

AN EXPOSITION OF  
**FIRST SAMUEL**

by  
Tim James



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An Exposition of the Book of 1 Samuel as Delivered in a  
Series of Messages to the Congregation of Sequoyah  
Sovereign Grace Baptist Church, Cherokee, NC.

by  
**Tim James**

Grace-eBooks.com  
Publications  
2021

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# SHUT AND OPENED

## 1 Samuel 1:1-28

1, Now there was a certain man of Ramathaimzophim, of mount Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephrathite:

2, And he had two wives; the name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah: and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

3, And this man went up out of his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice unto the LORD of hosts in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the LORD, were there.

4, And when the time was that Elkanah offered, he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions:

5, But unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion; for he loved Hannah: but the LORD had shut up her womb.

6, And her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the LORD had shut up her womb.

7, And as he did so year by year, when she went up to the house of the LORD, so she provoked her; therefore she wept, and did not eat.

8, Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? am not I better to thee than ten sons?

9, So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the LORD.

10, And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore.

11, And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man

child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.

12, And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her mouth.

13, Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken.

14, And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee.

15, And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD.

16, Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto.

17, Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him.

18, And she said, Let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad.

19, And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the LORD, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah: and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the LORD remembered her.

20, Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of the LORD.

21, And the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer unto the LORD the yearly sacrifice, and his vow.

22, But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, I will not go up until the child be weaned, and then I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD, and there abide for ever.

23, And Elkanah her husband said unto her, Do what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou have weaned him; only the LORD establish his word. So the woman abode,

and gave her son suck until she weaned him.

24, And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the LORD in Shiloh: and the child was young.

25, And they slew a bullock, and brought the child to Eli.

26, And she said, Oh my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the LORD.

27, For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him:

28, Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD. And he worshipped the LORD there.

**T**his book begins the historical account of the kings of Israel. Though the first two books are named after Samuel, it is unlikely that he wrote more than the first 24 chapters of the first book because the death of Samuel is recorded in the first verse of chapter 25. The old Jewish writers called this book *The First Book of Kings*, suggesting that of the six books that make up the account, this is the first. The book of Acts gives us the true measure of this book and the mark of the main character (the Lord Jesus Christ) that envelops the first 24 chapters (Acts 3:20-24; 1 Sam. 2:34-35<sup>1</sup>). This is where the Bible resides, in the doctrine of

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<sup>1</sup> Acts 3:20-24, And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. **1 Sam. 2:34-35**, And this shall be a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall die both of them. And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my

Christ. This Is where the elect of God live and move and have their being, in the revelation of Christ.

The glory of the providence of God in the salvation of the elect is revealed in prevenient grace. That grace, by which the elect are brought to the feet of the Redeemer, is the manipulation of events and circumstance that eventuate in the elect having only one hope left. Prevenient grace is designed to create hunger and thirst for God by stripping one of any other avenue of deliverance (Deut. 32:39; 2:6-7<sup>1</sup>).

This story begins with the record of the birth of Samuel, but it is about the *deliverance* of Hannah, Samuel's mother. Hannah was the wife of a man called Elkanah. Elkanah also had another wife named Peninnah. The practice of polygamy, though “winked at” by God, was never sanctioned by God, and whenever it was practiced by the people of God, it always proved a source of trouble and woe.

Though many would practice polygamy and justify the act claiming it is permitted in the Bible, and even commanded, the pages of this book, though not explicitly condemning the practice, reveals that it never turns out well. Human nature assures that when two women are vying for the affections of one man, the competition will be malicious. Just as Hagar's presence was a mockery to Sarah, so Peninnah was a mockery to Hannah. The cause of the mockery was that Peninnah was fertile, and Hannah was barren. Another thing that added fuel to the fire was that Elkanah loved Hannah and the exclusivity of love revealed that he did not love Peninnah. This distinction is clearly seen in the wording of

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mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever.

<sup>1</sup> **Deut. 32:39;** See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand. **2:6-7,** Ye shall buy meat of them for money, that ye may eat; and ye shall also buy water of them for money, that ye may drink. For the LORD thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thy hand: he knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years the LORD thy God hath been with thee; thou hast lacked nothing.

verses 4-5. Peninnah is called Hannah's adversary (v. 6a) because she mocked her for her barrenness. She caused Hannah such pain that she wept sorely and could not eat (v. 7).

Peninnah pictures the attitude of works religion toward the free grace of God in Christ. Hannah was loved, but she was barren. She could be of no true service to her husband. She could not produce a lineage to carry on his name. Humanly speaking and representing a spiritual truth, Elkanah's love for Hannah added nothing to him but greatly benefited her. She received a double portion (Isa. 40:1-2<sup>1</sup>). Religion can never understand the love of God for the *kind* of people that he loves. They are not productive. They can do nothing to further His name. However, *religion* presents ample proof that they are truly God's people. They have produced *many* children. They are not barren and have many works to point to. But they are not loved and are chapped that they, who do so much, are not rewarded for their efforts while poor impotent sinners, barren all, and having no evidence to show, are recipients of the unconditional love of God (Rom. 5:5-8; Titus 3:4-7; Matt. 7:21-23<sup>2</sup>). Truth be

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<sup>1</sup> **Isa. 40:1-2**, Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins.

<sup>2</sup> **Rom. 5:5-8**, And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. **Titus 3:4-7**, But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. **Matt. 7:21-23**, Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?

known, Peninnah's hatred was for *Elkanah*, but she would have lost all had she manifest her hatred toward him. Instead, she vented her venom on the one he loved. Our Lord said, "Marvel not if the world hate you,"—"it hated me before it hated you" (1 John 3:13; John 15:18-19<sup>1</sup>). In this world ye shall have tribulation. Providence is preparing Hannah. Though Peninnah was the source of Hannah's woe, it was God who shut up her womb.

For Hannah, the solution to her woes was simple. There was but one thing that would relieve her sorrow. There was but one thing that would remove her from this curse (1 Tim. 2:14-15<sup>2</sup>). Her salvation was in giving birth. Only by birth could she be what every Jewish woman desired to be—honored as a mother. She had been brought by blessed but painful prevenient grace to the place that her hope of deliverance was solely and entirely in the God of grace and mercy. We get a hint of that hope, and the incentive for it, not only in her helpless condition but in the God that they went to Shiloh to worship.

*Shiloh* has many meanings, and they all are names and descriptions of Christ—"to him it belongs," "peace," "the Son," "sent," "rest," "prosper." In verse 3 of chapter 1 is a "first." The Lord here is referred to as "The Lord of Hosts"—Jehovah Sabaoth. This name is particularly precious to those who are in the throes of sorrow (Romans 9:29; James 5:4<sup>3</sup>).

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and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

<sup>1</sup> **1 John 3:13**, Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. **John 15:18-19**, If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

<sup>2</sup> **1 Tim. 2:14-15**, And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.

<sup>3</sup> **Romans 9:29**, And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha. **James 5:4**, Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields,

Amid a hostile world and a host of persecutors the people know who rules in the midst of His enemies. It is the Lord of hosts, Jehovah Sabaoth to whom we apply.

The Lord of hosts is who Hannah prayed to (v. 11). She prayed for a child that she might give him to God as a Nazarite to serve Him all the days of his life. Hannah prayed with such fervency that Eli thought she was drunk. In silence she prayed, weeping, and mouthing the words without sound. She spake from her heart, pouring out her soul to God, and the voice of her supplication was heard though her voice was not. She prayed under the influence of the Spirit as is witnessed by the meekness of her response to Eli's accusation (vv. 14-16). Her prayer was answered by the promise of the prophet, and we see the course of providence.

God shut up her womb, allowed the accuser to taunt her, closed off every avenue of hope save Himself alone, put in her heart to cry out unto the Lord in her bitterness of soul, granted her desire and opened her womb at the appointed time (v. 20). There are no accidents in the deliverance of your soul (read Ps. 107). "She went her way and did eat and her countenance was no more sad" (v. 18). She was the Lord's elect. He had known her from all eternity, and when He had brought her to His throne of grace, He remembered her (v. 19; Exod. 2:24; 6:5<sup>1</sup>). He remembered her because she was named in His covenant of promise.

When she weaned the child, she honored her vow and brought the child to Shiloh, to the temple, to the place of worship. She brought a burnt offering typifying the payment of the sin debt. It was a sin offering revealing that she was a sinner, and all she had received was by grace, and it was a

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which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.

<sup>1</sup> Exod. 2:24, And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. 6:5, And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant.

peace offering that pictured praise and thanksgiving for the grace of God.

The child was weaned from the breast, but this weaning also involved a coming of age, a teaching of doctrine (Isa. 28:9<sup>1</sup>). We know this is so because the first account of any act of Samuel is seen in the last phrase of verse 28—“And *he* worshipped the Lord there.”

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<sup>1</sup> Isa. 28:9, Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.

# THANKSGIVING AND PRAISE

## 1 Samuel 2:1-5

1, And Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoiceth in the LORD, mine horn is exalted in the LORD: my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation.

2, There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God.

3, Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.

4, The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength.

