of God in dealing with the areas of our lives with which we ourselves will not deal.

It came up this morning out in the sanctuary. The Judgment Seat of Christ is designed to deal with the areas in our lives with which we will not deal. In I Corinthians 11 Paul, writing to the Corinthian Christians, referred to the defaming of the Lord's table and the resulting judgment. He goes on to say, I Corinthians 11:31, "But if we judged ourselves rightly, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord in order that we may not be condemned along with the world." God will do whatever is necessary down here in order to save us from being condemned with the world. He will not let us stay in the state the world is in, a state of condemnation, living like the world. It doesn't mean you lose your salvation. It means that God demands repentance now! Before you go to be with the Lord, if you are a believer, you will repent of whatever sin you have been holding back from God. God never loses any battles. That is one of the fun things about being God; He always wins. If we would only get through our noggins that God is going to win in these areas of our lives which we hold back and that he won't quit until we repent of them and give them up, how much easier it would be. It is pretty dumb to fight a battle you know you are certain to lose, that God has promised you will lose, that there is no



way you can win! This faithful, loving god is determined he will win in the areas of our lives that are destroying us. He doesn't just do some God type of discipline either. He always takes the area which we demand for ourselves, a little stronghold, and uses it to bring us back, to turn us around. Galatians 6:7, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap." The Greek says, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked, or laughed at, whatever man sows, that very thing, that very thing where he is mocking God, he shall also reap." God will take the very stronghold we demand for ourselves, and he will use that to bring us around.

We are going to see that now with David. David, of course, sowed the seed of lust in taking Bathsheba as just a fly-by-night affair. Then he took her as his wife to deceive the people of Israel and also with an intent to deceive God. Then along with lust and deceit, he added the murder of Bathsheba's husband. So into his life David has brought lust, deceit and murder. Now, since god is going to make David a man after God's own heart, and, if Galatians 6:7 is true, if whatever we sow that very thing we shall also reap, God is going to have to deal with David in the areas of lust, murder and deceit to bring him around. That is exactly what he does.

We saw last time in Chapter 13:1-20 that David's son Amnon, his first born, first out of his loins, the pride of his life, who, according to the Septuagint translation, had never been punished, raped his step-sister Tamar. Lust! Do you remember how he did it? Deceit! He deceived David into having Tamar sent to him in his bedroom. He engaged his own father as the agent in this deceit

The tragedy is David did not discipline Amnon but let him get away with it. David got very angry, the Scripture tells us, but that is as far as he went. This, then, begins to appear in the eyes of those about him that David plays favorites in dispensing justice. So people see that their own king, chosen of God and anointed of God to uphold God's law, is playing favorites.

There is a priority pyramid gleaned from I Timothy. Top priority is the Lord, next is your wife, next in order of importance are your children and last is your ministry, your job or whatever else. If these get out of kilter, you are not fit to handle the household of God because you haven't handled your own household.

David's first responsibility was not to his children; It was to his Lord. He was anointed of God to be God's minister, God's visibility, God's ruler to maintain the law of God [among other things]. So he had his priorities fouled up and instead of God, he allowed his family to be his first priority.

The tragedy, of course, was David's failure to insist Amnon marry Tamar, an unbetrothed virgin, and stay married forever as God's law required. In that event Absalom would never have killed his step-brother for raping his sister if his step-brother had been the husband of his sister. So David's tragic failure to follow through in what should have been his first priority, i.e., to be God's man, God's king, God's anointed, set up the murder of his own son. So, in the eyes of the people, it is pretty obvious David dispenses justice based upon favoritism.

Then we see in Chapter 13, verse 20 to the end of the chapter that Absalom, brother of Tamar, step-brother of Amnon, next in line to the throne after Amnon, is presented with a wonderful opportunity. With one fell swoop he can revenge the rape of his sister, whom he loved, and also eliminate the fellow in front of him in line for the throne. What a superb opportunity to accomplish his purpose and also to become a hero in the eyes of the people.

Remember, the culture at that time was geared to revenge. It was expected. If someone violated someone in your family, you were expected to revenge yourselves. God even made room for that. When you murdered a person, you raced to a city of refuge. They held a trial to determine whether your act was premeditated or just happened in a fight. If premeditation was determined, you were delivered into the hands of the avenging family outside the gate of that city. Under the law of God, the family took vengeance and were allowed to kill you. It was honorable to take vengeance as long as you stayed within the rules. It was expected to take vengeance as long as you stayed within the rules [This was long before Jesus Christ came.] God took the cultural situation and put rules on it so no one got hurt that shouldn't get hurt, but he didn't cause an upheaval of the whole cultural system.

Getting back to Absalom, taking advantage of the harvest time festival, which was a common celebration,

Absalom convinces David to allow all his sons to come down to the field near Ephraim to attend Absalom's festival, all his sons including Amnon. Taking advantage of the opportunity, Absalom promptly murders Amnon.

Again David metes out no punishment, and Absalom races up to his grandfather the king of Geshur. That kingdom is totally under David's control, and, if David wants Absalom delivered up for justice, all he has to do is go take him. He doesn't. Absalom stays there three long years. In the eyes of the people, of course, Absalom is not a criminal. He is a hero for avenging the rape of his sister, something David should have done. What the king should have done, Absalom did. So popularity begins to shift from David to Absalom. Absalom is more just than king David who plays favorites.

So we come to our lesson today which begins in II Samuel 14. Absalom stays in Geshur three years, afraid to come home. Apparently during this time, in an attempt to get back into Jerusalem, he sends Joab his general to make overtures to David. You can't become king of Israel if you are out of favor with the present king and in exile up in Geshur. So when the direct approach fails, Joab, the unprincipled general who doesn't mind killing people who get in his way, i.e., Abner, son of Ner, or Amasa later on, or Uriah the Hittite to get something on David, decides on a little deceit. Joab can see, "If I can get a hold on David like the hold I have now on Absalom, I will have leverage on both the king and the heir apparent." That is what is known as "job security." It would also make him the leading general of all Israel. So Joab sends a woman from Tekoa, [David's territory] a "wise" woman [the word also means "cunning"] to plead with David. She says, "I have two sons who were fighting in a field. One killed the other. Now the whole family '...has risen against your maidservant, and they say, "Hand over the one who struck his brother, that we may put him to death for the life of his brother whom he killed..." I will be left without a seed. My husband is gone. This is the last coal we have and my husband's name will be removed from Israel." David says, "Don't give it a thought. I will take care of it." It is unpremeditated. Then the woman goes a little farther. She needs more than that. She says, "If there is anything wrong with letting my son loose, let the blame be on me not upon you." David says, "Don't worry about it. No one will touch you even if something is a little bit wrong." Finally she says, "Please don't let the avenger of blood get him no matter what." And David says, "I vow to you before the Lord 'not one hair of your son shall fall to the ground.'" She's got him now. David without inquiring of the Lord says, "I don't care what he has done, don't worry about it." Now even if the act was premeditated, David is trapped. Having made her point, the woman then says, "Well, then why 'does the king not bring back his banished one?' "If you will let my son go free and the will of the people is for Absalom, then why can't he come home?" David, being no dummy, says, "Is the hand of Joab with you in all this?" She says, "Yes. You are a wise king, aren't you?"

Instead of disciplining Joab and because he longs for Absalom, David tells Joab, "Bring back the young man Absalom." Old Joab prostrates himself and is very effusive about how much he loves the king and what a wonderful thing this is. Joab goes to Geshur and brings Absalom home, but unfortunately for Joab, David says, "Let him turn to his own house, and let him not see my face."

Two years Absalom sits in Jerusalem without seeing the face of David. He is probably arousing the sympathy of the people, too, since he did what David should have done. David will not give him a full pardon and again sows the seeds of his own destruction. He has brought Absalom back without any real punishment and has allowed himself to be deceived without any rebuke to Joab.

Beyond this we see another problem. People like kings to look like kings. Starting with II Samuel 14:25 we see Absalom in town still not allowed to see the king, but the people can sure see him.

II Samuel 14:25:

**Now in all Israel was no one as handsome as Absalom, so highly praised;** [He is a hero of the people] **from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no defect in him.** [He is the "Mr. Universe" of the day. He is exactly what you would want a king to be, Just!. And beyond that he has this Macho image] **And when he cut the hair of his head (and it was at the end of every year that he cut it, for it was heavy on him so he cut it), he weighed the hair of his head at 200 shekels**

[That should be 20 shekels, about 2/3 of a pound, a lot of hair] **by the king's weight.**

In the culture of that day a full head of hair signified a strong virile man. It was a symbol of power, virility and masculinity. When you gave yourself to the Lord as a Nazarite and, as long as you were a Nazarite, you were not to shave, cut your hair or touch wine or strong drink. the longer your hair grew the more it indicated you were God's man. It served as a symbol of a virile man of God. When Samson let his head be shaved, he lost his touch with God. He lost his virility, and he got himself blinded.

So Absalom, in the eyes of the Jews, looks like a king.

II Samuel 14:27:

**And to Absalom there were born three sons, [Apparently they all died in infancy according to chapter 18] and one daughter whose name was Tamar, she was a woman of beautiful appearance.**

What do you think naming your daughter Tamar would do for your popularity with the people? "Oh, how much he loved his poor sister. He is living in desolation in his house because she was violated and David never took care of it. What a tremendous fellow Absalom is." Quietly David continues to sow seeds of his own destruction.

Do you notice something that is conspicuous by its absence all through here? Why is David being deceived? What is David failing to do each time some major issue comes up? Right! He never inquires of the Lord. The tabernacle is just a few blocks away; the priests are there; the Ephod is there. It would be very easy for him to inquire of the Lord. Instead he lives out of his emotions, his feelings. He does not seek the Word of God, the facts of faith, but instead uses the feelings of a loving and indulgent father.

Why do you think David is so afraid his sons won't like him? I'll give you a "Roe Sanctified Theory." You see this in life all the time. I believe it was because David felt rejected. He was a child of Jesse's old age by possibly his second or third wife. He wasn't even considered a son when Samuel asked for Jesse's sons for the anointing. David wasn't brought in. He was just a shepherd out on the hill. His brother's looked on him with disdain. He was the last of the litter. He was much younger than the rest of them. Joab, his general, was the son of his sister so apparently there was a large age gap between all the other brothers and David. He was a Johnny-come-lately, an after thought. He had been short-sheeted his whole life. He probably hated his father. What is god's warning when you hate? Romans 12, "Never repay evil to anyone. Leave vengeance to me," he says, "or do not become overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good." When you harbor evil, it possesses you. You start by harboring it, but pretty soon, it is there and you are part of it. David apparently had this struggle in his life, and it was something he never dealt with. So he creates the seeds of his own destruction.

At the end of chapter 14 Absalom is welcomed back into David's presence where he prostrates himself before the king and is kissed by David.

In Chapter 15 Absalom begins making eyes at the throne. He is now heir apparent, as far as he knows, but David could live to be quite old. Considering the fact that Absalom was David's third son and that David had at least 10 wives and 19 sons, that we know of, plus a number of daughters, you can see Absalom isn't getting any younger. So he would just like to speed up David's aging process, on a rather permanent basis.

This was not unusual in those days. One of the great queens of Egypt, Queen Hatshepsut, who was probably the one who pulled Moses from the bulrushes, reigned as queen regent for her son. Her husband died when her son was an infant. When her son came of age she refused to relinquish the rule. She had done such a remarkable job as queen that no one could throw her off the throne. We now know from the hieroglyphics that she instituted vast building projects. Her son Thutmose III finally helped her along to the hereafter. So it was not unusual to displace your parent if they got in your way. It went on all the time in the courts of that age. Thutmose plastered over all the hieroglyphics and inscribed his own. If it hadn't been for time wearing off the plaster, we would never have known that she had ever been on the throne. Now we know that much of the building credited to Thutmose III

was actually Hatshepsut's.

So Absalom making eyes at the throne was not unusual for the time. Now beginning in Chapter 15, verse 1 we see Absalom at his best. David's problem with the people right now is that he has not shown justice as a man of God, as God's king, should have. Absalom may be wicked, but he is no dummy, "How can I get to David's throne? I know, through his partiality, his injustice." If you don't put God first and be God's man, you lay yourself open to your enemies, and God will use them to bring you back. He does that here.

II Samuel 14:33 We see that David, influenced by Joab, calls for Absalom who arrives and prostrates himself before the king.