5, They that were full have hired out themselves for bread; and they that were hungry ceased: so that the barren hath born seven; and she that hath many children is waxed feeble.

**I**n this passage we find Hannah praying again. Previously, she prayed silently in sorrow of heart to bear a child and for relief from her adversary. Having received her desire she now prays audibly, and her prayer is the prayer of thanksgiving and praise. Thanksgiving and praise are an integral part of prayer, both private and public. Scripture says;

“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men” (1 Timothy 2:1).

“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God” (Phil. 4:6).

In Hebrews 13:15<sup>1</sup>, prayer is called the sacrifice of the heart.

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<sup>1</sup> Hebrews 13:15, By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

It is a *sacrifice* because self is left out of the equation. Praise and thanksgiving attributes all glory to God and has none for self. Self is thus sacrificed for the honor of God. I think this is why praying is sometimes referred to as “offering a prayer.”

Hannah’s prayer is a declaration of the person and glory of God in the salvation of sinners by Christ. Though her prayer may and should be viewed as thanksgiving for natural maladies, and natural deliverances, the message is only truly spiritual. In a sense, this prayer is “the prayer” of thanksgiving for salvation by Christ. There are true comparisons between this prayer of Hannah and the prayer of Mary in Luke 1. Compare verse 1 of our text with Luke 1:46-47<sup>1</sup>; verse 2 with Luke 1:49<sup>2</sup>; verse 4 with Luke 1:51<sup>3</sup>; and verse 8 with Luke 1:53<sup>4</sup>.

Verse 1 is the praise of God for salvation. She rehearses her glad estate with an eye on the Messiah. Her heart is made to rejoice in the LORD (Phil. 3:3; 4:4<sup>5</sup>). Her horn is exalted. The horn speaks of state of mind. It refers to peace and ease of heart, of confidence in God, of the knowledge of favor and light. In her former estate she was downcast, full of anguish and pain. Like Job, her horn was cast into dust and ashes (Job

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<sup>1</sup> Verse 1, And Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoiceth in the LORD, mine horn is exalted in the LORD: my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation. **Luke 1:46-47**, And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

<sup>2</sup> Verse 2, There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God. **Luke 1:49**, For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.

<sup>3</sup> Verse 4, The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength. **Luke 1:51**, He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

<sup>4</sup> Verse 8, He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, and he hath set the world upon them. **Luke 1:53**, He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.

<sup>5</sup> Phil. 3:3, For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. 4:4, Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.

16:15<sup>1</sup>). Now, having been so blessed of the Lord, she has no doubt of His favor.

Though religion, in this day, thrives on the promise of life being a bed of roses and any sorrow that men have is said to be self-imposed due to a lack of the employment of faith, the fact is that God given faith operates in time of woe as well as in times of ease. That does not suggest that the believer will not sometimes doubt the goodness, mercy, and favor of God (Ps. 77:2-10<sup>2</sup>). The mark of the believer is that when he is delivered, his praise is not of his faith but of the God who gave it. In this prayer, her peace, ease of heart, confidence in God, and the knowledge of favor and light is restored, the joy of salvation is restored—her horn is exalted in the Lord.

Her “mouth is enlarged over her enemies” (v. 1). This, of course, refers to Peninnah's mouth being shut by the birth of Samuel. She no longer must take a back seat to her adversary. The LORD has blessed her. She is no longer barren.

The reason for all this is that she rejoices in God's salvation. Notice that she does not say “my salvation.” She declares that salvation belongs to the LORD. Her blessings are not because of her faith or her prayer but they are all due to the goodness of God in “His salvation.” Without question, she speaks of the Messiah (v. 10). That she blesses the Lord for His sovereign work is likewise without question. Verse 2 makes that very plain.

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<sup>1</sup> Job 16:15, I have sewed sackcloth upon my skin, and defiled my horn in the dust.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. 77:2-10, In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: my soul refused to be comforted. I remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Selah. Thou holdest mine eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak. I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times. I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search. Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Selah. And I said, This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High.

“There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God.”

She first praises the Lord because He is *Holy* (v. 2). To *know* the LORD is to know He is holy. It is His essential, all-encompassing character, high, uplifted, separate and sovereign, pure and perfect. It is the singular characteristic that can be applied as the adjective to *all* He is and does. He is love indeed, but that is not His essential character. You cannot attach *love* as the adjective of wrath, anger, vengeance—only “holy” will fit those attributes. The reason that there is none holy as the Lord is because there is none beside Him. He alone is intrinsically holy. “Holy and reverend is His name” (Ps. 111:9).

There is no rock like our God (v. 2). This has a dual meaning. First, in line with what she has just said, the Lord is our *only* Rock. This is a name that is often given to our Lord throughout Scripture. Secondly, this may also suggest the exclusivity of His deity in opposition to all false gods, as idols are sometimes referred to as the rock of their worshippers (Deut. 32:31<sup>1</sup>). The believer, in praise, glorifies God in His exclusive holiness.

Though the words of the next three verses are surely a proclamation of the consequences of the circumstances that have transpired, they are in fact the declaration of the sinner saved by grace, and are not only spoken against an adversary but against self. Though I can almost hear Hannah saying these things to Peninnah, I can more clearly hear them in my own voice speaking to my own heart. These words are born of the knowledge that if I am saved it is God's doing. It is His salvation. When I consider what God has done for me, my pride is cast down; I am more apt to hear than to speak. The believer sides with Paul and cries, “What shall we say to

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<sup>1</sup> Deut. 32:31, For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges.

these things” (Rom. 8:31). My arrogance is revealed for what it is—self-righteousness and hardness of heart. I know that the Lord is omniscient, and he knows things about me which I cannot even imagine of myself.

The phrase “by Him actions are weighed” (v. 3) must not be lifted from the context. They do not speak of human actions as if good or bad they have influenced God in what he did. They are tied to the previous phrase that exalts His *knowledge*. Known unto the Lord are all His works. The meaning of the phrase refers to the Lord's knowledge of His own actions and asserts that He is a God of order, the sovereign who directs the feet of the righteous man, who does His will, who ordains the good works of His children, who employs and overrides the ambitions and works of wicked men as He sees fit, who raises men up and puts them down according to His purpose (v. 9). The ordering of the universe and all that dwells therein are not whimsical actions, they are the actions of a sovereign, weighed in the balance of eternal and immutable purpose.

Again, relative to the sinner's knowledge of self by grace, mighty men of war are no match for Him (vv. 4-6). His salvation is not by might or power but by His Spirit. Those who stumble, fail and falter, by their failure do not inhibit His grace. He girds the weak with strength so none can claim ought but grace for salvation (1 Cor. 1:26-30; Ps. 18:29, 32<sup>1</sup>). Those who have no need of Him will be made beggars for

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<sup>1</sup> **1 Cor. 1:26-30**, For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. **Ps. 18:29**, For by thee I have run through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall. **32**, It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect.

bread. They will become indentured slaves for a morsel of bread from the Master's table. This is pictured in the life of the prodigal son in Luke 15:13- 16.

“And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.”

The hungry are ceased. They that hunger and thirst for righteousness shall be filled (Luke 1:53<sup>1</sup>). The barren present is no difficulty to sovereign grace. The sinner is barren, impotent, and unable to produce anything but dead works, but God, in grace, makes to flow out of her belly rivers of living water (John 7:38<sup>2</sup>).

The number “seven” (v. 5) means full and complete, perfect (Heb. 10:14; Col. 2:8-9<sup>3</sup>). Hannah had five children besides Samuel (vv. 20-21). The last phrase of verse 5 may be attributed to Peninnah. The Jews have the tradition that when Hannah bore one child, Peninnah buried two, and whereas Hannah had five, Peninnah lost all ten of her children. Whether true or not, it is not known. The real significance of this phrase relates to the calling of the Gentiles into the church of God (Isa. 54:1; Gal. 4:27- 28<sup>4</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> **Luke 1:53**, He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.

<sup>2</sup> **John 7:38**, He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

<sup>3</sup> **Heb. 10:14**, For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. **Col. 2:8-9**, Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

<sup>4</sup> **Isa. 54:1**, Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into

Salvation is the Lord's work from beginning to end.

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singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD. **Gal. 4:27- 28**, For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.



# THREE VIEWS

## 1 Samuel 2:6-10

6, The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.

7, The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up.

8, He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, and he hath set the world upon them.

9, He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail.

10, The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed.

**T**here is a singular power and magnitude in these words. These words exalt God as He *is*—God! For the believer, they are words of finalization, of verdict, and a source of sublime confidence in the God who has saved them. Though these are words spoken by Hannah, they are a direct quote from God Himself. If you would know God, there is no greater source of information than the fountain of omniscience, God Himself. Years of vanity and lies have given men the false notion that they may paint their own picture of deity. Religion thrives on confusion, but men are without excuse. The Word of God is readily available and just a general perusal of this great tome allays all notions of God, save for how He describes Himself (Deut. 32:39<sup>1</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> Deut. 32:39, See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me:

These words are theology 101. They are not higher learning. They do not address the debates that course through the halls of ethereal, high academe. They are the ABCs, the kindergarten curriculum of every babe who desires the sincere milk of the word. If anyone truly knows God, it is by revelation and these things are the springhead, the beginning of the knowledge of God. These words also are vast, broad and encompass understanding to the point that all we are and know about ourselves, about God, about salvation, about the disposition of the world and all who dwell therein is fully found here. I confess to you that I love these words. I love to meditate upon them. They fill my heart with joy and peace in a wild and crazy world. In this study, I want us to consider these words in three views:

1. Their context.
2. As a declaration of Who God is.
3. As the method of God's Grace.

First, in the *context*, we have seen that the words spoken by Hannah are words of thanksgiving and praise, but they are also words of vindication against her enemy. Though some may think this attitude of Hannah to be petty, a kind of “Now who's the boss” mentality, these words are rather a declaration that she attributes all that has transpired to the fact that God is with her. Though Hannah spoke these words from her heart, God inspired them and likewise inspired Samuel to write them down. Many of the concepts and even the exact words were employed by writers of the New Testament declaring that these words had a spiritual significance that stretched well beyond the joy that spilled out of Hannah. But for Hannah these words are a vindication that declares God to be her keeper and the avenger of the elect. She suffered mightily at the hands of her nemesis.

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I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand.

Peninnah mocked her cruelly. Every day she displayed the fact of her fertility by parading her ten children before Hannah in mockery of her barrenness. What that torment was, we cannot imagine. How many nights did Hannah wash her bed with tears as she heard little feet pattering in her house? Now she rejoices that the sovereign God has remembered her, and her words are words that declare that He has not left off doing His people good. Her words glorify God in His greatness, and though they declare God to be a killer, causing some to wax feeble, bringing men down to the grave, making some poor, bringing some low, these words must be seen not only as descriptive of what God has done to Peninnah, but we miss the truth altogether if we do not see that Hannah is first speaking of herself. She acknowledges God in the glory of His mightily weighed actions is the totality of her life. Whether in hard times or times of rejoicing, she glorifies God because His hand had been the director of all that has taken place (Ps. 139:1-6; Phil. 4:11-13<sup>1</sup>). This is the view of the context.

Secondly, this is a view of *who God is* (vv. 6-10). What power is displayed in these words? Here God is seen in His essential character. He is sovereign. He is the ruler of the world. He holds the reigns of all that is and employs all things for the good of His people and the glory of His Name.

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<sup>1</sup> Ps. 139:1-6, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me. I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, even from good; and my sorrow was stirred. My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue, LORD, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am. Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Selah. Surely every man walketh in a vain shew: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them. Phil. 4:11-13, Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Nothing is outside the purview of His absolute control (read Isa. 40:9-31). These are His weighty actions. What more can be said of the great, mighty, high potentate? He is God, and blessed are they who have been found in His favor. This is the view of who God is (read Job 33:12-26).

Thirdly, this is a view of the *method of grace*. We know that men's experience of grace is varied. But some things about grace are very methodical. Though experience may vary, the method of grace does not. When God shows favor to a sinner there is a pattern. This pattern is seen in our text. Grace is as sweet as the honey in the comb. Grace is, however, unmerited favor. That precious concept is unfathomable and unacceptable to every sinner born of Adam. Religion, though often employing the words of grace and songs that speak of grace, cannot truly abide the doctrine of grace. The reason is that religion, the religion that we are born with and espouse all our lives, unless or until God acts on our behalf, rejects the divine principle and practice of free grace. Why? Because it is a painful, stripping thing. The very truth of grace shuts up a man entirely to grace. It shuts up man to a free act of God without consideration of anything a man is or anything a man does. This is galling to man's pride, his intellect, his power and finally his righteousness. Man must be slain before he is raised. He must be stripped before he is clothed. He must be made poor before he is made rich. He must be removed from his present domain before he can be placed in another. He must be made low before he can be made high. He must lose everything for him to gain everything. This is grace, prevenient grace, providential grace, saving grace. There is no other salvation than the salvation accomplished by sovereign, stripping, saving grace.

“The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the

beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, and he hath set the world upon them. He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail. The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed" (vv.6-10)



# ONE MORE VIEW

## 1 Samuel 2:6-8

6, The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.

7, The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up.

8, He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, and he hath set the world upon them.

In our last study, we looked at three views of verses 6-10. We looked at the view of *context* and saw that the dilemma of Hannah was necessary for her deliverance. The Lord shut up the womb of Hannah to bring her to the place where she cried to Him for deliverance, and He opened her womb and made her more fruitful than her enemy. We saw also that these verses revealed God as He is in *His sovereignty*. He rules and reigns over the world in every aspect of life and death. In the final view we saw that these verses reveal the *method of grace*, the way God brings His elect to salvation. In this study, I want us to consider still another view.

There is a way of defining grace by using each letter of the word as the first letter of another word in the definition. G.R.A.C.E. is "God's Riches at Christ's Expense." This definition is seen in these verses. This is a view of our Lord's substitutionary work for His people. It addresses the condescension of our Lord and the great benefits that we have received as a result of His voluntary substitution for us.

Each of the acts of the Lord in verses 6-7 are representative of His accomplishment as Savior and

Redeemer. Each also represents what He has done for us and what He has assumed as our representative.

“He killeth and He maketh alive” declares His personal power over life and death. He, in order to satisfy the penalty of the law and justice, gave of His own life. The penalty for sin is death, and our sin-debt could not be canceled unless the issue of the death we owed was answered. When he died, He killed death on behalf of His people (Heb. 2:14<sup>1</sup>). The purpose of baptism is to confess that Christ died, and we who were in Him died with Him (Rom. 6:3-4<sup>2</sup>). Our Lord, however, did not remain dead. The old hymn says, “Death could not keep its prey, He tore the bars away”

Our Lord killeth and he maketh alive. By His *own* power, He *arose* from the dead. Life and death are His, and when the time arrived, He rose victorious from the grave. He was given this command by His father (John 10:18<sup>3</sup>). Note well that this is not a mere declaration of His power but a revelation that His death and His life was given for His sheep. There is no accounting for His death and His life except in the truth of *substitution*. This fact assures us of eternal life. He died that we would live.

“He killeth” refers to His death, and “he maketh alive” refers to what we have received by His death. This truth is further stated in the second phrase of verse 6. He went “down to the grave” and He came up (“bringeth up”) from the grave. When He died and was buried, we were in Him, and His resurrection was our quickening to life (Eph. 2:4-6; Rev.

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<sup>1</sup> **Heb. 2:14**, Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.

<sup>2</sup> **Rom. 6:3-4**, Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

<sup>3</sup> **John 10:18**, No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

20:6<sup>1</sup>). The elect are made aware of this by the preaching of the gospel (1 Cor. 15:1-4; John 5:25<sup>2</sup>).

“He maketh poor and he maketh rich” (v. 7). What a wonderful description this is. It reveals what Christ, the King of kings and the Lord of Glory, willingly gave up to bring His people to their happy estate. “He maketh rich.” In Eph. 2:7 the free favor of God *is* described as the riches of His Grace. Our Lord made Himself poor and low that we would be made rich and lifted up (Zech. 9:9; Matt. 8:20; 2 Cor. 8:9<sup>3</sup>).

Verse 8 is the declaration of what Christ has freely done for His people. “He raiseth up the poor.” This speaks to spiritual poverty; of being spiritually bankrupt. We have nothing of value in the spiritual realm. Such poor ones are blessed, according to the Word of God (Matt. 5:3<sup>4</sup>). The place from which the elect are raised up is the “dust” (v. 8a).

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<sup>1</sup> Eph. 2:4-6, But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Rev. 20:6, Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. 15:1-4, Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures. John 5:25, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

<sup>3</sup> Zech. 9:9, Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. Matt. 8:20, And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. 2 Cor. 8:9, For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. 5:3, Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

This addresses the true extent of our spiritual poverty. “Dust” in Scripture, is equated with *death*. Our spiritual bankruptcy is a result of the fact that we are spiritually dead; dead in trespasses and sins, graveyard dead, “twice dead and plucked up by the roots” (Judg. 1:12). In the matter of the elect's spiritual condition by nature, nothing short of God given life will suffice (Ezek. 16:3-6<sup>1</sup>).

The next phrase is especially important in understanding salvation by grace. The elect are referred to as “beggar[s] from the dunghill” (v. 8b). The word “beggar” intimates one who is in great need and entirely dependent upon the kindness of a benefactor. This tells us that this beggar is an awakened sinner, one who has been raised from the dust and poverty of death and given light to his *condition*. This is true of every sinner awakened by the gospel through the Spirit in regeneration. “All the fitness He requireth is to feel your need for Him.”

Such as have need are said to be lifted from the dunghill (v.8b). They are *lifted*. That tells us that though their need is great their *ability* is not. If they are removed from the stench of their surroundings, someone, strong and mighty must reach way down and lift them up. They cannot lift themselves; they cannot even crawl from where they are. Thank God for His strong arm of salvation!