II Samuel 15:1:

**Now, it came about after this** [After David welcomed Absalom back and finally restored him which took approximately five years during which time Absalom gained in popularity with the people. Then look what he does] **Absalom provided for himself a chariot and horses, and fifty men as runners before him. And Absalom used to rise early and stand beside the way to the gate;** [All the business transactions were done at the gate of the city] **and it happened that when any man had a suit to come to the king for judgment,** [In other words, when anybody felt oppressed or had a wrong done to them, they brought a suit, So all the wronged, all the people who felt oppressed, would come into the city to the king for judgment.] **Absalom would call to him and say, "From what city are you?"** [Here is our first opinion poll] **And he would say, "Your servant is from one of the tribes of Israel." Then Absalom would say to him, "See, your claims are good and right, but no man listens to you on the part of the king." Moreover, Absalom would say, "Oh that one would appoint me judge in the land, then every man who has any suit or cause could come to me, and I would give him justice."** [Talk about the shaft] **And it happened that when a man came near to prostrate himself before him** [which you had to do before the king] **he would put out his hand and take hold of him and kiss him.** [Remind you a little of baby kissing politicians? Three thousand years ago! All men were treated as his equal. He was not the prince. He was their equal. Equal of the down-trodden. That is good political stuff. Don't talk about the rich. Talk about the poor and the tragic and the oppressed.] **And in this manner Absalom dealt with all Israel who came to the king for judgment, so Absalom stole away the hearts of the men of Israel.** [A brilliantly planned political campaign]

When was the last time David fought? How many years have gone by do you think? This warrior king has not been leading his people. Now we see horses and chariots. Chariots in the Bible are always weapons of war. The king and his sons rode mules. When Christ came into Jerusalem as the King prophesied in Scripture, he came on an ass. Mules, asses were animals of peace. Chariots and horses were weapons of war. God had told the Israelite kings, "I will be your chariots. I will be your horses. You are not to multiply horses or chariots like the nations about you. I always want you at a disadvantage in any fight. I want you totally inadequate so no one will ever get the impression you delivered yourselves. Therefore, you are not allowed to have Sherman tanks. I will be your Sherman tank."

Psalms 41 and 55 seem to indicate that David was going through some kind of disability or some deep illness about this time. Apparently he was really suffering, so he was anything but a virile king.

Then we see Absalom deliberately placing himself at the city gate presenting himself as a kingly person and quietly sandbagging his father. He waits for every person with a complaint and, of course, the only ones bringing complaints were those feeling badly about the justice system., feeling they were being dealt with unfairly. Each one he quietly wins for himself, "Oh, that I were judge. I would give you justice." Four years he spends quietly winning the hearts of all Israel. He very intelligently asks each petitioner, "What tribe are you from?" Very interesting parallel to our own system. Anyone today trying to win the presidency wants to be very sure to make every state that can help them. So does Absalom. Incidentally, as we will see, he has a superb campaign manager, a man named Ahithophel who is the most brilliant counselor in all of Israel. Ahithophel is David's personal, private counselor and his personal, private friend and the greatest mind in all Israel. Another interesting fact; guess

who Ahithophel's granddaughter is? Bathsheba.

So Absalom makes sure he covers all the tribes and gets equal representation in them all. It is a brilliantly conceived campaign, and it hits David's one weak spot, justice. Absalom finally builds up a constituency throughout Israel.

Four years Absalom deliberately deceives David. Surely in four years, though, David must have caught on. What does that say David is doing to himself? He's deceiving himself. He doesn't think Absalom could possibly be that wicked, not the son he loves. He doesn't want to see what is going on, what is happening. He doesn't want to think, after indulging him all his life, loving him, forgiving him, bringing him back into full favor, that Absalom would do something like this. He doesn't want to see it. And so not only is David deceived, but David is self-deceived.

II Samuel 15:7:

**Now it came about at the end of forty years [make that four years.] that Absalom said to the king, "Please let me go and pay my vow which I have vowed to the Lord, in Hebron. For your servant vowed a vow while I was living at Geshur in Aram [Syria], saying, 'If the Lord shall indeed bring me back to Jerusalem, then I will serve the Lord.'" And the king said to him, "Go in peace." So he arose and went to Hebron.**

What does that say about Absalom's spiritual training? Absalom is using his religion to further his own ends. He has no concept of the righteousness of God. He deliberately lies to his father, "I made a vow when I was in Syria, that if I got back I would go down to Hebron and pay my vow to Yahweh," the God of the Covenant, Jesus. Interesting side note, Hebron was Absalom's birthplace and prominent to the tribe of Judah. It was also David's headquarters for 7 years before he moved to Jerusalem which was of the tribe of Benjamin. When he moved his headquarters, all the perks, all the offices, all the staffs, all the money, all the economics involved in having the capital in your town disappeared. David probably made lots of enemies moving from Hebron to Jerusalem, out of Judah up to Benjamin.

II Samuel 15:10:

**But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, "As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then you shall say, 'Absalom is king in Hebron.'" Then two hundred men went with Absalom from Jerusalem, who were invited and went innocently, and they did not know anything. And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor, from his city Giloh, [which is south of Hebron. He was down there on some pretext] while he was offering the sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong, for the people increased continually with Absalom.**

Absalom needs some support, some integrity, something to make a revolution look good. He can't have a revolution with just a few conspirators. He needs what looks like public support. So, being crown prince, he invites two hundred influential men to go down to Hebron with him while he pays a vow.. They accompany him "innocently." The Bible says, "They did not know anything." and unexpectedly Absalom starts a rebellion. There they are two hundred influential men of the city, probably high up in the capital, compromised. Absalom suddenly has what he needs on his side, integrity. Ahithophel is also down there with the excuse of offering sacrifices. So the stage is set.

The conspiracy increased in strength probably again because of David. I Chronicles tells us David had instituted a centralized kingdom. Instead of the tribes enjoying the old tribal freedom they used to have, they were represented by governors who reported to David in Jerusalem. The tribes, to a large degree, lost all their local tribal rights. They were even required to supply certain things to the king and his staff each month. So the tribes' resentment toward the centralized kingdom added to the strength of the group with Absalom. David is suddenly caught, now, with a real rebellion. We will pick that up next time.

I want to slow down a little bit and pick up Ahithophel's thinking. II Samuel 16:20, the final blow of this whole situation. Remember we had lust and murder. We get lust and murder again.

II Samuel 16:20:

**Then Absalom said to Ahithophel, "Give your advice. What shall we do?" And Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Go in to your father's concubines, whom he has left to keep the house; then all Israel will hear that you have made yourself odious to your father. The hands of all who are with you will also be strengthened." So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof [this was the roof of the palace], and Absalom went in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel. And the advice of Ahithophel, which he gave in those days, was as if one inquired of the word of God; so was all the advice of Ahithophel regarded by both David and Absalom.**

Ahithophel has been a very godly man for a long time, "And the advice of Ahithophel, which he gave in those days, *was* as if one inquired of the word of God; so was all the advice of Ahithophel *regarded* by both David and Absalom." What do you think has happened to Ahithophel? What happens when you begin to harbor that little seed of bitterness? It just quietly festers and fester like a cancer until one day it metastasizes and spreads throughout your whole being. You are no longer godly. You are now ungodly. It was typical in that day for the heir of the throne to get his father's concubines. Ahithophel knows how much David loves, forgives and will forget so he has to make very certain that Absalom is totally odious to David. If David loves and forgives Absalom even for this rebellion, Ahithophel's neck is going to come a cropper. So he wants to destroy the relationship between father and son so it can never be repaired. Therefore, he advises Absalom, "Set up a tent on the top of the palace in the sight of all Israel and rape your father's concubines whom he has left to keep the house, and all Israel will hear you have made yourself odious to your father." Pure filth from a godly man, but his life is at stake, and he doesn't care anymore. He has been possessed of evil, and he hasn't dealt with it

That isn't even enough. How about his dearly beloved friend David to whom he has been a godly advisor all these years?

II Samuel 17:1:

**Furthermore, Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Please let me choose 12,000 men that I may arise and pursue David tonight. And I will come upon him while he is weary and exhausted and will terrify him so that all the people who are with him will flee. Then I will strike down the king alone, and I will bring back all the people to you. the return of everyone depends on the man you seek;**

What happened to that love?

**Comment from class:** It didn't take long for Nathan's prophecy to come to pass.

**Bob's response:** Exactly right.

II Samuel 12:9

**Why have you despised the word of the Lord by doing evil in His sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the sons of Ammon. Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife. Thus says the Lord, "Behold, I will raise up evil against you from your own household; I will even take your wives before your eyes, and give *them to your companion*, [One who is near to you is the idea of the word. Absalom his own son] **and he shall lie with your wives in broad daylight. Indeed you did it secretly**, [Remember he walked around on the roof of the palace at nightfall, He spotted her at nightfall and took her at night, but God said, "I'm going to spread this in front of all**

Israel in broad daylight"] **but I will do this thing before all Israel and under the sun."**

That was the prophecy for David's future after his sin with Bathsheba, murder, lust and deceit. Reminder, "Whatsoever a man sows, that very thing he shall also reap." David's beloved first born Amnon rapes his own step-sister. His beloved third born Absalom, now heir to the throne and whom even after the rebellion David wanted kept alive because he loved him, tries to kill his father. His dear, dear counselor Ahithophel who has been like the voice of God to him wants to personally shame David's name in front of all Israel. He has been waiting a long time for this. David took Bathsheba and was married to her for a year before God came into the act. Then it was two years before Absalom killed Amnon and three years in exile for Absalom. That is six years. Then two more years while Absalom is in Jerusalem. Ahithophel has been waiting eight years to get David, all the while giving David advice and being his friend and closest advisor. Eight years Ahithophel waits to defame David's name, see his wives raped and personally get to kill him. "I want him for me."

Do you see the tragic interplay here? The willful choices of afflicted men still work out for the glory of God and the fulfillment of prophecy. God is faithful, "Whatever a man sows, that very thing he shall also reap." Fortunately God is also loving, and he is faithful to whom He loves.

Next week we will see his faithfulness and love to David. He does not abandon his own. He may give you a good sound spanking, but he will never abandon you.

Father, we thank you so much for your love and grace and mercy to us. We thank you for your faithfulness too, Father, that you will not let us go nor will you let us live in our sin, that you do whatever is necessary to bring us out of that that we might not have to face your judgment at the Judgment Seat of Christ that we might deal with it down here. You want us to present ourselves before our Lord at the Judgment Seat of Christ pure and holy and blameless and spotless in love as you have predestined us in peace and love. So we thank you for your faithfulness down here, Father, to deal with those very areas that are strongholds in our lives and take the very strongholds, Father, and make them work for you, and we thank you more than that for your faithfulness to love us the whole time and bring us out the other end of the tunnel. Father, we thank you so much that as we walk through that Valley of the Shadow of Death we shall fear no evil for Thou art with us in the midst of your judgment you have us by the hand. Thank you, Father, in Jesus' name.  
Amen

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## **Chapter Thirty-two**

### **Absalom Revolts - II**

#### **II Samuel 15, 16, 17**

Today we will look at the time leading up to David's battle with Absalom. I want to go back and go through II Samuel 15, 16 and 17 from another angle.

Last week we saw the Lord's discipline in David's life and noticed that, as Scripture says, "As a man sows, that very thing he shall also reap." We saw this happen to David. David, in exercising his office as God's king, hid his own sin, never punished Amnon for raping his step-sister Tamar, and never really punished Absalom who murdered Amnon. Absalom used this injustice and partiality in the land to raise up the tribes of Israel who had never been exactly joined anyway. They each had their own little political football they kicked around and no real allegiance to David of Bethlehem of Judah who came out of Hebron down in Judah. The tribes were extremely

splintered and only lasted one generation as a "nation." We will see later on they were still splintered under David. In creating a strong centralized government in Jerusalem, David deprived them of their individual independence, and all they needed was an excuse such as David's injustices to become isolated, insulated and individual tribes again. By the way, this gives you some concept of Solomon's prayer with it's cry for wisdom.

In I Kings 3, when Solomon was made king, he was quite a young man. God appeared to him in a dream and asked him what he would like. Solomon in verses 6-9 of I Kings 3 said:

**Then Solomon said, "Thou hast shown great lovingkindness to Thy servant David my father, according as he walked before Thee in truth and righteousness and uprightness of heart toward Thee; and Thou hast reserved for him this great lovingkindness, that Thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. And now, O Lord my God, Thou hast made Thy servant king in place of my father David, yet I am but a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. And Thy servant is in the midst of Thy people which Thou hast chosen, a great people who cannot be numbered or counted for multitudes. So give Thy servant an understanding heart to judge Thy people to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Thine?"**

Solomon watched his father's failure in his major role as the judge of Israel in the place of the Lord. So Solomon prays that he might not follow in David's footsteps, and, because of this prayer, God gave him wisdom beyond anyone before or after. Then, too, because he didn't ask for long life, riches, power or control of his enemies, God gave all of these to him also. He gave him the greatest reign in all of Israel's history. The tragedy, of course, is that Solomon did follow after David in one area, sex, lust. Where David had 10 wives and unnumbered concubines, I Kings 11 tells us Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines. He married pagans, which was not allowed to a Jew. These pagan women brought their gods with them, and Solomon built temples for their gods on "the mountain east of Jerusalem." Scripture says the gods of his wives stole the heart of Solomon away from the Lord, the God of Israel, Yahweh, and he became a tyrant. At the end of his reign Solomon was not a beloved king ruling wisely but a tyrant living in sumptuous luxury with a vast army and political alliances with all kinds of pagans. God said to him, "Even though you deserve it, I will not tear the kingdom away in your day for the sake of your father David, but I will tear it out of the hand of your son." Solomon was a big man on campus, his wisdom worshipped by kings of all the earth. "And all the earth was seeking the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart." The Queen of Sheba came that great great distance from Sheba just to sit at his feet.

When Solomon died and Rehoboam came to the throne, he displayed the same pride of heart that affected Solomon. When the elder counselors came to him and said, "If you will be a servant to this people today, will serve them, grant them their petition, and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever." [I Kings 12:7] But the young Turks he grew up with, who were also proud, said, "You go out and tell them, 'My little finger is thicker than my father's loins... My father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions.' I'll show you who is boss around here." Rehoboam listened to the young Turks, went out and said those words, and, sure enough, the ten northern tribes said, "What have we to do with you, O son of Jesse," and broke away. From that time on, the nation was divided, and it never again came back together.