The dunghill is representative of the foulness of sin, but it is representative of much more. It is a picture of the unknown vileness of the flesh in seeking to establish personal

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<sup>1</sup> Ezek. 16:3-6, And say, Thus saith the LORD God unto Jerusalem; Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of Canaan; thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite. And as for thy nativity, in the day thou wast born thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple thee; thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all. None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou wast cast out in the open field, to the lothing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born. And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live.

righteousness for acceptance before God. One would not think that a moral life of piety would be described as manure, but that is precisely what it is. Our works of righteousness are nothing but dung, and religion cannot see it or do anything about it because they have so long abided on the dunghill that it no longer has a noticeable stench. It is not until one is made alive that he can even realize the corruption in which he resides. The astonishing and repulsive thing is that the hill upon which we reside is a mountain of our own refuse, evacuated from us—the works of our flesh (Phil 3:4-9<sup>1</sup>). What mercy is it for the Lord to show us the true character of our works (Job 37:7<sup>2</sup>)?

The heights of mercy are wondrous. He takes the beggar from his house on dung-heap drive and delivers Him to Royal Avenue, the palace of glory. He has made us sinners, kings, and priests unto our God. We have been translated from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of His dear Son. They have been made to inherit the throne of glory (Rom. 8:16-17; Rev. 3:21<sup>3</sup>).

The phrase “pillars of the earth” (v. 8) has a couple of applications. It refers to the purpose and providence of God

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<sup>1</sup> **Phil 3:4-9**, Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.

<sup>2</sup> **Job 37:7**, He sealeth up the hand of every man; that all men may know his work.

<sup>3</sup> **Rom. 8:16-17**, The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. **Rev. 3:21**, To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

that upholds and directs all things, but primarily, this phrase speaks of those whom God has made alive, brought up from the grave, made rich, lifted from the dunghill, and made to inherit the throne of glory. They make up the body of Christ, the church, and they are the pillars of the world (Prov. 9:1; Gal. 2:9; 1 Tim. 3:15; Rev. 3:12).<sup>1</sup>

Praise His name for His glorious substitution.

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<sup>1</sup> **Prov. 9:1**, Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars. **Gal. 2:9**, And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. **1 Tim. 3:15**, But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. **Rev. 3:12**, Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

# PLAIN TRUTH

## 1 Samuel 2:9-10

9, He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail.

10, The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed.

Christianity is considered by some to be one of *many* reasonable philosophies of life. The way things are, and what will surely be, are lost in a malaise of intellectual interchange that amounts to little more than side-stepping that which is of true and simple importance. The Word of God does not spend time with doting questions and useless fables that only engender strife and contention. To some degree, the words of our text are a summation of the theme that permeates the pages of Holy Scripture. This is plain truth. It is unadorned with the inventions of men and the anesthetizing rhetoric of the upper echelons of human religion.

In these verses we find three vital truths; three things that God has promised and will do. Forget for a moment the ancillary issues that might occupy your mind. Forget for a moment your thoughts of the last days, the politics of the day or the things that beset you in your sojourn through time. Let's dwell, for a moment, on what is *evidently* set forth in these words.

First, God will take care of His people. The destiny of His saints is forever secure.

Secondly, the wicked, no matter their strength, will not prevail, and they will finally, summarily, and eternally be

destroyed.

Thirdly, Jesus Christ is and will continue to be exalted as the anointed of God for the task of the salvation of His elect and will be the basis for the judgment of the elect and the lost. These are *sure* things, unchangeable things, plain and simple truths that you can bank on. No matter how the world changes, no matter what else lies on the horizon, mark this down, these things are absolute and sure. All will be well with the righteous. Nothing will be well with the wicked. Our Lord will be glorified. These truths put things in a proper perspective.

As far as the world is concerned, they generally agree with the first two principles as far as they are able. Viewed from a purely natural point of view, everybody agrees that good people will have it better than the wicked in the end of life, but their view is skewed because they judge from what they think of themselves.

Seeing themselves as good, law-abiding citizens, they are convinced that the felons and miscreants surely must have a horrible end awaiting them. After all, it only seems reasonable. The problem with this thinking is that even among the best of society, not to mention the worst, there is not one that is personally righteous; there is not one that is personally holy. God does not “keep the feet” of good people, He keeps the feet of His saints, those whom He has made holy by the person and work of His Son (1 Cor. 1:30<sup>1</sup>).

Let us here consider these truths and may our gracious Lord draw our minds and hearts to the plain things here presented.

First, we have some good news. “He will keep the feet of His saints” (v.9a). Notice first that there is no indication that the saints have any part in being kept. This promise is in no way contingent upon the saints themselves. They can do

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. 1:30, But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.

nothing that has or will contribute to their being kept (Ps. 37:23-24; 91:11-12; 94:18; 121:3, 8; Prov. 16:9; 1 Pet. 1:5<sup>1</sup>). There is no possibility of one of God's saints ever being lost (John 6:37-39<sup>2</sup>). The eternal welfare of the saints is in the hands of Him who cannot fail. This is an *absolute*—an immutable truth.

Secondly, “The wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail. The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them” (vv. 9-10). The term “wicked” must not be interpreted in a natural, but rather spiritual sense. The wicked are unbelievers, those who have despised the grace of God, those who believe that they can be righteous by the power of the flesh. The natural world finds it easy to define the wicked. They simply gather all those who are criminals and lump them into the category. The spiritual world finds that the criminally vile are the same as the personally, religiously righteous. The pedophile and the philanthropist are equally wicked in the sight of God. The end of the wicked is that they will wind up in outer darkness (Ps. 9:17; 37:38<sup>3</sup>). But those who have been redeemed are by nature no different

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<sup>1</sup> Ps. 37:23-24, The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand. 91:11-12, For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. 94:18, When I said, My foot slippeth; thy mercy, O LORD, held me up. 121:3, He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. 8, The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore. Prov. 16:9, A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps. 1 Pet. 1:5, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

<sup>2</sup> John 6:37-39, For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

<sup>3</sup> Ps. 9:17, The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God. 37:38, But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off.

than the wicked except by the grace of God. That being so, our Lord puts a disclaimer in this passage. Our Lord declares that neither the saint is kept nor can the wicked improve by their own strength.

Thirdly, the single object by which the saint and the wicked are judged is the person of Christ. When our Lord went to Calvary, the saint was judged in Him as his substitute, and the unbelief of the wicked was judged in themselves. Saints are saved by the act of Christ, and the wicked are slain by it. Christ's heel was wounded for the saints, and Satan's head was crushed by Christ. The Lord God laid help on one who is mighty—the mighty King of kings. He has exalted the horn of His anointed (v. 10e; Acts 4:26-28; Phil. 2:9-11; Rev. 5:9-10<sup>1</sup>).

“Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him. (Isa. 3:10-11).

“For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the LORD upholdeth the righteous” (Ps. 37:17).

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<sup>1</sup> Acts 4:26-28, The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. **Phil. 2:9-11**, Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. **Rev. 5:9-10**, And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

# SONS OF BELIAL

## 1 Samuel 2:12-17

12, Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD.

13, And the priests' custom with the people was, that, when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was in seething, with a fleshhook of three teeth in his hand;

14, And he struck it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the fleshhook brought up the priest took for himself. So they did in Shiloh unto all the Israelites that came thither.

15, Also before they burnt the fat, the priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the priest; for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw.

16, And if any man said unto him, Let them not fail to burn the fat presently, and then take as much as thy soul desireth; then he would answer him, Nay; but thou shalt give it me now: and if not, I will take it by force.

17, Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD: for men abhorred the offering of the LORD.

**T**his passage of Scripture depicts the depths to which the priesthood had fallen by the time of the birth of Samuel. This is the beginning of the record of two marked men, two priests named Phinehas and Hophni, first named in chapter 1 verse 3. They are marked men and will be given no space for repentance because God has counted them among His adversaries (v. 10), and He intends to kill them (v. 25). Note that the reason given for their refusal to hearken to the Lord is “because the Lord would slay them.” Folks would like to have that the other way around, but this

is how it is. The names of these two men are significant. Phinehas means “mouth of brass” and the root meaning of the name is “enchantments” or “divinations” (sorcery). Phinehas was a cruel man who seduced people with words of enchantment. Hophni means “pugilist” or fist-fighter.

These men began the blasphemous practices that are recorded in this passage. Their practices show that these two men, in performance of their duty and practicing the office of priest, invented a way that the priest could get more than what he was assigned.

The priest was to live by the priesthood. God has assured him that he would be taken care of, and his every need would be met. Though he owned no land, he held the esteemed position of God's servant and the leader of the people in matters spiritual. He, of all men, had reason to praise God and be thankful because the priest alone received everything he had from the hand of God. This pictures the priesthood of believers who have everything by the good hand of God. The result of this knowledge, revealed by the gospel, leaves nothing for the believer but to praise the Lord with thankful heart (Heb. 13:15<sup>1</sup>).

What they did revealed the heart and nature of their crime. When this particular sacrifice was offered, it was beneficial to everyone involved. It was the peace offering that celebrated the peace that was established by the burnt offering. It was the offering of thanksgiving to God for having accepted the death of the burnt offering on behalf of the people. The burnt offering was entirely consumed by fire picturing the Lord's sacrifice on Calvary. That offering was made to God for putting away the sin of His people.

The offering that Hophni and Phinehas had polluted was the peace offering, not the burnt offering. The peace offering dealt not with what the burnt offering accomplished

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<sup>1</sup> Heb. 13:15, By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

between God and His Son but what the people had graciously received because of that great transaction. In this offering God received what belonged to Him. The offerer (the man who brought the offering) received what belonged to him, and the priest who made the offering received what belonged to him. Though each received different parts of the offering, they all received *of* the offering. What they received pictured what every believer receives by grace because of the work of Christ (John 1:16<sup>1</sup>).

Phinehas and Hophni had invented a way that the priests could get more than what belonged to them. In this offering, the fat which belonged to the Lord was immediately to be burned as a sweet-smelling savor unto the Lord. A shoulder and a breast of the sacrifice was to be given to the priest as a picture of Christ carrying the believer on his shoulder and in his heart. The one who brought the offering got the remainder of the sacrifice so that each party could say, “The Lord is my portion.” As required by God in the law, this pattern was to be strictly adhered to.

What Phinehas and Hophni did was to take what was theirs and then went to where the offerer was cooking up his portion, thrust a trident into the pot, and took whatever the three-pronged hook grabbed for themselves. There were two crimes committed in their act. First, it gave the priest more than what God allowed. Secondly, it robbed the offerer of what rightly belonged to him. In plain language, it meant that the people of God were not equal before the Lord. Hophni and Phinehas started a *hierarchy* in the church.

The priest became wealthy off the people. We have but to look at history to see that this is the end of every religion that has an earthly hierarchy. Religion in this day mirrors this horrible principle. Preachers live in mansions, fly their own jets, and have much because they rob the people of what is rightfully theirs. They lay claim to greater blessing from God

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<sup>1</sup> John 1:16, And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

and by great swelling words they enchant people to give to them more than they deserve. Though offices in the church vary, equality and standing rests in Christ alone, and all of God's children are equal.

Not only had this practice become common to the point that it was accepted behavior because of the brass mouthed preachers having done it so long, there was another practice that was more blasphemous. This practice was not done with great words but with brute force. I think this was probably Hophni's invention and his area of expertise. Before the sacrifice was to be portioned, the fat was to be removed first and *immediately* burned before the Lord. After the fat was consumed with fire, the priest was to receive the breast and shoulder, and the offerer was to receive the rest.

First however, that which belonged to the Lord was to be given Him. This pictures the truth of the preeminence of Christ and the singular source of all our blessings of God. When we ask of the Lord, we are to ask in Christ name. When we thank the Lord and praise Him, such praise and thanksgiving is *by* Christ. This practice equates with burning the fat as a sweet savor unto God.

To approach God, or to thank him, while disregarding Christ and His work is to praise him as if He did not give His Son. It is to praise God as if we are the authors of our own salvation. The blessings of God are gained then by threats and holding out judgment without offering to God a memorial of what He has done, which is the source of the blessing. Such take more than what they have right to and do it by force and without Christ. The first, the foremost, the preeminent thing for the child of God when he comes to God is to honor God with praise for what He has done. The world of Christendom is replete with people who have praise and thanksgiving but rarely even mention the person and work of Christ.

What are we to think of these false priests? We are to agree with God. First, we are to know and realize that this is

great sin (v. 17). The greatness of it is simple. They despise Christ and have caused the people to hate the offering (Mal. 2:8<sup>1</sup>). They hate the offering because they refuse to honor God for all that they have. They set themselves high above others because they believe that by *their* guile, force, will and power they have obtained the blessing of God. They are not believers though they do all these things in a religious manner, even saying that this is really the way God is honored. They are imps of the Devil and sons of Belial (John 8:23<sup>2</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> **Mal. 2:8**, But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the LORD of hosts.

<sup>2</sup> **John 8:23**, And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world.



# IT IS WELL

## 1 Samuel 2:11, 18-21, 26

11, And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house. And the child did minister unto the LORD before Eli the priest.

18, But Samuel ministered before the LORD, being a child, girded with a linen ephod.

19, Moreover his mother made him a little coat, and brought it to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice.

20, And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife, and said, The LORD give thee seed of this woman for the loan which is lent to the LORD. And they went unto their own home.

21, And the LORD visited Hannah, so that she conceived, and bare three sons and two daughters. And the child Samuel grew before the LORD.

26, And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the LORD, and also with men.

Read Verses 11-36.

**A**s was seen in the last study, the priesthood at this time in the history of Israel was altogether corrupt. They were guilty of robbing God of the honor that was due Him, and they robbed the people of what was due them. They were filled with greed and avarice, and the two ringleaders were Hophni and Phinehas. They were sons of Eli, and as will be seen in further study, the lord will judge Eli's house not only for the sin of his sons but also because Eli did not check them in their felonious behavior. Eli himself, though beloved of God, was benefited by the

thievery of his sons. He had taken of the meat of the peace offerings and had thus robbed the people of reason to praise God and to be thankful. The greed of Hophni, Phinehas and Eli does not paint a pretty picture of the spiritual estate of the priesthood but paints a very accurate picture of religion in the day in which we live.

It is easy and very human to look at all that was going on and wonder what the end of such things might be. The description of the crimes of those who attended the things of God is sad and alarming. The people of God sometimes begin to abhor the ceremony because all that it means has been diminished to a business where those who supposedly speak for God have used the precious things of Christ to make money, to become fat by oppressing the people, by stealing from them their source of praise. We look around us at this religious and corrupt generation and our hearts grieve at the blasphemy that is called preaching. Our anger is real and reasonable as we hear the person, work and character of our precious Lord referred to in such low, beggarly, anemic, and piteous terms.

As I was reading this passage and seeing the end of the house of Eli, I was struck with the manner in which our Lord gave comfort in the midst of all this sorrow.

I am reminded of the words of an old hymn,

“Change and decay all around I see;  
O thou who changest not, abide with me.”

Amid all these things that have been slated for a sad end we find our gracious God salting the report with handfuls of purpose, seasoning the hopelessness of Eli's house with the salt of the savor of grace. Before our Lord even begins to teach us of these deadly priestly errors, He first promises that He will take care of it all (vv. 9-10). In our sojourn here, we may not see Him execute final judgment of His adversaries, but by faith, we have seen Him execute judgment and justice

for His people in the person of the King who he has helped, the anointed one, the Lord Jesus when He hung as our substitute on Calvary's tree. There too, on that faithful day, all who opposed Him and all who ever would were sealed in their doom. These are mighty, wonderful, and terrible things, and our poor mind can but glimpse a portion of the glory therein.

The very next verse (v. 11) reveals what the people of the Lord do in the midst of all that goes on around them. Elkanah took Hannah and went home to Ramah. This may not seem like much, but several things are clearly suggested.

First, the child of God goes about his business, no matter what is going on around him. There can be no doubt that the awful practices of Hophni and Phinehas and the other priests were known to Elkanah, but we find him living his life.

Secondly there is no indication that he tried to remedy the mess. He believes the promise of God that those who trusted God would be set among princes and would be pillars of the earth. In this verse, we also see Samuel begin to minister to the Lord before Eli the priest. What he did at this tender age is not known, but more than likely, Samuel's ministry was to Eli, doing errands and being trained up in the things of the Lord. Amidst the chaos, the children of God fulfilled their function.

After the record is given of the errors of the priesthood and the vicious thievery of Hophni and Phinehas (vv. 12-17), we see in verse 18 the contrast between the priesthood that will soon be cast down and the man whom God will raise up. Samuel ministered to the Lord while the rest of the priests ministered to themselves. He was girded in an ephod made of linen by his mother. The ephod was the garment of the priest. Verse 19 tells us that Hannah made him a new ephod each year and brought it to him at the time of the yearly sacrifice.

Often the mother in Scripture is a picture of the church. Here we see Hannah portraying the church caring for him

who ministers the things of God. The thing to see is that while all these other things that might distract from serving God were going on they did not distract Hannah from caring for Samuel. The church, the true church, the redeemed of God go about the business of offering the sacrifice of praise and taking care of the household of faith. The church does not tremble and quake at the manifold whims and bloated activities of this world's religion. Instead, they do what they have been called to do. Without fanfare or seeking world acclaim, they, in a state of calm and contentedness, worship God and take care of the manifold functions for the furtherance of the gospel and the glory of God's grace.

In verses 20-21, and 26, we see the promise of blessing that Elkanah and Hannah received from the Lord. Simply, it was an answer to Hannah's prayer. Though she prayed for just one child, the Lord, as he is accustomed to do, added grace upon grace and gave far above what she could think or ask. She dedicated her child to God and honored the Lord with her act. She did not receive payback from God, All God's blessings are conditioned entirely on His grace.

This complete scenario began with God shutting up Hannah's womb, bringing her to call upon the Lord and promising the child to the Lord. This was divine providence working to the end that God would give the barren many children. It is all about God birthing His children into His church by grace (Acts 2:41-47; Gal. 4:26-28<sup>1</sup>). Again, we see

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<sup>1</sup> Acts 2:41-47, Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. Galatians 4:26-28, But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not;

that amid all that was wrong, God's plan for His people is not discouraged or altered. Samuel grew before the Lord (Eph. 2:2; 4:15; 2 Pet. 3:18<sup>1</sup>). Amid all sorrow and chaos, the people of God live their lives believing the promise.