The ruler raised up by God for the ten northern tribes was an idolater. To prevent the people from offering sacrifices in Jerusalem in the territory of Judah and Benjamin, the two tribes that had continued loyal to Rehoboam, he created two golden calves and placed one at the southern border of Israel (Bethel) and one at the northern border of Israel in Dan. He said, "These are your gods, oh Israelites," and he led them into idolatry. In all their history, they never had one godly king. They were carried into captivity 225 or 250 years later, about 725 B.C.

The two southern tribes stayed a little closer to Yahweh because they had the temple there in Jerusalem, but they, too, went down the tube and were taken into captivity in 600 B.C.

The nation of Israel had one king and one generation of a really united kingdom. My friends, we sow seeds that go



a long way. Solomon, with his eyes on David's failure to reign in justice, prayed for that, but he liked his dad's harem. He dealt with the area of his life that was an obvious problem in his father's life, but he didn't deal with the other areas, and it destroyed him.

Now along with the discipline of God goes the grace of God. Paul talks in Romans 11 about the severity of God and the goodness of God. The severity of God in the context of Romans 11 is His rejection of the nation of Israel for a time. Of all the nations of the earth, they were chosen by God to be a light unto the Gentiles. It was not because they were bigger or better than any other people but because God had a purpose for them. In the Old Testament, in a sense, God incarnated himself in a nation, the nation of Israel. It was a theocracy. God was King ruler, and he wanted to live his life through this nation. All His rules and regulations were designed to show the godliness of God and the grace of God. There was the law that couldn't be kept and at the same time the sacrifice that covered the violation of that law, the severity of God and the goodness of God. Israel was to manifest God for the Gentiles, but they wouldn't do it. "We're the chosen people," they said, and they were, "And you are dogs." They didn't use the word for puppy dog either but the word for mangy cur. God, in His severity, set them aside temporarily when they crucified the Messiah. They will not be taken back into God's purpose "until the times of the Gentiles is fulfilled," the start of the Tribulation. 2,000 years have gone by, and we see Gentiles leading Jews to Christ instead of Jews leading Gentiles to Christ.

The goodness of God was in taking the Gentiles, who had nothing to offer God at all, who were living in the utmost filth and paganism in black darkness, and unnaturally grafting them into the olive tree of God's patriarchs. You cannot graft a wild olive branch into a domestic olive tree and make it work, but God did. He took the wild olive branch of the Gentiles and grafted it into the domestic olive tree, all the promises and covenants which rested on Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. For two thousand years the Gentiles have been the way God has been reaching Jews. This is the grace of God.

All right, so David gets disciplined, and his own son rises up in rebellion and chases him out of town. That is the severity of God. Now we want to look at the faithfulness or the grace of God. We are going to trace it through 15, 16 & 17.

David is being chased out of town and Absalom has initiated a rebellion in Hebron in Judah, David's own tribe. As we have mentioned, apparently they were annoyed with David when he moved the kingdom headquarters with all its perks and prerogatives out of Hebron and up to Jerusalem. So, Hebron, where David first reigned, is where Absalom takes over. It is only 20 miles from Jerusalem, and Absalom is moving out. David, an old warrior, knows you don't stay in cities and get trapped; you get out in the country where you can conduct hit and run warfare, where you can flee if you have to. Out there you can attack on your own terms.

II Samuel 15:15;

**Then the king's servants said to the king, "Behold, your servants are ready to do whatever my lord the king chooses." So the king went out and all his household with him. But the king left ten concubines to keep the house. [They will come into focus later. They fulfill a prophecy of God.] And the king went out and all the people with him, and they stopped at the last house. Now all his servants passed on beside him, all the Cherethites, all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, six hundred men who had come with him from Gath, passed on before the king. Then the king said to Ittai the Gittite, "Why will you also go with us? Return and remain with the king, [his son Absalom] for you are a foreigner and also an exile; [He's a Gittite. He's from Gath. He's a Philistine] return to your own place. You came only yesterday, [He apparently joined David just recently] and shall I today make you wander with us, while I go where I will? Return and take back your brothers; mercy and truth be with you." But Ittai answered the king and said, "As the Lord [Yahweh] lives, and as my lord the king lives, surely wherever my lord the king may be, whether for death or for life, there also your servant will be."**

This is not a palace revolution as most of them were. Instead all of David's servants hang in there. All the major leaders of the government, all the people that know David best and know his failures best, hang in there with him.

They are not staying to make points. They would be better off with Absalom who is winning. That's where the patronage will be. There will be no patronage with David in the wilderness. Yet God has the major men of Israel stay with David, and intriguingly enough the Cherethites and the Pelethites, who were originally pagans, have become David's most loyal followers, his private bodyguard.

They could be likened to the Praetorian Guard, the palace guard of the Roman Emperors who were choice young men chosen from families of nobility. These men were awarded very special privileges. They received double the pay of anyone else. They guarded the Emperor himself. They only served 14 years and then received a pension. They had quite a large alumni association right there in Rome, which proved their undoing, by the way. They began to exert political clout. Yes, Rome had its legions all over the world, but united right there in town were thousands of retired highly skilled, highly trained, highly paid men, plus the existing Praetorian Guard, and pretty soon they took over, buying and selling the Emperorship.

The Cherethites and the Pelethites don't do that. Originally they were pagan Philistines, yet there is something about David that has brought them into a love relationship with him. When the chips are down, when they have everything to lose, they go with David. They are not an insignificant force either. They even have their own general, Ziba. Later they were able to defend David's position when he had Solomon declared king and Adonijah, together with Joab and Abiathar the high priest, tried to usurp the throne. Mind you these were men whose lifestyle and economy had been based on war. They had survived by taking from the Israelites. They did not cultivate themselves. They just moved in year after year and usurped the harvested and prepared grain the Israelites had grown, threshed and prepared. They wouldn't give the Israelites swords, but they did sharpened their ploughshares and pruning hooks to keep them busy cultivating for the next harvest. Remember when David was fleeing from Saul and flew to the Philistines. All the malcontents began to gather to David plus all the mighty men who were upset with Saul, and he wound up with six hundred vicious, tough, guerrilla warriors. Remember when he moved to Ziklag and, because these men worked for pay, raided all the nations down there, the Amalekites and the others on the borders. They slaughtered whole towns, leaving nobody alive, not even babies, so they could not be traced. They would come back into Ziklag, give their tithe, or their offering of the loot, to their king Achish of Gath and tell him they had been raiding only Judah and making themselves odious to Saul. It is this same bunch, a bunch of robbers, who have stuck with David through the years and have become a consolidated band, that stays with David now when there is no booty. In fact they are actually leaving the booty behind when they remain with David.

Also there is a man named Ittai of the Gittites, a general, who will rank equally with Joab and Abishai in David's defeat of Absalom. He is an experienced Philistine general from Gath. He is a Gittite. He talks to David about, "As Yahweh lives," and "As my lord the king lives." He has adopted David's God and David's lordship, but he adopted David's God first, "I'll stick with you even if it costs me my life, and so will all my men."

What is there about David that attracts these kind of people and holds them? They are not collecting any booty now, my friend. This is the other side of David. Yes, he is a tough little monkey, bloodthirsty, vindictive, mean and proud. This is the outward David. But what is there about his heart that locks men of this caliber to him unto death? What is the real basic desire of his heart? He blows all over the place, true, but what is the one real thing David wants to do? His whole life can be characterized by it. He wants to please Jehovah. He really loves his God. Now, many time he doesn't understand how to operate out of the life and strength of God, but David always, in every instance, loves his God. These men have never seen a God like this. They have never seen a man, a king, have a love affair with his God. Their gods are vicious and have to constantly be placated. These men were never sure where they stood with their gods.

It is scary to have other gods. You don't sleep at night. You are always wondering, "Have I tread on some taboo? Did I do the right number of offerings? Does he like this?" You are never safe. You are never secure. You are never at rest. Yahweh is a God who says, "This is my righteousness. This is my severity. This is the law that I insist that you adhere to, 'Be ye holy for I am holy,' but here is the sacrificial system that will cover your sins when you fail to honor my law. I will make provision both for my holiness and for my law because I want you to have a love affair with Me, even in your flawed and fallen state. I'm not talking upstairs someday either but right down

here." David caught that 3,000 years ago. His Psalms reflect a love affair with his God. These young men have never seen that in their whole lives. They were attracted to David in the beginning, but they remained with him not for what they could get out of him but because of what they see in him. It is intriguing that a Philistine general leaves his own country and all the rank he has and even takes quite a few of his men with him because Yahweh lives. He lives in Israel. Do you see what God is doing? He is quietly separating the wheat from the chaff. He is giving David a hard core group of men who are actually devoted to Yahweh, and incidentally are one of the finest fighting groups in the whole world.

Poor Absalom is out there in left field. He is attacking God's anointed. David has never ceased to be God's anointed. God chose David. David didn't choose God. God's gifts and calling are irrevocable. They are not based upon performance, yours or David's. Yes, He chastens David when he performs badly, but his gifts and calling are irrevocable. When Absalom takes on God's anointed he is taking on Yahweh.

So God quietly selects the best warriors, all the fighting generals, all the toughest fighters and gives them to David. Absalom has a great mob, sure, but they are undisciplined, untrained and don't know what they are doing. All they know is they don't care for David and his present system. Eventually they will end up being butchered.

Then something else, verse 24:

II Samuel 15:24:

**Now behold, Zadok also came, and all the Levites with him carrying the ark of the covenant of God. And they set down the ark of God, and Abiathar [the other high priest] came up until all the people had finished passing from the city [They were leaving the city and climbing the Mt of Olives on the way out of town] And the king said to Zadok, "Return the ark of God to the city. If I find favor in the sight of the Lord, then He will bring me back again, and show me both it and His habitation. But if He should say thus, 'I have no delight in you,' behold, here I am, let Him do to me as seems good to Him."**

For the good of the people, David believes the ark of the covenant must remain in Jerusalem. He puts the worship of God and the good of the people above his own political rivalry, and he casts himself on the mercy of God. He sees this as God's discipline. So he says, "Whatever He wants is O.K. with me, but I am not going to use God to help me. I am not going to bring the ark with me as we did once before with the Philistines. Leave His ark in Jerusalem. If God wants me He'll find me and let Him do to me as seems good to Him."

Do you see anything missing here? When God begins to discipline us, what is the first thing that happens? We not only rationalize and justify, but we get mad don't we? We get angry. What does David do? He justifies God. "Whatever God wants is O.K. with me. If he wants me back, I'll come back. If he doesn't want me, I'm here. Let him do with me what he wants." Conspicuous by its absence is any hint of rationalization for his own sin, of justification of himself versus God, of anger against God. I think right here is where David won the battle. It wasn't with his coterie. It was right here. He put himself on Yahweh's side. He gave himself to Yahweh for whatever Yahweh had in mind for him. That was a man after God's own heart, not Absalom.

So he sends the priests back to Jerusalem with the ark. In verse 30 he ascends the Mount of Olives and acts as a penitent. This is the king of Israel, now, barefoot, weeping and with covered head, a sign of grief and mourning. He deliberately humiliates himself before his God and in front of all his men.

And then II Samuel 15:31

**Now someone told David, saying, "Ahithophel [That is his counselor who counsels so wisely that his counsel is counted as the "counsel of God" it says a little bit later on] is among the conspirators with Absalom." And David said, "O LORD, I pray, make the counsel of Ahithophel foolishness."**

So here he is being chased out of town by his own son and at the same time learns that his chief advisor is

determined to destroy him. This is a man who was so godly that his counsel was as if God himself spoke, but also, unfortunately, was grandfather of Bathsheba. David is not coming out the other side after winning a battle now. He is going away from God, away from his kingdom, being chased out of town with his tail between his legs and by God's permission yet. That he knows. So what do we see about his relationship with God?

**Comment from Class:** He can still turn to Him in his time of need.

**Bob's Response:** Sure! Nothing has happened to his relationship with God has it? Ever noticed in your life that when God disciplines you it doesn't shut off the relationship. In the midst of your testing, your trials, your tribulations, God wants you to call upon him. God says in I Cor 10, "There is no temptation overtaken you [or testing is the word literally] but such as is common to man and God is faithful [not you or me] not to let you be tested but that which you are able to bear, but with every testing God will provide a way of escape that you might be able to go through it". Sure God will discipline us, and we deserve it. We need it to grow in Christ, but God says, "I will take you through it. You are going to be victorious because I am going to take you through it." Therefore he says in Philippians 4, "Don't ever be anxious about anything [Literally in the original it means "Don't worry yourself sick about anything] but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving [Because you know God is going to take you through it] let your requests be made know to God and the peace of God which passeth all understanding [all comprehension] shall guard your heart and mind [Military term. Shall garrison your heart and mind about with a wall of soldiers] in Christ Jesus." And David understands this. While he is being chased out of town with his tail between his legs, he calls upon God, "O God help me."