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break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.

<sup>1</sup> **Eph. 2:2**, Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. **4:15**, But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ. **2 Pet. 3:18**, But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.



# THEY KNEW NOT THE LORD

## 1 Samuel 2:12, 22, 25

12, Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD.

22, Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

25, If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the LORD, who shall intreat for him? Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the LORD would slay them.

**T**he sons of Eli are “sons of Belial” or sons of the Devil. They are described so because they are priests who know not the Lord. This is the core of their entire problem. They are religious without Christ (John 17:2-3<sup>1</sup>). Their religion is self-serving, and they grow rich by oppressing those who endeavor to worship God as He has designated that He is to be worshipped. The order of the sacrifice was specific. First the lamb was to be slaughtered, and the fat was to be burnt immediately as a memorial to God of the burnt offering, which pictured the God honoring, law and justice satisfying, sacrifice of Christ.

First, and foremost in the worship of praise and thanksgiving is that the basis of it is the just salvation of the elect. Secondly, the shoulder and the breast of the lamb were

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<sup>1</sup> John 17:2-3, As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

to be given to the priests for food, signifying the sufficiency of Christ for every need of the believer. The remainder was to go to the person who made the offering who made it into a kind of boiled stew for his food. This order was to be strictly followed.

The sin of Eli's sons was manifold. They, as David said, did not worship God after the right order. Before the very first necessary thing, the burning of the fat, the priests came to where the lamb was slaughtered and took not only what was due him but took more. He preferred his meat roasted and not boiled, so he took from the offerer the meat that belonged to the offerer. After the offerer began to make his stew, the priest returned and dipped a trident into the stew and whatever he drew out of the stew, he kept for himself. We have seen that in doing so, the priest robbed God of his glory and the people of their offering by taking what belonged to God and His people for himself.

This easily equates to those in religion who rob God of the glory of His salvation by making the sacrifice of Christ a secondary thing and putting forth the glory of their will above that of God. The result is that the *offerer* holds the sacrifice in low esteem because he sees that the hierarchy of religion greatly benefits, gets glory for himself, and the worshipper is left with scraps for which he finds it hard to be thankful. Such a thing causes the offerer to abhor the sacrifice, and praise and thanksgiving comes to men and not God (Mal. 1:6-9; 12-14; 2:13<sup>1</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> Mal. 1:6-9, A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name? Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the LORD is contemptible. And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts. And now, I pray you, beseech God that he will be gracious unto us: this hath been by your means: will he regard your persons? saith the LORD of hosts. 12-14, 54

This was not the only crime that these two sons of Belial committed (v. 22). They turned the house of God into a house of ill repute. The women referred to here are not prostitutes, though I'm sure that these wicked priests would have called them such. These women were victims of rape. Women generally came to the temple about eight weeks after the birth of a child for the rites of the child's purification. For this ceremony, other women friends often accompanied the mother for the happy occasion. The women would come with the offering of turtledoves—offerings representing the blood of Christ. These sons of Belial somehow figured out a way to delay the sacrifice and keep the women overnight. During the delay the men took these women into an inner chamber of the temple and raped them. In this, they revealed their hatred for the sacrifice and for those who made the offering. They committed their iniquity in the name of the Lord.

They carried out their duties in this perverse manner and destroyed the people's confidence in the priests and ultimately the sacrifice. The people did not despise the sacrifice in truth, but they knew what was going on in no way honored God, and if those who were supposedly responsible for proper worship did such things, what could possibly be of value in the sacrifice. What they had done had become *tradition*, and their activities were worthy of death. God would not bring them to repentance. Though their father, Eli, dressed them down for what they did, it was to no avail.

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But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the LORD is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible. Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the LORD of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the LORD. But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the LORD of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen. **2:13**, And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand.

The Lord had set His vengeance upon them, and from that there is no escape. They will not be allowed even the common human response of remorse. They are marked for death, and nothing can turn it back.

What will become of those who speak of Christ in such lowly terms? What will become of those who make His sacrifice of no value unless men, with the trident of their wills, make it profit them? What will become of men who, because of their hatred for Christ, cause the people who come to worship to see no reason to praise God for the sacrifice? What will become of those who so misdirect people from honoring God to the point that they cannot be thankful? Their end is set. Their feet are on a slippery slope, and they will slide in due time. They will not repent. They fill their coffers with the praise that belongs to Christ alone. They seek to gain from God before they honor Him for who He is and what He has done. Their concept of worship is what they can gain, what benefits them. What they do is worthy of death, and they are slated for destruction (v. 25).

Why did they come to this state of blasphemy? They arrived here because they knew not the Lord. Here is the dilemma and blasphemy of trying to be a Christian without Christ. The giant umbrella of Christendom envelopes hordes of people who talk of the blessing of God and offer Him thanks, but they never consider that worship is not about what they can get but what honor and glory belongs to God because of the accomplishing death of Christ.

Worship begins with burning the fat and rejoicing in the benefits of knowing Christ. We burn the fat and feed on Christ, and we only have what has been freely given us by His grace. The believer wants for nothing but what is his in Christ. Wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, justification and redemption complete the elect, and they disdain the thought of seeking more than what God has given. The things of this world are not to occupy the thoughts of the believer. They are promised to those who seek His kingdom

and His righteousness, but they are never to seek after them.

Those who despise the sacrifice look to gain from the world by their affiliation with religion. The believer wants Christ. He wants to glorify God by Christ, and nothing else matters. The world's religion stands like the horse leach and cries "give, give," but the true believer's cry is, "I am complete in Christ!"



# SAMUEL, SAMUEL

## 1 Samuel 3:1-10

1, And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision.

2, And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see;

3, And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep;

4, That the LORD called Samuel: and he answered, Here am I.

5, And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down.

6, And the LORD called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again.

7, Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him.

8, And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child.

9, Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10, And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth.

This part of Samuel's history is one of the more familiar to most people. It is the report of the Lord calling Samuel to the office of Prophet. It is also the story of the Lord calling his people out of a religion that is set for destruction. Eli was the priest of God, and he had not only allowed but also participated in, and benefited from, the wickedness of his two sons. Because of his deeds, the Lord promised to destroy his house and remove the priesthood from him. We saw, as we considered these things before, that just as Eli kicked against the teaching of God, just as the Jews despised the gospel, the Lord took the word from them and gave it to the church or believer's from among the Jews and Gentiles. The word of the Lord to Eli pictures the setting aside of the Old Covenant and the institution of the New. There is much in this passage that teach us these truths.

Verses 1 and 2 teaches us the state of affairs in the Jewish religion of that time. The child Samuel was about the business of his duties in his ministry. Since the Lord in the previous chapter continually mentions this fact, it carries for us an important consideration. There are, even in false religion, those who belong to the Lord yet do not know Him, have not yet been called by Him, who yet seek to do what they believe is their duty before God. Samuel was born into the world by God's will and because of God's mercy. Though those around him cared not for the glory of the Lord and took part in all manner of vile behavior, Samuel did as he was told. He faithfully ministered to Eli. What his duties were are not declared, but whatever they were and no matter how menial, he did them in a manner that pleased the Lord and found favor with men (2:26<sup>1</sup>).

Samuel's behavior reveals that the missionary spirit of the Church is pointed foremost at the organized religion of the day. The Lord called for His people to come out of Babylon.

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<sup>1</sup> 2:26, And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the LORD, and also with men.

Samuel was the prophet for his time, but he didn't know it. He was called from his mother's womb and ordained to this office, and he had no idea (Jer. 1:5<sup>1</sup>). Almost every gospel preacher I know was ministering in false corrupt religion when the Lord began to call them out. Even Saul of Tarsus was kicking against the gospel. Those preachers were not profligates, they were doing what they believed to be honoring to the Lord, though they knew Him not.

Though the behavior of Eli and his sons was evil, the reason for it is found in the last sentence of verse 1. The Word of the Lord was precious in those days. This word “precious” is not spoken in the sense that it was well loved, obeyed, and applied. This word means “rare, hard to find” (Isa. 29:10-13; Amos 8:11-14<sup>2</sup>). Everywhere and in every case where the church falls into disobedience and idolatry the source of the fall can be traced to only one thing: the rarity of preaching and the hearing of the word. In those days as well as these, every error is due to lack of gospel preaching.

There is no lack of religious *activity*. There is no lack of people fulfilling religious duties. Obviously, there is no lack

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<sup>1</sup> Jer. 1:5, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. 29:10-13, For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered. And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed: And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned. Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men. **Amos 8:11-14**, Behold, the days come, saith the LORD God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it. In that day shall the fair virgins and young men faint for thirst. They that swear by the sin of Samaria, and say, Thy god, O Dan, liveth; and, The manner of Beersheba liveth; even they shall fall, and never rise up again.

of giving even though much of it is due to preachers extorting money with the threat of punishment or the promise of reward. But the precious doctrines of justification, substitution, propitiation, and imputed righteousness are as rare as a fine gem. Because of this, error is rampant, and iniquity is done in the name of the Lord. "There was no open vision" (v. 1) means there was no prophet, no one to speak the word of God. Though the word of the Lord was rare, it had no effect on the business of religion. It was moving in its own power, a giant well-oiled machine that seemed to operate on the principle of perpetual motion. In all this we are reminded of the 400 years of silence between Malachi and Matthew and that silence was not broken until God raised up a prophet to declare *the* Prophet.

In verse 2, we see not only the result of the rarity of the Word but also the beginning of the promise that the Lord had made to Eli concerning the Old Covenant priesthood. The description of Eli's actions is a depiction of the diminished capacity of the priesthood. Eli was laid down "in his place." This as much as says that Eli is *done*. The sense of the language, in a spiritual light, is that of a static state. Eli will not rise up to do good. He will not resume his priestly duties; he has spent himself on ill-conceived projects and now laid down in his place. Further illumination of this estate is seen in the report that his eyes "began to wax dim" and "he could not see" (v. 2, 2:33; John 9:39-41<sup>1</sup>). Verse 3 very poetically declares that some time would expire between the beginning of the end for Eli's priesthood and the calling of the prophet of God.

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<sup>1</sup> 2:33, And the man of thine, whom I shall not cut off from mine altar, shall be to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart: and all the increase of thine house shall die in the flower of their age. **John 9:39-41**, And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also?, Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

The remainder of this passage must be viewed in the light of verse 7. Another way to word this is seen in the marginal reading. It reads,

“Thus did Samuel before he knew the Lord and before the word of the Lord was revealed to him.”

Samuel was an obedient servant. He attended seriously to ministering the tasks to which he was appointed. He was in the school of grace, but his revelatory “book learning” had not yet began. In these encounters with the LORD, we see a pattern of *prevenient* grace and the elect's response to it. I know that many declare that one *knows* when the Lord begins a work of revelation in his heart. I will not debate their zeal or their declaration except to ask; was not Saul in school at the feet of Gamaliel and when he held the garments of those that stoned Stephen? Was he any less the child of God when he rode hard against the church? Was he not blinded and led in darkness before the declaration of the gospel wiped the scales from his eyes? Who can know the mind of the LORD? Was the Lord less in control of Saul when he wreaked havoc in the Church than when he was bowed in the dust before God's shining presence.

Samuel was where God had *placed* him when he heard the voice of the Lord. But he “did not yet know the Lord.” The Lord had not yet revealed Himself to him. So, he did what many do when the first inklings of the calling enters the heart. He went to the one that he *thought* spoke for the Lord. He went to the one whom he had spent his life ministering to and serving. I do not know when the Lord first stirred thoughts of Him in my heart. I can remember, however, my actions when I began to have a sense of Christ. I went to the religion of my youth, to the place where sweet old ladies told me stories of the Bible heroes. Just as easily as I picked up religion to answer what I deemed a call and discovered that religion hadn't called, I returned to my bed of ease. This was

often repeated in my life. I would feel inklings toward the Lord and went where I thought He was or to someone in religion whom I thought spoke for Him.

Was it the voice of the Lord? Was it the stinging accusation of conscience? I cannot say, but I know this. I cannot distinguish among any of those stirrings, what they were, and how they came, save to say that one of them brought me to a place where I heard a man say to me, "If the Lord is calling, surrender to Him." Say unto Him "Speak Lord for thy servant heareth." When I believed that it was the *Lord* speaking, I called to *Him*. Until He stood by me in my state of slumber and called me by name, everything I did was to ease my conscience. When he called by His gospel, I heard His voice and followed Him. I discovered that I was one of His sheep, one of His chosen ones. When I heard His voice, I "conferred not with flesh and blood." I told my best friend, ole' Jim Byrd, that the Lord had saved me, and I wanted to be baptized and confess what He had done for me.

I look back now, and each of those stirrings seemed to result in my dissolution with religion, my hunger for something more, something real, something that I could not fix, or produce. I do not know how the Lord works in bringing His sons and daughters to Him, but I know that when He calls them by His gospel, they come, they bow, and they obtain His glory. Divine providence always does its work and accomplishes the purpose of God.

Do you hear His voice? Then now or someday soon you will say, "Speak Lord for thy servant heareth."

# SAMUEL'S FIRST JOB

## 1 Samuel 3:10-18

10, And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth.

11, And the LORD said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle.

12, In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end.

13, For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.

14, And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever.

15, And Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel feared to shew Eli the vision.

16, Then Eli called Samuel, and said, Samuel, my son. And he answered, Here am I.

17, And he said, What is the thing that the LORD hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide it not from me: God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide any thing from me of all the things that he said unto thee.

18, And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, It is the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good.

**A**s I studied this passage, I tried to recall the first message I preached after the Lord put me in the ministry. I couldn't recall but I thought of this young man Samuel and the first message that God gave him. It was the message of God's wrath kindled against the house of the

man who he faithfully served. I fully understand his initial trepidation. My thoughts of what Samuel had to do brought back memories of the times when I knew that honesty with *my* friends and family concerning the gospel might well cost me those relationships. The message of the glory of God in the salvation of sinners carries with it the terrible message of God's inflexible justice against all who refuse to bow. The gospel is a savor of life and of death, and the weight of that knowledge often makes the heart of the bearer of good news to tremble for those who oppose it. Who is Sufficient? Men may trifle with many things, but God will allow none to trifle with the message of His Son.

Samuel was a humble servant of his master. Eli, though full of faults and error had evidently taught the young man to reverence the name of the Lord. I see this humility come into play when Samuel did not explicitly follow Eli's instruction in answering the Lord (vv. 9-10). Samuel left out the name of the Lord in his reply while retaining the position of servant. This omission is probably due to the esteem that was taught to the people of God concerning the use of the name of God. That blessed, high and holy name was not liberally bandied about as it is in our day. It would have been anathema to salt general conversation with that Holy Name. Men felt that to say that name was to call upon that name and such a thing was only proper in worship and prayer. It is a pity that in the day which we live, the name of the Lord is used in such vile and menial ways that reverence for Him has all but disappeared. Much of that irreverence lies not at the door of the profligate but at the pulpit where men who supposedly speak for the Lord, employ terms and tactics that can never be conducive of worship. Such was not the case with Samuel. Though he had been told that it was probably the Lord that had awakened him, he felt that to call this one Lord might be an offense and opted to wait for the Lord to reveal Himself.

The message given to Samuel was amazing and terrible.

Our Lord told Samuel that He was about to do a thing that would make every ear tingle. Notice that our Lord did not refer to the eyes but to the ears. What He will do will be told, retold and rehearsed in the ears of God's people for all time. It is even being repeated here tonight. This language is reserved for the revelation of wrath in the Old Testament (2 Kings 21:12; Jer. 19:3<sup>1</sup>). The message that Samuel was to deliver portended the end of the Old Covenant. Granted, it only targeted Eli and his house, but spiritually, it pointed to the message of the gospel. Part of the teaching of the gospel is the dissolution of the Old Covenant and that all its attendant laws, practices and ceremonies are no longer valid and are not to be pursued lest you be found seeking a life among the dead.

To tell a person who has been raised in religion that all their salvation hangs entirely upon the merits of Christ and that He alone is the object of faith, is to make many an ear to tingle because it removes all hope but Christ. Look at the words of the Lord to Samuel (vv. 12-14). Consider that this is his first job. Consider what these words convey. When these words enter the ear and arrive in the heart, Samuel truly has no representative, daysman or mediator between Him and God except for the very One whom now speaks these words to him. Is this not the true effect of the preaching of the gospel? Do not men, when they hear it, realize that they are shut up to the Lord alone? Do not men who reject it do so because the message allows for no other avenue of grace but Christ? When the Lord calls his sheep, they know that they will never listen to another voice. For Samuel these words are particularly painful. They mean the end of his

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<sup>1</sup> **2 Kings 21:12**, Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Behold, I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle. **Jer. 19:3**, And say, Hear ye the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem; Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, the which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle.

*friend and mentor, his earthly master.* How often this is the case when we tell folk, friends, and relatives of the gospel. We know that we do not bring peace but a sword. We know that after the truth is told, in all probability, our acquaintances and even those we love will no longer seek our fellowship (Matt. 10: 34-39<sup>1</sup>).

It is no wonder that Samuel feared to shew Eli the vision (v. 15). There had been “no open vision” and the word of the Lord was rare indeed (3:1). Now, on the day that Samuel is to debut as the prophet of God, his first words are words of condemnation not only for his former religion, but also for his beloved priest, judge and master. It is as if he had to say, “Pastor, friend you can't know God.” Consider the words of *the Prophet*, our Lord when He preached the first time in His hometown synagogue (Read Luke 4). Jack Janes once said, “The gospel got me out of trouble with God, but got me in a whole lotta' trouble with men.”