And God moves pretty fast II Samuel 15:32:

**It happened as David was coming to the summit, where God was worshipped, that behold, Hushai the Archite** [This is a friend of David's. The word "friend" has not the idea of a pal, but the personal privy-counselor of the king, the one who shares his most intimate secrets, an elder of Israel, an old man, an extremely wise man, and the one fellow who can put Ahithophel's counsel to flight. And it just so happens that he comes along just after David cries out for help. What a coincidence.] **met him with his coat torn, [He's in deepest mourning] and dust on his head. And David said to him, "If you pass over with me, then you will be a burden to me. But if you return to the city, and say to Absalom, 'I will be your servant, O king, as I have been your father's servant in time past, so I will now be your servant,' then you can thwart the counsel of Ahithophel for me."**

And David says, "By the way, Zadok's sons are available to you to bring messages to me."

The flesh and the spirit are always at war, and David shifts back and forth. While he has just talked to God, he is also human, and he is scared. Even when Hushai, sent by God, shows up right off the bat, David still decides God needs a little help. "Hushai, since we have to move fast, and you're too old to run with me, you'd be a burden, you go on back to my son Absalom, lie to him, say you are on his side, and that way you can thwart Ahithophel's counsel."

Next God confronts David with two unfriendly men who are also used to strengthen him. First is a deceitful man Ziba, servant of Jonathan's crippled son Mephibosheth. As David passes a little beyond the summit of the Mount of Olives he is met by Ziba with a couple of donkeys laden with food and drink, exactly what God sends them to sustain their strength on their long journey across the Jordan River. Ziba stole it from his master; he lifted it right out from under the pregnant women of the household. David asks him, "Where is your master Mephibosheth?" Ziba deliberately lies, "Behold, he is staying in Jerusalem, for he said, 'Today the house of Israel will restore the kingdom of my father to me.'" David without thinking shoots from the hip, which is one of his biggest problems. "OK, everything of Saul's that I gave to Mephibosheth is yours." He was deceived, and he did a dumb thing, but God had provided him with the food he needed.

The second man is Shimei, and here God deals with an area in David's life which he had never addressed. As David, with his mighty men to his right and his left, comes to Bahurim, a town east of the Mount of Olives, he is confronted by Shimei from the family of Saul. He begins cursing David, throwing rocks at him & casting dust on

him. These acts are suicidal, considering David's entourage, but Shimei is so angry and he hates David so much that he doesn't care.

Now what do you suppose could drive a man to the point where vengeance is so gratifying that he is willing to risk his life just to goad David? Well Chapter 21 of II Samuel tells us the incident. II Samuel ends at chapter 20 as far as the narrative is concerned. 21, 22, 23, 24 are appendices.

Sometime during David's reign Jehovah brought a great famine upon the land. After three years the light finally dawns, "There is something wrong here," and David seeks the mind of the Lord. The Lord says, "It is for Saul and his bloody house, because he put the Gibeonites to death." You'll recall the Gibeonites were those Amorites who tricked Joshua as he came into the land. God had said to Joshua, "You can make covenants with anybody outside the land, but anybody in the land you are to wipe out, man, woman and child." The Gibeonites apparently knew this and, with old clothes, old wine skins and moldy bread, convinced Joshua they had come on a long journey and wanted to make a covenant with him. So Joshua makes a covenant based upon sight. He did not inquire of God and, as it turned out, they were Amorites from just up the street. Since now, under an oath of God, they are safe and cannot be killed, they are made hewers of wood and drawers of water. Saul in his zealotry for the nation of Israel, and maybe in an attempt to buy off God, tried to butcher the Gibeonites. Well, you don't violate an oath to Jehovah with impunity. 3 years of famine is the result. Now David knows the reason, but instead of asking God, "What do I do to atone for Saul's actions?" Instead he goes to the Gibeonites and asks them. These are pagans, remember. They don't like Jews. They hate Saul. Their gods are vicious, cruel creatures. They say, "We want seven sons of Saul's who we will execute and hang up in front of the Lord in Gibeah of Saul." They want to go right into Saul's headquarters, his home town, and string up seven bodies of his sons and leave them hanging. David gives them over, two sons of Saul by Rizpah his concubine and five grandsons of Saul by Merab, his oldest daughter the one who was almost David's wife.

Well, that violates two basic laws of Israel, and David knows it. #1 Fathers are not to be killed for the sins of their children nor sons for the sins of their fathers. #2 They didn't hang by the neck in Jerusalem. They killed a man first then strung up the body as desecration to show how heinous the criminal was. You were not allowed to profane the body longer than enough to make your point. At dusk it had to be taken down and given a burial or the land was defiled. Not so with the sons of Saul. They hung there from the beginning of the barley harvest in April until the coming rain in autumn, six months in the middle of Saul's Gibeah. To prevent the bodies from being defiled by animals, Rizpah brought a big mat and for six months fought all the wild beasts and birds of the air and honored those bodies.

Meanwhile the famine went right on. David still did not consult God about it. Finally when he heard about Rizpah and got the message. He took the bodies down, got Saul's and his sons' bodies from Jabesh-gilead and gave them all an honorable burial. Then he entreated God, and God healed the land, but not until then.

One other item. Remember in I Samuel 24 when David could have killed Saul in the cave and didn't, just cut off a piece of his robe? Saul acknowledged that David would indeed be king of Israel, and he also asked David to swear by Jehovah that he would not cut off Saul's descendants or try to remove his name from Israel. David swore and yet he violated that covenant with Saul as we have just seen. He never dealt with that in his life. Now God is going to restore David, but he is going to restore David whole. Here is an area in David's life that he has never faced, and the Bible says if we will judge ourselves we need not be judged, but if we do not judge ourselves then God judges us that we might not be condemned along with the world.

So David is marching out of town and runs into Shimei who takes on the whole of the mighty host. He humiliates David, curses him, calls him a man of bloodshed and calls him a man who has shed a lot of the blood of the house of Saul. Abishai, David's general, says, "Let me go and remove this dog's head." David says, "No, God sent him to curse, let him curse. If my own son will take me on how much more this Benjamite; Seven sons I killed." And he accepts the humiliation of Shimei, as a judgment from God. Do you see why David is a man after God's own heart? He does awful dumb things, true, but, when Jehovah moves in, his attitude is always

acceptance, total acceptance!

If I can stress one point as a mark of spirituality, it is acceptance of the will of God. What is the outstanding mark of the life of Jesus Christ on earth when he manifested only the Deity of the indwelling Holy Spirit of God the Father through his humanity and never once used his own Deity? The miracles? No, Moses and Elijah and others did miracles. Moses devastated Egypt at the height of its powers. A following? After three and a half years of ministry up and down Palestine, what kind of a following did Jesus win? Five hundred on the mountain? One hundred and twenty in the upper room? Really only twelve were with him at the end and one of those was a traitor. There were some women who remained loyal, but from a nose count Jesus had a rather poor ministry. The one thing that makes him outstanding is that he accepted the Father's will, *period*. "I always do what I see the Father do. I always say what I hear the Father say. I always do the will of him my Father." Which of you convicts me of sin? Find one time in my life when I didn't accept whatever the Father wanted done and do it, including Gethsemane. 'Abba, Abba, you can do anything. Let this cup pass from me, but not my will but Thine be done.'" He had to make three trips to get his own emotions in line, but always, "Not my will but Thine be done."

Acceptance is the mark of maturity, my friends. Not scalps in your belts or how many you lead to Christ or how large your Sunday School is or what a tremendous Bible teacher you are, but how do you accept the will of God for your life. That is the mark of spirituality. That is the mark of David. Performance, zilch! He gets an F in performance. Commitment of the heart, an A+; Acceptance an A+. This man lived a thousand years before Christ came on the scene. He had no model such as you and I have. All he had was the Word of God in the Old Testament. Much of the Prophets had not as yet been written. He wrote 73 of the 150 Psalms. Compared to us he has relatively little light in his life, just a personal relationship to the Living God. Acceptance is the mark of David, and that is why he is a man after God's own heart.

You want to know where you are going in Christ? Look back and ask, "How has my acceptance quotient grown during the last year? Has it grown, plateaued or skidded off? Don't count your converts. Don't count the size of your Sunday School class. Don't count your offering. Just count one thing, "Do I justify me instead of God when he puts the finger on my sin? Do I get angry with God when he puts the finger on me and not the guy next door who is a crumb? How much do I accept the will of God for my life?" David is a man after God's own heart because of one thing, the only thing that really matters to God demonstrated by his Son. He really wants to be God's man. Jesus Christ really was God's man. That is why Jesus is called the son of David. With pride he calls himself that.

Next week we'll go into the battle and watch how God moves.

Father, we thank you so much for the fact that you do not ask us to perform; you simply ask us to be open and honest and available to you, to be willing to be your man or your woman, be willing to accept your will for our lives no matter what it is, Father, whether we think it is good or bad but just to quietly thank you for whatever happens to us no matter whether it is a house burning down, or the kids running off, or that lousy husband or that no good wife, or loss of job or even cancer. In everything that happens to us may we see your loving hand quietly molding and changing us into the image and likeness of Jesus Christ, what we were designed to be, thanking and not getting angry, thanking and not comparing, but just thanking you Father. We thank you in Jesus' name.

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## Chapter Thirty-three

### Absalom is Defeated and Dies

## II Samuel 16:15-19:8

We have looked at David as a man of God and his quiet acceptance of the will of God. Today I want to look at God's acceptance of David.

David has now been humiliated and humbled by God and has accepted it. He has left Jerusalem and gone up the slope of the Mt. of Olives, being chased out of town by his own son. You will recall this is part of God's discipline for David's sin with Bathsheba. He was told the sword would never depart from his house and that the people who would cause the problem would be part of his own household. His son Absalom is the one causing the problem now.

When we pick up the story, David has prayed, "O Lord, I pray, make the counsel of Ahithophel as foolishness." Ahithophel, you remember, was David's greatest counselor, his own privy counsel, but also, unfortunately, the grandfather of Bathsheba the woman David violated. He has now joined forces with Absalom in order to get revenge upon David. He wants to see David's wives violated, and, in a moment, we will see he also wants to personally be the one to take David's life.

So David, going up this slope being disciplined by God, prays that God will thwart the good counsel of Ahithophel who counseled as a man of God and was an exceptionally brilliant man. God, in the midst of his discipline of David, chooses to honor David's prayer.

That is very helpful to me. It indicates that when we are being disciplined by God it is discipline, not punishment. Our earthly background is one of rewards and punishment. In the business world you behave yourself and you get promoted. You misbehave and you get fired.. You drive down the street at 25 miles an hour and the cop smiles at you. You go 35/40 and he pulls you over to the tune of 40 bucks. We carry that world attitude over into Christianity. We know from the Scriptures, though, that the law was not given for the righteous. It was given for the unrighteous.

The law does not apply to me at all when I am walking in the domination of the Spirit of God. I do not need the law of God at that point in time. Jesus Christ didn't. Jesus Christ wrote the law of God. The law of God describes Jesus Christ's personality, his character. He did not obey the law, in a sense, although he did. He fulfilled the law. It was fulfilled in his person. When I am walking in the light, in the life of Jesus Christ, totally dominated by the Spirit of God, I do not need, "Thou shalt not commit adultery; Thou shalt not kill; Thou shalt not steal; Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife; Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind and strength and thy neighbor as thyself." I don't need those rules because those are just normal for Jesus Christ.

The law was given for Adam. The flesh does need the law because the law is designed to restrain. It is designed to confine. It is designed to punish, in that sense, because the flesh is totally irresponsible. It is totally in rebellion against God. It cannot please God. We tend to carry this idea from the flesh over into our whole Christian experience. We think when we have done something in the flesh, which is sin and which is wrong, that God is out to punish us, that he has a big stick up there to hit us over the head. But we forget one thing. God punished already in Jesus Christ. Christ bore the penalty of my sin, and God is at least as just as our present legal system which has a law of double jeopardy. I cannot be punished twice for my sin in the state of California or by the Government of the United States. Once I have served my time in prison, or whatever, I am free from that punishment forever. Even the Romans recognized that. When a Roman defied the law of Caesar, he was given a Bill of Particulars and thrown into prison. The Bill of Particulars was nailed to the door of his cell and when he had served his time for those very offenses, the Bill was stamped "Forgiven" and handed to him. He then walked out of that cell with a guarantee he could never again be incarcerated for those crimes, not even by Nero. The Romans weren't allowed to punish twice. How much more would God not punish twice.

So God is not in the punishing business. He is in the disciplining business, and that is a whole different ball game. It tells me that the God who is disciplining me is also loving me, that the purpose is redemptive not punitive. He is

not trying to even the scales. He is trying to mold me and shape me like his Son. There is a positive aspect to it. The negative has been dealt with.

So as David is going up that hill being chased out of town by his own son as part of the consequences of his sin, he feels perfectly free to call upon God to thwart the good counsel of Ahithophel. He still has a relationship with his God that is a father-son relationship, a child and its parent. That has not been severed even though he knows from Nathan the prophet that what is happening to him is because he willfully and deliberately violated Bathsheba and then hid his sin for a year and a half or so. I think it will be helpful if we can remember this as we go through this passage.

So starting with Chapter 16, verse 15, Absalom comes into Jerusalem having chased his father out. Hushai the Archite the friend of David, another great counselor, is sent by David to help God thwart the good counsel of Ahithophel. He goes to Absalom, lies and manipulates and claims he will serve Absalom just as he served Absalom's father. "I will serve whom Yahweh chooses, and since you are king, God has obviously chosen you [Which, of course, appeals to Absalom's ego] so I will serve you." Absalom lets Hushai stay. Hushai's sole purpose is to thwart the good counsel of Ahithophel.

In verse 20, Absalom speaks to Ahithophel

II Samuel 16:20:

**Then Absalom said to Ahithophel, "Give your advice. What shall we do?" And Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Go in to your father's concubines, whom he has left to keep the house; then all Israel will hear that you have made yourself odious to your father. The hands of all who are with you will also be strengthened." So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof, and Absalom went in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel. And the advice of Ahithophel, which he gave in those days, was as if one inquired of the word of God; so was all the advice of Ahithophel regarded by both David and Absalom. Furthermore, Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Please let me choose 12,000 men that I may arise and pursue David tonight. And I will come upon him while he is weary and exhausted and will terrify him so that all the people who are with him will flee. Then I will strike down the king alone, and I will bring back all the people to you. The return of everyone depends on the man you seek; then all the people shall be at peace. So the plan pleased Absalom and all the elders of Israel.**

Here you see a godly man turned wicked by the bitterness of revenge. The advice of Ahithophel, up to this time, has been as the advice of God. It was the same as going to the priest who put on the Ephod and inquired of God. That is how godly Ahithophel was. But when David violated his granddaughter, the family name was insulted. You don't do that in the Orient. You don't make people lose face. And so this godly man begins to plot revenge. God warns in Scripture to never repay evil with evil but to always repay evil with good. It goes on to say, "'Vengeance is mine, I will repay.' says the Lord." When you take revenge or get even with somebody, you are taking upon yourself the prerogative of God, the right of God, and God has restricted that right unto himself. There is no way you can repay evil with evil and retain your control over that evil. The evil will consume you. The moment you start taking revenge, the revenge will possess you. God says, "Never, ever repay evil with evil." "Be not overcome by evil," is his warning.

This is what we see happening with Ahithophel. He now has two plans.

#1 Since his granddaughter was violated, he wants to get back in kind. David, when he departed Jerusalem, left ten concubines behind to keep house. He felt totally secure that they would be respected. Women weren't abused in a war in those days. Men were slain, but the women weren't. They were not considered participants. So he felt perfectly confident about leaving them. Well, not so with Ahithophel. He wants that revenge. He tells Absalom, which is good advice in one sense, "Go in to your father's concubines." Remember the heir to the throne always inherited the concubines of the father. "So, Absalom, make some public stand that shows you are the heir and that you are going to maintain that posture. Also, it will make you odious in the eyes of your father so all your



followers will be totally committed to you. They can't ever go back to David. He will kill them." Remember how, on a pretext, Absalom lured 200 key men, key advisers to David apparently, key officials of his, down to Hebron from Jerusalem. As a result he so compromised them that they could never go back without losing their lives. Ahithophel is intent on compromising Absalom and his company so thoroughly that there can never be any reconciliation between them and David. Beyond that there is a corresponding desire, "David violated my granddaughter, so I am going to have his wives violated. He did it in secret. I am going to have it done on the top of the palace. [In front of all Israel just as God had said it would happen] I am going to destroy his name." Mind you, this is David's best friend, his closest advisor.

#2 "I want more than that in my revenge; I want personally to kill him. I want to lead the twelve thousand men, I want to go after David as he is fleeing and is tired and doesn't have his forces organized. I want to get him before he gets to the river. I want to kill him. If you let me do that, I will just kill David, and I will bring back all the people to you. But I want to lead." Notice! All personal pronouns here.

David has prayed to God that the good counsel of Ahithophel might be thwarted. He had just finished praying that when up comes Hushai the Archite, and there is the obvious answer to his prayer. Here is another man who is just as brilliant as Ahithophel. Hushai is David's friend. So instead of letting God do his work, David, thinking he is doing God a favor, begins to plot how to use Hushai, "Go back to Absalom, cozy up to him, pretend you are on his side and thereby thwart the counsel of Ahithophel." Now God doesn't have to stoop to deceit, only we do that. Hushai goes to Absalom, stoops to deceit, and God chooses to use him anyway. The tragedy, of course, is that David will never see what God might have done had he just left God alone.

And so Hushai is addressed by Absalom.

II Samuel 17:5:

**Then Absalom said, "Now call Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear what he has to say."**

And Hushai begins reasoning with Absalom.

#1 "David is an experienced warrior. He is not fool enough to be out with the people. He will be in a ravine, or a cave. He'll be in some hiding place."

#2 "All his men are old time guerrilla fighters. This is their kind of fight. You go out to them in their territory, and they will butcher you. And the first time they pounce on you the rumor will come back that your men have been slaughtered. Then even the valiant will be sacred to death because they know your dad is a mighty man of war and his followers are fierce fighters. They are like a bear that has been robbed of its cub. They have lost face, and they are going to redeem their face at your expense." Absalom is a coward. Remember how he killed his brother Amnon? He didn't kill him himself and get revenge. No, Amnon, being the first born, was trained for kingship, and thus was a highly skilled warrior. So, when Amnon is drunk, Absalom sends his servants to kill him. Hushai goes on, "You go out and case all of Israel from Dan to Beersheba and raise an army, as many as the sands of the sea. Then this vast army, with you at the head, will come down on David and cover him like the dew covers the earth. If he goes into a city, we'll pull the city down. We'll get him. But let's play it safe." This would appeal to Absalom because it does two things for him.

#1 It does play it safe.

#2 It gives him all the glory.

II Samuel 17:14:

**Then Absalom and all the men of Israel said, "The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel." For the Lord had ordained to thwart the good counsel of**

### **Ahithophel, in order that the Lord might bring calamity on Absalom.**

It is intriguing isn't it? The counsel of Ahithophel was good. If Absalom had obeyed it, he would have killed David. It is exactly what they should have done to win the war. First of all declare your position, compromise all the people so they cannot return, move right on out and kill David, and Absalom would be king. and God himself called it "good counsel." It would have worked.

David thinks that his manipulations through Hushai the Archite is what caused the counsel of Ahithophel to be thwarted. God says in Scripture, "It was thwarted because I chose to have it thwarted." The sad thing is that David, by his manipulations, lost all the blessing of watching God do His thing for David's sake.

Another tragedy of David' manipulations. What does he fail to see that he might have seen if he had just trusted God? What would God have told David if God had done what God wanted to do, whatever it was? He may have used Hushai anyway, but if David had just stood back and watched God thwart the good counsel of Ahithophel, what would it have done for David's relationship with God? Sure, it would have strengthened it, wouldn't it? It would have given him a sense that God was there in charge, that God was loving him.

Let me point out one thing. Don't ever sell God short. This world may be behaving in a manner that shows no respect for God and yet be fulfilling the exact plan of God. His plan is right on schedule.

I just read an article that someone put in my box. It was obviously written by a non-Christian, a philosopher, and he cited four books written by four major authors all of whom served time in Soviet prison camps, all four Marxist atheistic Soviet philosophers. The title of one book was Gulag Archipelago. I have forgotten the other names. It points out that everyone of these men in the confines of prison discovered freedom when they were totally stretched out, totally without hope or help, and with no way to save their own lives. When they clung to their ideals, what they knew to be right, "the inner voices" they called it, no idea what they were talking about as far as God was concerned, they discovered an interesting principle. If they would save their soul at the expense of their body, they would save both the body and the soul. And they all experienced the same thing. They cite circumstances where it was impossible for things to happen that happened. One of them was forty days out on the glacial ice. He didn't care about his body; he was going to hang on to what he believed to be right, and he got the inner strength and the inner walk to survive forty days on a glacier. On the other hand in every single case where the person tried to save his body, he lost both the body and the soul. Every single time they tried to live up to the light they had, what they thought was right no matter the expense to the body, they won. They didn't know how to call it God. They didn't want to call it God, but when they did what they knew to be right, it worked. When they lived up to the light that they had, it worked. In the most distressing circumstances, when all was lost, physically speaking, they discovered freedom. They were free from themselves. That is the greatest freedom in all the world. And it only came when they were totally wiped out physically and emotionally, and just clung to whatever light they had, to that light which they knew to be right. Everyone that did that found a freedom they didn't understand and an experience of joy and a great freedom of peace in the midst of those slave labor camps and under vile conditions. God is winning, my friends. He may lock up half the world in a slave labor camp, but he is freeing people while he is doing so. Don't ever look at the circumstances and think God is losing. These are atheists I'm talking about. They are not Christians. They are Russian philosophers brought up in an atheistic society. They can't even say the word God. One of them does, I think. I'm not sure he knows how to spell it even, but he says it. But they discovered that if they lived up to the light they had and were willing to die for it, they would be free. It is a fascinating thing.

**Comment from Class:** How do you explain this without Jesus Christ. Is it because of the principles that are involved?

**Bob's response:** God has certain basic principles for all mankind. Now, if these men will keep on observing the principle they discovered, I am thinking God will lead them down the road to Christ. Scripture says if I live up to the light that I have, it is incumbent upon God to lead me on to further light. I wouldn't be surprised if these four philosophers end up being believers somewhere down the line. It is quite possible, you know. As a matter of fact in this very church there is an American man and his son who for some reason were in a slave labor camp in

Siberia, way up in the boondocks. The father, who was a Christian, was going crazy in isolation. He was locked up for seven years in solitary confinement. You know what he prayed for in the uttermost reaches of Siberia in the midst of atheistic Russia; a Bible. Guess what happened. He was called into the commandant's office one day and handed a Bible. The commandant said, "I had to send all the way to West Germany for this thing," from Siberia to West Germany. Now this is the leader of a Communist slave labor camp in Siberia. His life is on the line for doing something like this. But he did it, and in that cell up there in Siberia that American man got his Bible. Someone would have had to crawl through the Iron Curtain to get it. Don't ever kid yourself that God's hands are tied. So I wouldn't be surprised but what these four philosophers, if they continue to do what they claim they have done, give up their bodies in order for their souls to survive, are going to become Christians. In fact one of them is talking about the New Testament and the Old Testament. So God locks up half the world. That is how he frees people. Remember the Biblical paradox. You have to die to live. You have to be in prison to be free. Sure it is screwy, but I didn't invent it. It is God's norm.

That is what is going on with David. When God disciplines, God loves. That is the height of his love. Hebrews 12 says so. "I discipline every son I love and I scourge every son I receive. It is a mark of my sanction and my love."

In this same vein China closed its doors to foreign missionaries, but they have a very thriving church. What happened all those years when the Bamboo Curtain was down? God was doing His thing just exactly on schedule. Don't ever sell God short. And don't manipulate him either. David didn't need the lying and cheating on Hushai's part. Hushai thwarted the good counsel of Ahithophel because God ordained that it should be thwarted, because he was going to deal with Absalom while he was disciplining David.

Hushai then immediately sends word to David to get across the ford of the Jordan, to get on the other side, which David does. He flees across the Jordan. Then in verse 23 there is tragedy.

II Samuel 17:23:

**Now when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled *his* donkey and arose and went to his home, to his city, and set his house in order, and strangled himself; thus he died and was buried in the grave of his father.**

This is the end result of a godly man who decided to be ungodly. His finish, too, is typical of suicide. He contemplates it. He makes his final settled decision. He goes very typically about his business, clam, cool and relaxed, gets his household in order, then takes his belt and strangles himself. If you have a suicide caller screaming to high heaven, that isn't the time to worry. It's when they call up and tell you they have a 32 caliber automatic, that it has a bullet in it and then begin to describe it very carefully, very calm, cool and collected. When they do that, it's time to be concerned. Once that decision is made, apparently a calmness comes over you. Ahithophel had the exact syndrome here. When he made the decision to kill himself, he went home, did his thing, and killed himself. That is the end of a man consumed by revenge whose advice had been as good as the High Priest according to God. Now it doesn't say anything about his eternal salvation. We are talking about his life on earth, and God took him home. He turned from godliness to evil, and he, of all men being one of the wisest men of all Israel whose advice was as the advice of God, should have known the most about not doing something like this.

So David crosses over to the east side of the Jordan. Now he is in his territory. You recall David was on the east side of the Jordan when he conquered Syria in the north. Then, still on the east, he swept down and took Ammon and on south to Moab and Edom and wiped them out. So on the eastern side of the Jordan David has a sold block of people who owe him something. He has secured their land for them.

Also Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh, who were also on the eastern side of the Jordan, were some of Israel's greatest warriors. Because they made a bad choice and, instead of crossing into the Promised Land,

decided to stay on the east side of the Jordan for the good pasture land, they had as neighbors the Assyrians, the Ammonites, the Edomites and the Moabites. So they were in constant conflict with them and developed into tremendous warriors. There is a note on that in I Chronicles.

On the east side of the Jordan David is joined by Shobi, son of Nahash of Rabbah of the sons of Ammon, Barzillai the Gileadite and Machir the son of Ammiel, some of the mightiest men on the eastern side of the Jordan. The Ammonites join his army and his battle. Here is that strange tie David has with the Ammonites. Apparently when David conquered the Ammonites, he must have put to death only those involved in the resistance, and when the Ammonites have a chance to get even with him they don't. They choose to join his side.

Now Absalom has to gather his army, come across the Jordan and fight on David's turf against people who know the lay of the land. The greatest warriors and the greatest generals are all with David. So God is quietly building up this powerful force.

David goes to Mahanaim, which is located in very rugged territory. He has the biggest force, the best warriors, the best generals, and he not only knows the local territory, but he can choose the site. So Absalom has to come to him. He has everything going for him, so, of course, he feels very secure, doesn't he?. Watch how God operates.

In Chapter 18 David numbers his people and divides them into three groups. He puts one third under Joab, one third under Joab's brother Abishai, and one third under Ittai the Gittite, the Philistine general, apparently one of their top men. God provides a Philistine general to help fight this thing. And then David sends them out to be a three prong pincer movement, which was typical of the fighting in those days. The three prong method was one up the middle, and two around the sides. As they go out, David begs for one thing.

II Samuel 18:5:

**And the king charged Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, "Deal gently for my sake with the young man Absalom." And all the people heard when the king charged all the commanders concerning Absalom.**

It is an amazing hold that Absalom has on David. It is far deeper than just the normal love. There seems to be a deep problem of guilt involved. David is deathly afraid of Absalom's loss, and, in just a moment, I am going to make a suggestion as to why I think this is.

They go out to battle. 20,000 of Absalom's men are involved, but the intriguing thing is that they fail mostly because of the topography, not because of David's army. God deliberately destroys them himself rather than through all the skilled men he has given David. More fall in the forest than fall by the sword. And the armies of Absalom are put to flight.

What is God trying to tell David? What is the loud and clear message that God is trying to send to David? David has this extraordinary army, brilliant generals, skilled fighters, everything on his side, but, as far as success in this battle is concerned, he could just as easily have used a small group of recruits. Yeah! God is going to put David on the throne. David is God's anointed king, and God hasn't changed his mind. The gifts and callings of God are irrevocable. He is trying to tell David in the strongest language possible, "You are my king, and you are going to have your throne back. This part of the discipline is now over."

Unfortunately, God also has to deal with Absalom. The problem is Absalom is not in revolt against just David. He is in revolt against God. If you recall Deuteronomy 17 the #1 rule, out of 5 or 6, is, "I choose the king of Israel." So Absalom is not fighting David. Absalom is fighting Yahweh. He is in rebellion against Yahweh. So as David will not deal with his own son, God has to. If we won't judge our own children, God will judge them.

Meanwhile, Absalom on a mule, which the king's son rode in those days, trots through this extremely dense forest, goes under an oak tree and gets his head caught in a notch of the tree. The mule keeps on going and leaves

him hanging between heaven and earth. Josephus tells us that his long hair got entangled in the branches. That is probably true. For some strange reason God mentions, prior to this, that he has long hair and is proud of it. God loves to take pride and use it as a tool. So there he hangs. He can't let go to untangle his hair or he will strangle. So he has to keep on hanging to keep his neck up, just swinging there back and forth. One of Joab's men sees him, goes and reports to Joab. Joab says, "Why didn't you kill him? I would have given you ten pieces of silver." The man replies, "I wouldn't have killed him if you had given me a thousand pieces of silver. You heard what David said. He told all three of his generals in front of all the people, 'Don't touch Absalom.' If I had touched him, you wouldn't have defended me, Joab. You would have acted as though I wasn't there." He knows old Joab. Joab says, "I don't have to keep listening to this nonsense," and he goes out and jabs Absalom with three spears, none of which kill him. That is kind of interesting because God had said, "the sword" will not depart from your house, not "the spears." Then Joab sends his aide-de-camp to hack up Absalom as he is hanging in the tree. They throw Absalom into a great pit and pile stones on him. The passage ends with the fact that they erect this great pile of stones over Absalom. Because he had no sons and wanted his name to continue, he had already erected this impressive pillar, The pillar of Absalom, outside of Jerusalem, and here he ends up in a criminal's grave. Criminal's were interred in a deep pit covered with a pile of stones, such as they did with Achan at Jericho [Ai] when God wiped him out. Then Joab immediately calls back his force. He doesn't want to cause any more bitterness than necessary.

Joab sends runners to tell David about the victory. Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok the High Priest, wants to be the chief runner. He has been running to David from Zadok in Jerusalem. He wants to run now and tell David the good news that they have conquered these people in these trees. Joab says, "No you don't. You do not run today, the king's son is dead." When David receives bad news he has a habit of killing the messenger. Remember the Amalekite who came to David saying, "Hey, I helped kill Saul when he was dying. I put him out of his misery." Off goes his head. And when Rechab and Baasah brought David the head of Ishbosheth, who was a rival for the kingdom after Saul's death, he had them killed. You don't go to David with things like that. He has a rather hot hasty temper. So Joab sends a Cushite, not a fellow with a name, just a slave. Although he starts first, Ahimaaz passes him and gets to the king before the Cushite. Ahimaaz won't tell the king that Absalom is dead, however, but the Cushite finally comes up and does tell David. Look at David's response in verse 33 of Chapter 18. I think this is a tip off.

II Samuel 18:33:

**And the king was deeply moved and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept. And thus he said as he walked, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you. O Absalom, my son, my son!"**

David's weeping is so intense that the people who won the victory feel ashamed. They slink into the city because of the grief of David, the guilt of David. May I make a suggestion as to why David feels such shattering guilt. This is not Scripture, you understand, but I think it is right. This is the first son of David's who has not been saved. I think this is the first one he has lost that he knows is truly lost. David really values eternal life. He really values his salvation. When he sinned against Bathsheba, remember, he said to the Father, "Don't take your Holy Spirit away from me." That wasn't loss of salvation. That was loss of empowerment. He went on, "And restore to me the joy of my salvation." He knew he was still saved. But now let's look at Amnon for a second. His crime was a crime of passion. It was not premeditated murder. Yes, he violated his step-sister, but he did it in passion, and he hated and loathed himself afterward. That is why he loathed her. He was David's first born. His mother was Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, a godly woman. He was brought up undoubtedly in the fear of Jehovah. He was heir apparent to the throne, so he was trained in both war and worship. When he was murdered two years later, he had had plenty of time to repent and to sacrifice and to make things right with Jehovah, which he undoubtedly did. Chileab was the second son, apparently killed in warfare. Remember who his mother was? Abigail, the Carmelitess, the wife of Nabal, the godly woman who stopped David from butchering all the males in Nabal's household. Chileab was brought up by another godly woman, so he is with the Lord. Third son he lost was his first child with Bathsheba, the illegitimate child. What did David say about that third child? How sure was he of that child's salvation back three thousand years ago. He stopped mourning the moment the child died. He had mourned for seven days that he might get God to repent. When God didn't and the child died, he got up, dressed,

shaved, ate breakfast and relaxed. His servants said, "You are out of your cotten-pickin' mind. [Free translation of the Hebrew.] You mourn, you weep, you won't touch food, then, when you find out the child is dead, you get up, dress, shave, worship, go out and eat breakfast. What's with you?" David said, "Well, God has made his choice. The child will not return to me, but I shall go to him." He knew that child was with the Lord. But, now, what about Absalom? Who was Absalom's mother? Maachah the daughter of Talmai the king of Geshur, a Syrian kingdom up north. David made a political marriage this time. He married a non-Jew, a Semite, but a non-Jew. They probably worshipped the Baals up there, an ungodly woman. She was the mother of Absalom and Tamar. Undoubtedly she brought her god with her, and Absalom grew up a pagan. You wonder why Solomon ends up with 700 wives and 300 concubines and all those shrines he built to pagan gods? He did you know. I Kings 11 is a tragic statement.

I Kings 11:1:

**Now King Solomon loved many foreign women along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, from the nations concerning which the Lord had said to the sons of Israel, "You shall not associate with them, neither shall they associate with you, for they will surely turn your heart away after their gods." Solomon held fast to these in love [A direct violation of the known will of God]...For it came about when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father *had been*. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth [That is that horrible filthy goddess of fertility] the goddess of the Sidonians and after Milcom the detestable idol of the Ammonites. [To this god burned your babies in a flaming cauldron, fried them by laying live babies on red hot metal hands, a horrible thing] And Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, and did not follow the Lord fully, as David his father *had done*. Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable idol of Moab, on the mountain which is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the detestable idol of the sons of Ammon. Thus also he did for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.**

Who introduced paganism into Jerusalem? Solomon. Who built shrines to these repulsive pagan gods and goddesses in Jerusalem? Solomon. Who did he build them for? His wives. "Thus also he did for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods." Where did Solomon get the idea? From daddy who made at least one marriage alliance, that we know of, out of pure political expediency. He brought into his household Maachah the daughter of Talmai the king of Geshur, a pagan woman who worshipped the Baals of those filthy worship systems. Her son was Absalom, and Absalom was a pagan. He demonstrated his paganism by premeditated murder. He waited two years to kill his brother. He defied Jehovah and tried to kill God's anointed king, his own father, and he died in defiance, before repentance.

Do you see now why David might cry, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you. O Absalom, my son, my son!" How much does David value his salvation? More than life itself, doesn't he.

That is another reason why David is a man after God's own heart. He sees the invisible as being visible. He sees that life with God is more important than life down here, and his son is gone, lost forever, and without eternal life. Because David knows his Lord so well, he would rather die and be with him if Absalom could still be alive with a chance to repent, but it cannot be. And painfully he knows deep in his heart that he is partially responsible. He married outside the will of God. He didn't raise his kid according to the will of God, and his kid died out of the will of God. "For God is not willing that any should perish but all should come to repentance." I think that is the deep agony David went through.

**Comment from class:** As a man after God's own heart, it would appear David shared with God the revolt of Satan and the anguish that God felt when Satan fell.

**Bob's response:** There is a parallel there, because God did mourn the fall of Satan. The strongest Hebrew language capable of describing extreme anguish is describing God at the fall of Satan in Ezekiel 28. God loves

Satan. He does not hate Satan. He hates everything he stands for, everything he does, but he does not hate any of his creatures, and Satan is one of his creatures. When Satan falls, as described in Ezekiel 28, he uses the strongest Hebrew language possible for extreme anguish, and God is the one extremely anguished. God, of course, does not have any guilt trip because Satan made a choice against perfect light. But David, I think, has a guilt trip here. He knows this son of his might have lived had he done things differently.

We look at David's outward actions and, frankly, he isn't doing too well. Then you look at David's heart. Last week it was acceptance. This week it is the value he places upon eternal life. He really understands the value of God's life lived in him, how much salvation really means. The first son, apparently, that doesn't make it quite tears him apart.

After the dreaded news about Absalom, David cries so much that the people slink into town as though they were fleeing from a losing battle. Then Joab steps in. Good old Joab. He may be a rotten, unscrupulous general, but he is an excellent general and very much a pragmatist. Joab comes to the house of the king and says, "You are bawling your heart out over Absalom when all these people risked their lives for you and you aren't concerned about them at all." When the message of the battle was brought to David by the two runners, the first question he asked was, "How did Absalom fare?" not "How did the people fare, but how did Absalom fare?" He is scared to death his son will be killed, and Joab tells him so in verse 5;

II Samuel 19:5:

**Then Joab came into the house to the king and said, "Today you have covered with shame the faces of all your servants, who today have saved your life and the lives of your sons and daughters, the lives of your wives, and the lives of your concubines, by loving those who hate you [Absalom], and by hating those who love you [All your troops]. For you have shown today that princes and servants are nothing to you; for I know this day that if Absalom were alive and all of us were dead today, then you would be pleased. Now therefore arise, go out and speak kindly to your servants, for I swear by the Lord, if you do not go out, surely not a man will pass the night with you, [They were on the east side of the Jordan, a long way from home] and this will be worse for you than all the evil that has come upon you from your youth until now." [Those are pretty harsh words and actually only partially true, but this is what God uses to shake him loose] So the king arose and sat in the gate. When they told all the people, saying, "Behold, the king is sitting in the gate," then all the people came before the king [and he reunites the troops].**

God uses an unscrupulous general to bring David back to his senses. But you see the beautiful thing about David. He really values the same things as God. He really values the things that are eternal and not temporal. He blows much of the temporal, but his value system is godly, and God looks upon the heart not upon the outward person.

Remember Moses? He considered the reproach of Christ more valued than all the riches in Egypt, for he was looking for the reward. It didn't happen down here. He didn't get into the Promised Land. But it sure happened up there.

Check your value system. How much do you value this world and the things in this world versus the things of the Word of God, the other world, the things that last? Don't in any way judge your life upon your performances, your actions down here. Judge your life based on, "What was my attitude when I did that dumb thing? What was my real desire when I did that?" That is what God is doing right now. He is evaluating your attitude, your heart, not your performance.

Father, we thank you again for the way you reveal what you are really after, us, not our actions, not our performance, just us. You want us. You want to possess us. You want to hold us. You want to live in us. You want to dwell in us. You want to love us. You want every facet of our being, Father. You want to take us and use us to glorify Yourself. Thank you, Father, that is does not depend upon our actions or our manipulations or our intelligence or any of these things. It simply depends upon our desire, and all of us in this room, no matter whether we come from a

background of a high education or low education, high IQ or low IQ, ghetto circumstances or silver spoon in our mouth, any and all of us can desire to be your man, want to have you as Supreme God and Lord of our life. Therefore, any of us and all of us can really be sons of the Living God. Thank you, Father, there are no distinctions in your kingdom. Thank you in Jesus' name.

**Editor's Note:** The lesson on II Samuel 19:9-20:26 is not available. I offer a summary here for the sake of continuity. (Helen DeCoursey)

The people of Israel question why David is not brought back to Jerusalem. So David sends to Zadok and Abiathar the priests and asks them to speak to the elders of Judah about why they are the last to bring back the king. He places Amasa as commander of the army before Joab. The men of Judah as one man send word to the king, "Come back." So David returns as far as the Jordan where Judah comes to meet him and bring him across. Shimei is among the group who goes to meet David and confesses he sinned against David. Abishai says, "Should not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the Lord's anointed?" David says, "I'm king over Israel today, no man shall be put to death today." Then Mephibosheth also comes to meet David, and tells him he was deceived by his servant and that he is grateful for the kind treatment David has given him. So David divides Saul's land between Ziba and Mephibosheth, but Mephibosheth is willing to let Ziba have it all. Then Barzillai a Gileadite who sustained the king while he was at Mahanaim comes to escort David over the Jordan. David says, "Come along and I will sustain you in Jerusalem," but Barzillai is eighty years old and wants to return and die in his own city near the grave of his father and mother. There rises up a dispute between the men of Judah and the men of Israel. The men of Israel say they have more of a claim on David as they were the first to suggest the king be brought back. Then a worthless fellow named Sheba, a Benjamite, gathers the men of Israel saying, "We have no part in David" and they leave David and follow Sheba. Only the men of Judah stay with David from the Jordan to Jerusalem. David tells Amasa to call out the men of Judah in three days, but Amasa delays, so David tells Abishai to go after Sheba lest he find a fortified city and cause David more trouble than Absalom. So Joab's men, along with the Cherethites and the Pelethites and all the mighty men, go to pursue Sheba. Amasa comes to meet them in Gibeon. Joab is in uniform with a sword at his waist. As Joab takes Amasa by the beard to kiss him, he stabs him in the belly and he dies. Then Joab and Abishai pursue Sheba. They come to the city of Abel Beth-maacah and besiege it. A wise woman faithful to Israel makes a deal with Joab, "Don't destroy the city and I'll throw the head of Sheba over the wall," which she does. Joab gathers his troops out of the city and ends up over all the troops of Israel. (December 26, 1999)

The final lesson in this series will be principles gained from our studies in the life of David.

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## Chapter Thirty-four

### Summary: The Life of David

Today I want to talk about some of the principles we have seen in our studies these last weeks. God wrote these things before time, we are told, for our instruction that we might have the wisdom of God. By observing the lives and the actions of these people and the incidents that occurred in their lives and by seeing acted out these spiritual truths, we will see principles. Albeit these actions were 3,000 years ago, we can bring these spiritual principles into



our daily lives and apply them here and now. So David may be 3,000 years old, but the truths of David are current. I would like to go through some with you.

What would you say is the biggest principle we have seen in the life of David? What is probably the key principle of all? God himself being described in describing David? God himself even gave the key in his description of David. He's a "man after God's own heart." With the track record he has, how can he possibly be a man after God's own heart? I and II Samuel primarily depict a life of failure, willfulness, disobedience and impulsiveness. What is there about David that makes him a man after God's own heart, that he is even called that in Scripture? He really loved the Lord. He really wanted to be God's man, didn't he?

What is the difference between David and Saul? They were both chosen of God, both chosen kings of Israel. Saul was even chosen to be king of Israel forever. God said, "You obey me, and your line will rule forever." He did not set Saul up for a one shot trip. He took Saul, changed his heart and filled him mightily with the Spirit of God. David was also filled mightily with the Spirit of God. But David's track record is littered with more sin and wickedness, at least recorded, than Saul's. Saul's essential wickedness was rebellion, but they were both willful kings. What is the difference? Why is Saul not a man after God's own heart when David is? What was there about David versus Saul that was the key?

**Comment from Class:** David would repent.

**Bob's response:** Yes, and what did he do when he repented? This is the most crucial thing to me in the whole of I & II Samuel. When God puts the finger on our lives and says, "That is wrong," what did Saul do?

**Comment from Class:** He defied him.

**Bob's response:** He didn't literally defy him openly and shake his fist at Yahweh. He wasn't that dumb. What did he do when God said, "This is sin

**Comment from Class:** He wouldn't admit it.

**Bob's Response:** Right! He wouldn't admit it. He rationalized. He would justify himself. He did it every single time. When you justify yourself, you cannot justify God. You declare God to be wrong. If you say, "God, you have no right in your righteousness to discipline me because it really isn't my fault. My mother was scared by a fire engine," and God says, "Yes, it is," you are declaring God to be wrong. What did David do when God put the finger on him.

**Comment from Class:** He said, "You're right."

**Bob's Response:** When David did have the arm or the finger of God put on him, David always justified God. He always said, "You're right, I'm wrong." This to me is the mark of a "Man after God's own heart," not your track record, not whether you are Irish or Jahuvian or whatever. What do you do when God faces you up to your life? David fouled up all over the place, but God faced him up to it. When Nathan went to David after Bathsheba and Uriah, for example, and said, "You are the man," David said, "You're right, I am. I have sinned." No more argument. That was it. What was God's very next word? Now David had sinned in violation of the law against adultery which meant he should have been stoned. He committed premeditated murder which meant he should have been stoned. He practiced hypocrisy for a good year and a half which meant he should have been stoned, but what did God say the moment David said, "You're right. I have sinned."

**Comment from Class:** "You shall not die."

**Bob's response:** "You shall not die. Your sin is forgiven." And David didn't seek any excuse for his sin. He just ask for forgiveness.

If nothing else comes out of this series, I'd like to get across that God is in the forgiveness business. He came to

die to forgive sin. There is no way a Holy God can ever excuse sin. Freedom in the Scriptures in not doing what I choose. It is being what I was designed to be, and the primary attribute of God in the Word of God, revealed by the Word of God, is Holiness. It is not Love, not Grace, not Mercy. It is Holiness. And God is constrained by his inherent character of Holiness. He cannot do whatever he wants, and I use those terms reverently. God must do everything he does within the confines and restrictions and perimeters of his nature which is Holiness. He cannot be unholy. Therefore, he cannot excuse unholiness. His Holiness demands payment for the penalty of unholiness. He cannot, therefore, excuse sin. God cannot. It isn't that he won't. He CAN'T. So when you demand to be excused, "God, excuse my sin," you automatically cut yourself off from the blood of Jesus Christ because that blood was shed because sin CANNOT be excused. That blood was shed for willful, deliberate, wicked sin. And if we once catch on to this, we will stop fooling around. God wants to forgive. God came to forgive. God does everything in the world necessary for forgiveness. There is nothing left over to be done by God or by man to obtain God's forgiveness than to simply reach out empty-handed and say, "I have sinned." God's forgiveness is bestowed just like that, "You shall not die. Your sin is forgiven." This to the king of Israel regarding willful, deliberate, rebellious sin against the written law of God. Consequences, sure, but the sin never. Saul all the way through asked God, "Excuse my sin. It really wasn't my fault. I really didn't mean it." and God can't. And God did everything he could for Saul.

Another principle I see from the life of Saul is the long-suffering of God. How much did God really love Saul? What all did he do trying to get Saul to repent? What did he do when Saul deliberately rebelled and took matters into his own hand, using the excuse, "Well, you didn't show up, Samuel, like you said you would. Therefore, I had to go out and sacrifice." That was forbidden to the king. Only priests could do that. This first rebellion cost him his dynasty. Whereas God had said, "I will establish your dynasty forever." Now the word is, "Your kingdom shall not endure." His second rebellion, when he spared Agag the king of Amalek and the best of the sheep and oxen, actually cost him his kingdom. God said, "I have torn the kingdom of Israel from you today, and have given it to your neighbor, who is better than you." What happened to Saul then? What happened to the Spirit of God that had come mightily upon Saul, the changed heart God have given him in order that he might be the king God wanted him to be. What did he get instead? The spirit of evil from the Lord himself. Not from Satan, although it came from Satan, but by the permission of God. God deliberately allowed an evil spirit to drive Saul crazy. Why? What is God really after in the life of Saul? Yeah! He wants to make him so miserable in disobedience that he will turn. Why does God allow the consequences of sin to wreak havoc in our lives, because he wants to get even?

No, he got even in Christ. All of my punishment fell on Jesus Christ. My Heavenly Father got totally even with me on Jesus Christ. I will never be punished by God, ever. Never, ever *underscored*. I want to make that point as strongly as possible. I will never be punished. Yes, there will be consequences, but what purpose do the consequences serve? Why does God allow the Holy Spirit of God to be taken from Saul and his life driven by a demon? Why does he allow us to reap the consequences of our sin? Well, think about it. When do you think about God the most, when you have the mortgage paid and your kids are doing great in school, when you have a steady job that brings home the old paycheck and your wife is going easy on the credit cards? Seldom! When do you really get serious about God? I'll tell you; when the mortgage is due and you haven't got the money, when the termites are carrying your house down the street, when you wife is having a ball with the credit cards or your husband is drinking up the paycheck. That is when you get serious about turning to the Lord. So God is not punishing us by allowing the consequences to work out in our lives. They are designed to bring us to a state of repentance and dependence so we will begin to trust the Lord more and more. So the key difference between David and Saul is David justified God whenever God put the finger on him, "You are right and I am wrong." He never asked God, "Excuse me," in order to justify himself and not God.

With all his track record of failure and impulsiveness and vindictiveness, God never took the Spirit of God away from David as he did with Saul. This is not loss of salvation now. We are talking about empowerment to rule, to be God's man. In Psalm 51, after David and Bathsheba, after living in hypocrisy long enough for their baby to be born, to grow up enough to capture David's heart, and then be taken home by God, what is David's prayer? "Take not Thy Spirit from me." He still has God's Spirit, and he knows it is there. He doesn't want God to take it away.

Also God knows David will justify God, whereas Saul won't.

So when you sin, my friend, and when I sin, my friend, justify God. Say, "You are right, and I am wrong." It is called confession. "Say with God" is what the word means, and if you will say with God, he is "Faithful and Righteous." He is not loving, kind, generous, merciful or gracious. He is faithful. He will always do it. And he is righteous. He has to do it. Again God cannot go against his character. Since he has already gotten the punishment for sin that his Holiness requires from Jesus Christ, his Son, he cannot punish me. He cannot, not will not. He cannot punish me because of his Holiness. Therefore, he is faithful to do it every time, and he is righteous, he must do it every time. He will "Forgive my sin and cleanse me from all unrighteousness." Those are satisfying terms. If you are a Christian and you believe those terms, you ought to sleep well at night. When the time comes for you to go across the line, you walk across hand-in-hand with the Lord. A little scared, yes, because you don't know what is going to happen since you've never been through the experience before. But your hot, sweaty little hand has a tight grip on someone you know has been there before. So you have what I call a scared confidence or a confident fright.

Another thing we see in David's life. Each time he blew it there was something conspicuous by its absence. And he did blow it, and blow it, and blow it. Oh, he had moments of grandeur, but the weight of his track record in on the side of botching it. What was conspicuous by its absence in each case? He failed to consult the Lord. What provision had God made for David to find the will of God? He had it before he became king, once he was God's anointed, and after he became king. He had it when he was the great general of Israel under Saul and when he was being pursued and hounded by Saul. According to Deuteronomy 17, what was God's rule #5 for his kings? "He shall write for himself a copy of this law...in the presence of the Levitical priest...and he shall read it all the days of his life." He was to be a man of the Word and God gave him the Spirit of God to interpret it for him.

There was another means provided David to know the will of the Lord, an unbelievably gracious act on the part of God. Remember when David, through treachery and deceit, escaped from Saul and fled to Ahimelech at Nob, the priest who had inquired of the Lord many times for him in the past. When asked why he was all alone, David lied to Ahimelech and was given the consecrated bread along with the sword of Goliath. Saul found out about it and butchered not only Ahimelech but also the whole family of priests in the city of Nob. Only one High Priest with one ephod escaped. The ephod apparently had the Urim and the Thumin, "lights and perfections" by which some how the priest determined the will of God. We don't know exactly how. Where did Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech, the lone escapee, go? To David. So all during his wilderness wanderings, he had the High Priest of God together with the ephod available to him. God never left him without the ability to inquire of the Lord. And think, by lying to Ahimelech, David caused the slaughter of Ahimelech along with all those priests in Nob, except for the one God saved to be his man in the wilderness with David. How much did God really want David to know His mind? What a gracious God we serve.

Another principle. What generally preceded David's greatest failures? Victory. There are about three major failures in David's life that are very bad, and every one of them is preceded by tremendous victory. The first one, of course, was when he was a victorious general under Saul. He defeated Goliath, and he defeated the Philistines. There springs up a popular folk song, "Saul has slain his thousands and David his tens of thousands." Saul gets the message and gets jealous. David has been anointed king of Israel. He knows he is going to be king of Israel. God did not anoint him to be slaughtered. He anointed him to be king of Israel. So he knows he is going to be king. When Saul pursues him with the intent to kill him, he escapes from his home through the lies of his wife and flees over to Ramah to Samuel. Saul sends wave after wave after wave, three waves of soldiers, and finally goes himself to take David. What happens to the waves of soldiers and even to Saul himself? God causes them all to turn into prophets. And when Saul goes after David personally, he becomes the greatest prophet of them all, prophesying for a day and a night. They can't lay a finger on David. What is David's response to this "victory?" He goes running to Jonathan and says, "I am one step ahead of death, but I've got a scheme. "You know the current feast that I should attend. Well, you tell daddy I have to go home for the feast of my parents, and that you, as the crown prince, gave me permission to go.. I'll hide out here in the field. If it works and Saul is happy about it and wants me back, let me know, and I'll come back. If he doesn't want me back, let me know and I'll flee." So Jonathan, a Benjaminite, the great archers of Israel, joins the deceit and says, "Look, I'll shoot some arrows. As

the little boy I bring gathers my arrows, if I shoot beyond him, you are to flee. If I shoot short, you are to stay." So they work out their deceit, and it is very well done. The only problem is what? Saul sees through it just like that. The result is he tries to kill Jonathan, his beloved first born, the heir to his throne, the throne he is trying to protect for Jonathan by killing David. What's more he hardens his heart against David. All their scheming goes for naught.

So David flees to the wilderness. For maybe up to ten years, we can't tell exactly, he is protected from Saul by God. Twice Saul is given into his hands, and his men encourage him to do away with Saul. David is God's anointed king. Saul is out of the will of God, and fighting Jehovah, but David won't touch him because he is still God's anointed. He is willing to let God be God and make David king when God wants David on the throne. Tremendous spiritual battles. Tremendous spiritual victory. If you had your enemy who for ten years has been tracking you all over the wilderness of Judea with the intention of killing you, if you had him in your hands twice and also had a long sharp knife and 600 men encouraging you to kill him, what would you do? You bunch of liars, you'd do just what I would do. I would stick it to him but good. David didn't. Saul was God's anointed. David even fought his men on one occasion to stop them from killing Saul. Tremendous spiritual victory. Then after this tremendous victory when God says, "Get back into Judah. That is where I want you." What does he do? He goes through this long, sad pity party in Chapter 27. "I know I am never going to make it here. I'm going over to the Philistines and get out of this place." The self pity just oozes. So he goes over to Achish, who is rather a nice chap for a Philistine. He has more honor than David. He accepts David at face value. Of course, it doesn't hurt to have 600 solidly well-trained guerrilla warriors since he will be fighting the Israelites. He makes David one of his chief princes under a feudal arrangement. He grants David Ziklag and gives him the freedom to reign and roam down there. David and his men attack various tribes of the Amalekites [non-Jews] and slaughters man, woman, and child, leaving nothing alive to implicate him in his life of deceit. He returns with all the booty, gives his share to his feudal master Achish, and lies to him saying he has been fighting Judah and Caleb [Jews]. He becomes nothing less than a butcher, a robber baron, God's anointed king.

And third. After reigning for approximately twenty years, doing a great job as king, given tremendous success, and it says, "For the Lord God of hosts was with him," what happens? What is his greatest sin in the Bible? David and Bathsheba. He violates Bathsheba and murders Uriah. Whenever you have a spiritual triumph, be on your guard.

I have a friend who just had a big promotion. He is a Christian, and has a tremendous sphere of influence. He influences young wives who are training under him. We met yesterday at a Bible study and I said, "We have to get very serious about Bible study because you are going to be a number one target of Satan now. You are in a key position, and you can mold lives that will mold lives that will mold lives. It will have a domino effect for years." When you have spiritual victories, keep your eyes open.

Another principle I find in David that is kind of interesting, something I tend to do. When David is successful as a king or getting away from Saul or being a robber baron, he tends to see these successes as God's blessing on all areas of his life. It's the old rewards and punishment syndrome we've talked about before. Did you ever notice when God is blessing you with a tremendous ministry, a new job or whatever it happens to be, that you can interpret that as God's blessing on all areas of your life. We tend to interpret these so called successes as the fact that all areas of our lives are according to the will of God, and we seem to lack discernment.

David does this. when David is in Ziklag acting as a robber baron, deceiving his feudal lord Achish, with whom he has made a covenant, he thinks he is getting away with it. God expects covenants to be honored even with foreigners. Joshua made a covenant with Gibeon, remember, and God made him honor it. When Saul dishonored that covenant by killing Gibeonites, God brought famine on Israel for three years even though the Gibeonites were pagan Baal worshippers. When David goes with the Philistines to fight against the northern tribes of Israel, God even delivers him out of that, and he doesn't have to fight. When he goes back to Ziklag, the Amalekites have raided and taken all the families, including David's. He inquires of God and God says, "Pursue them. I'll give them to you." He pursues them and gets everyone back safely. God is just taking care of everything. Isn't it wonderful! But what happens when he becomes king of Judah? Do the ten northern tribes come flocking down in

mobs to make David king of all Israel? They do not. They go to war with him, even though they know David is God's anointed king and Saul himself has declared it so. But David had aligned himself with their bitterest enemies. While he was having his great success down south, he was hardening the ten northern tribes against him. My friends, that hardening never healed, not in David's time, not ever really. It broke apart in Rehoboam's time, Solomon's son. They never really trusted David after that.

The same thing is true when he was king of all Israel. It was a tragic thing. Chapter 5 of II Samuel "David became greater and greater for the Lord God of hosts was with him." He became an outstanding king of Israel, an extremely popular success, puts down all the enemies around him, and it says David became greater and greater because the Lord God of hosts was with him. That is II Samuel 5:10. II Samuel 5:13, just three verses down the road, says, "David took more wives and concubines." Now in those days the size of his harem was how you determined the greatness of a king.. But what was rule #4 in Deuteronomy 17, "You shall not multiply wives to yourself." David goes right ahead and multiplies wives because God is blessing him and, therefore, he is a great king. So seeing what other great kings do, he takes on more and more wives and concubines in direct violation to what he knows to be the Word of God. He seems to think he has been given blanket approval of all his actions

While this is all going on what is happening to David's sons? While the Lord of Hosts is making David greater and greater because the Lord of Hosts is with him, what kind of a father is David? He is a lousy father, isn't he? Why did Adonijah try to steal the throne from Solomon even though he knew Solomon was God's anointed? Because David never, ever denied him anything. And why did David never deny him anything, remember? Because David had been the runt of the litter. He had had a terrible childhood. He wasn't even considered a son. When Samuel was there to look over the sons of Jesse in order to anoint one as king, David wasn't even brought in until Samuel asked if Jesse had any more sons. Again when he brought supplies to his brothers who were fighting for Saul, Eliah, the eldest, put him down, "What are you up here for, you punk kid. Did you come to see the battle? Why aren't you back doing what you should be doing." His whole life has been one big put down. He has had to fight for everything his whole life and it shows in his vindictiveness all along the line. You don't cross David anywhere through I and II Samuel without getting hurt. So, "My boys are not going to have what I had. I am not going to put them through what I went through." So he indulges them. All the while God is blessing him he fails to discipline his kids. Amnon, #1 son, wants Tamar, Absalom's sister. So he takes her. Why? What was Amnon's model? David. What did David do. Took Bathsheba. Absalom, #3 son, comes along and is mad at Amnon. David doesn't punish Amnon and make him marry Tamar. The law of the violated virgin says that Amnon must marry Tamar. He should be slain, actually. He is not allowed incest with a half-sister, but if David couldn't bring himself to kill him, he should have at least made him marry her because the law says so. You had to marry a violated virgin for life. You could never divorce her. He doesn't punish him nor make him marry her. Absalom would never have killed his brother-in-law who was also his brother. So Absalom hates him, plots his revenge for two years and then kills him. What was his model? What did David do when Uriah got in his way. He killed him. How about Absalom wanting the throne? He is half Syrian. He feels a little like he's not exactly family. He is not a true Jew, but he is good looking, has a pleasing personality, looks regal is now #1 son, and he wants the throne.

Later on when Solomon is to be made king, Adonijah wants the throne. What do they do? They try to take it. They just take what they want. Where did they learn that? What did David do when he wanted something? He took it. He moves down to Ziklag and takes anything he wants. When Nabal crosses him and insults his messengers, he goes up to kill Nabal and every single male in his whole family. Why? Because he insulted David. That is all. So his sons grow up like this. Their model is daddy. Where did Solomon get the idea that he could have 700 wives and 300 concubines and make political marriages? David. David had wives and concubines and when he got to be a great king, he added more wives and more concubines, and #3 wife we know was the daughter of Talmi, the king of Geshur, a Syrian, a worshipper of Baal, a political marriage. All during this time David is modeling for his sons. What does this do for David's ability to discipline his children when they are doing the same thing he did? It disqualifies him, doesn't it.

Our authority to discipline our children is based upon our obedience to the Lordship of Christ. We have no authority apart from that. It is not like the Navy. I discovered that in a hurry. I got put on report the first day I was

in the Navy. I reported a day early and got a nice civilian haircut from a civilian barber. "They are not going to butcher my head" Comes the first day of inspection. We all take our hats off and look like a bunch of monkeys. Here comes the Captain, four stripes. Now he is retired but brought back during the war. He has this gorgeous silver mane that goes way down his back, and he loves that hair. It is beautiful. He comes by, takes one look at me and says, "That man is on report. He needs a haircut." The steam shot out of my ears and nose, my eyes flashed, but I kept my mouth shut. Afterwards I went to my battalion officer and said, "Did you see that? You know I got a haircut yesterday." He said, "Son, one thing you've got to learn about this navy, you do as the captain says not as the captain does. You are on report, now go get a haircut." So I went to the Navy barber, he went whoosh, whoosh and that did it for my hair. That doesn't work as a father or as a husband or as a man or as a pastor or as a Christian. Your life speaks so loudly no one can hear what you say. If you obey the Lordship of Christ, you have authority. If you don't, you have none, absolutely none. The obedience of Christ to his Father was so evident that a Roman Centurion who lived under absolute obedience to his Tribune, a man who had the power to kill him very slowly and very painfully, could see a man that had authority. Why? Because Christ was in absolute obedience. This Centurion with absolute authority over his men because he was in absolute obedience to his Tribune, could see Christ's authority was not based upon his miracles. It was based upon his obedience to his Father.

Another thing I see, and which I love about David's life, is the amazing illustration it is of the grace of God. Before studying David, I really didn't have an understanding of how gracious God really is. David does some horrible things as we have seen over these last 9 months. I feel almost lily white at times compared to David. It is a wonderful comparison. If you ever feel down on yourself with your self-worth at a low ebb, turn to I and II Samuel and read about David. It really helps you. But any time David does these horrible things and truly repents, God forgives, just like that. There is absolutely no bottom to the barrel of God's mercy and grace. You will never, ever, ever, use it up. Now, he may have to discipline you, and if you keep on rebelling, he may even take you home, but he takes you home. What is home? Well, everything that is normal and wonderful and comfortable and lovely and natural. I will never forget C. S. Lewis' statement that when he goes to heaven, he is not going to be overwhelmed by the glory up there. When he walks into heaven, he is going to be HOME. He'll say, "Of course." It is home and will be just as natural and normal and obvious as what it should be considering his new state. It will be just as natural as his home is right now for his present state while he is not with the Lord. Even if God takes you home because of your extreme disobedience, he takes you home where you walk in and say, "Of course." Oh, yes, you will face the Judgment Seat of Christ, and that will not be fun, but you do go home.

Secondly in the lineage of David, I love it, Matthew 1:6. David had many wives and many concubines and so the Lord had a great number of choices for children to put in his lineage. But I read in verse 6, in chapter 1 of Matthew "to Jesse was born David the king and to David was born Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah." He deliberately chooses David's greatest sin, David at his worst, and puts that in his lineage. Do you know what that says to me? That Jesus Christ is not a fair weather Lord. He does not just identify with me in my "successes" or when I am obeying him, but Jesus Christ identifies with me totally, even at my worst, no matter where I am spiritually. There is never any time when Jesus Christ does not identify with me. Now that does not mean he sinned. It does mean he had all the temptations I have had. The Bible says so, but he was victorious. I can never, ever get to the point where I cannot turn around, run and leap into his lap with dirt all over me and say, "You are right, I am wrong." and not have open acceptance, immediately crawl into his arms and squeeze tight. He doesn't care how dirty I am. I am to run to him. The kings of the earth, the great men of the earth, in Revelation, flee from the wrath of the Lamb. I am told to flee TO the Lamb. In the midst of his wrath upon me, the consequences of my sin that I am feeling so bad about, that hurt so much, I am to run to him. That holy God, the one who cannot sin, who cannot go against his own holiness, says I am to run to him, leap into his lap, and he will hold me close. I don't have to get cleaned up first, no showers before I walk into the presence of Jesus Christ. He identifies with me totally, my peaks and my pits. That is some God. That is the thing that really struck me. A lot of us love our God with all our hearts, but do you know what I am saying here? I like my God. I really like him. He is really something.

Father, we just thank you so much that you are that kind of a God. We frankly cannot understand it, but boy, do we like it. Father, we like it that you are the kind of God that we can both love and like, that you are just like us in the sense that you identified yourself with us. You know what we

go through. You have been there yourself but you have been victorious. You have never sinned. You know how to handle temptation. You know how to be victorious every time, and yet you also know the pull upon us and the weaknesses we have and our desire to rationalize and our foolishness and the stupidity of our hearts and you accept us anyway. You identify with us whether we are walking in obedience and having mountain top experiences and you identify with us when we are having our Bathsheba trips. You are some God. Thank you, Father, in Jesus' name. Amen.

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