Finally, after Samuel was threatened into telling the vision we have the response of Eli. I've heard many scenarios about why Eli answered in the manner that he did. Some say it was resignation to the sovereignty of God. One preacher said that it was proof the Eli was an uncaring parent. Others have said that Eli was merely nonchalant about the whole matter. I think Eli's response is the response of every child of God when he hears the message from God. What can be said? What notion of changing the message might occur? Eli has heard the prophet of God, received him as such, and therefore has received the One who *sent* the prophet. One prominent attribute of the child of God is that the Word of

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<sup>1</sup> **Matt. 10: 34-39**, Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

God settles the matter. There is nothing else to consider. The believer knows that he has neither right no warrant to question the will and wisdom of his maker (Romans 9:17:23<sup>1</sup>). When the elect hear that God has disallowed every work of their hands, that God accepts only what He has provided, that the law is finished and fulfilled, and the only access to God is Christ—it is all that he the believer needs to hear.

His glad response is “It is the Lord: Let Him do what seemeth good” (v. 18).

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<sup>1</sup> **Romans 9:17:23**, For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory.



# IN SHILOH

## 1 Samuel 3:19-21

19, And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground.

20, And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the LORD.

21, And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh: for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD.

**A**s seen in the last study, the LORD revealed himself to Samuel, and in that revelation was the removal of everything that Samuel held dear and counted on. Only the LORD filled his vision. The Lord alone became his world and his universe. We saw that this was when Samuel came to know the Lord. Up to this time he *belonged* to the Lord as he had been given to the Lord before his birth. He served the Lord by caring for and attending to Eli and the house of the Lord, but even with the employment of his religious duties, and being dedicated to it, He did not *know* the Lord. Jehovah had not yet revealed Himself to Samuel.

We saw that Samuel acted as many do when the Lord begins to deal with them in prevenient grace. When Samuel was called of the Lord twice, not knowing the Lord, he went to Eli, conferring with flesh and blood, but when the Lord revealed Himself, Samuel took the place of the servant and immediately was placed in the office of prophet.

We saw also that his first message was one of condemnation. Though the gospel, the revelation of Christ, was good news to Samuel, it was death to his former religion and hope. His calling meant that all that he had counted on was reduced to nothing in the light of Christ. In all of this,

Samuel proved himself a faithful servant of the Lord. The measure of the faithfulness, though he was at first timid to exercise it, was that he told the truth, no matter the cost. Though men may apply many duties to pastor, the measure of a pastor whom God has put in the ministry, is summed up in a single fact—he tells his people the truth even if it costs him his family and everything that he holds dear. The only way he can give account for the souls that have been placed in his charge is to preach the gospel to them. To some degree, he will always approach his task with trepidation (1 Cor. 2:1-5<sup>1</sup>). The singular thing that is of value in this ministry is saying the truth as it is in Christ (John 10:41<sup>2</sup>).

In this study, we find the record of God's estimation of this man Samuel, the prophet that He has ordained.

The first phrase of verse 19 is a familiar theme, “and Samuel grew” (2:18, 26; 3:1<sup>3</sup>). One might ask how it is that Samuel is spoken of in the same terms, both before he knew the Lord and after the Lord revealed Himself to him. Though this will not sit well with those who hold that salvation can only be considered in time, the fact is that Samuel was the Lord's by election and predestination before the world began. Christ had assumed suretyship for Samuel's sin debt before the world began. Though Samuel did not know the Lord, the Lord knew him, and Samuel came into

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. 2:1-5, And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

<sup>2</sup> John 10:41, And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true.

<sup>3</sup> 2:18, But Samuel ministered before the LORD, being a child, girded with a linen ephod. 26, And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the LORD, and also with men. 3:1, And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision.

this world viewed by God, in Christ. If you were to ask Samuel if He was a sinner, he would surely declare it to be so—as an indisputable fact. If you were to ask the Lord, the reply would be that this man was holy because Christ had been made to be sanctification to him. Neither his person nor his service could be accepted except in Christ. Those events that led to the day of revelation were the workings of sovereign providence. They began in eternity with election and in history with the shutting up of Hannah's womb. “And Samuel grew” (v. 19a). There can be no doubt that this “growing” primarily refers to “growing in grace and in the knowledge of Christ.” He grew up into Christ.

We know this by what follows. This brief history of Samuel as the prophet of God may be applied to Christ as the prophet of God, who *grew* in wisdom and stature and was acclaimed by many to be that *promised prophet*, whose words were *truth*. Samuel as *a* prophet was a picture of *the* prophet. He is also a picture of the *elect* of God, everyone a minister of God functioning in the church of God in various capacities with a single calling, to say the truth as it is in Christ.

Samuel grew and “the Lord was with Him” (v. 19b). Samuel lived in the presence of the Lord. The Lord was his help. The Lord was his motivation. The Lord assured Samuel's success in what he was called to do. This is seen in the last phrase of verse 19. The Lord “did let none of his words fall to the ground.”

First, we see precisely what the ministry of Samuel entailed. His ministry was *words*. He spoke the word of God as it was directly delivered to him from the mouth of God. What God told him, he repeated to his hearers. He did not opine or debate the theological ramifications of what he said. He did not call for a council of learned men to determine whether what he said lined up with the general attitude or belief of the people. His ministry is every believer's ministry. It is to say what God has said.

Secondly, we see that he executed his office faithfully in

that the Lord “did let none of his words fall to the ground.” This is poetic language that simply meant that he was a faithful prophet and spoke the word of God. The word of God is revealed in the preaching of the gospel (1 Pet. 1:25<sup>1</sup>). The preaching of the gospel is always successful. The gospel is always victorious (Isa. 55:11; 2 Cor. 2:14-17<sup>2</sup>). To preach the gospel is the calling of everyone in whom God has implanted His word (Jer. 23:28-32<sup>3</sup>). God will “let none of His words fall to the ground.” This is metaphorical language and pictures an archer shooting an arrow. The arrow is the word of God, and it will not fall to the ground. It will always hit its mark. Though we do not know the target, save that the bulls-eye is invisibly painted on the heart of every one of the elect, we declare the Word, and in the hands of God, that arrow is a guided missile which will surely hit its mark. He will let none of His words fall to the ground. This is the mark of a faithful prophet (v. 20; 9:6<sup>4</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. 1:25, But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. 55:11, So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. 2 Cor. 2:14-17, Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.

<sup>3</sup> Jer. 23:28-32, The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD. Is not my word like as a fire? saith the LORD; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces? Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that steal my words every one from his neighbour. Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the LORD, that use their tongues, and say, He saith. Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD.

<sup>4</sup> 9:6, And he said unto him, Behold now, there is in this city a man of

Finally, in verse 21, we see the source of the word or in whom the word is revealed. The LORD (Jehovah) appeared in Shiloh. Shiloh is one of the Old Testament names of Christ. Shiloh means “To Him it belongs,” Shiloh means “peace,” Shiloh means “the son,” Shiloh means “sent,” Shiloh means “rest,” Shiloh means “prosper.” Shiloh means Christ. Shiloh was where God was worshipped. In Shiloh the LORD is revealed. And He is revealed in Shiloh by the word (Col. 2:9<sup>1</sup>).

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God, and he is an honourable man; all that he saith cometh surely to pass: now let us go thither; peradventure he can shew us our way that we should go.

<sup>1</sup> Col. 2:9, For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.



# THE LORD'S WORD

## 1 Samuel 4:1-11

1, And the word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and pitched beside Ebenezer: and the Philistines pitched in Aphek.

2, And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel: and when they joined battle, Israel was smitten before the Philistines: and they slew of the army in the field about four thousand men.

3, And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the LORD smitten us to day before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of Shiloh unto us, that, when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies.

4, So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth between the cherubims: and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.

5, And when the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again.

6, And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, What meaneth the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood that the ark of the LORD was come into the camp.

7, And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore.

8, Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? these are the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness.

9, Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye

Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you: quit yourselves like men, and fight.

10, And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man into his tent: and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen.

11, And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.

**I**n verse 19 of this text, the declaration concerning Samuel as the prophet of God is that “none of his words [fell] to the ground.” This is the ultimate test of all who have the title of prophet (Jer. 28:9<sup>1</sup>). Samuel had published the word of the Lord concerning the end of Eli's house and the sure death of his wicked sons Hophni and Phinehas (Ezek. 2:5<sup>2</sup>). In this passage we observe the fulfillment of that prophecy given to Samuel (v. 1a).

Whether Israel instigated this war with the Philistines or the opposite is not clearly known. Most commentators seem inclined to think that Israel was the instigator, and this seems reasonable because of the result, the fulfillment of the prophecy of the Lord to Eli. What *is* clear is there is no evidence that Israel sought council from the Lord in prayer or at the door of Samuel. Regardless of who was the instigator, Israel went out to battle on their *own*, having no grief over the horrible sin of the priesthood and the people. Their present state of utter disobedience did not sway their enthusiasm nor curtail their confidence that, because they were the people of God, nothing could stand in the path of sure victory. Just forty years before, the entire nation had been in captivity of the Philistines until Samson delivered them.

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<sup>1</sup> Jer. 28:9, The prophet which prophesieth of peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known, that the LORD hath truly sent him.

<sup>2</sup> Ezek. 2:5, And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, (for they are a rebellious house,) yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them.

They had already forgotten that they were in that captivity because they did not that which was right in the sight of the Lord (Judg. 17:6<sup>1</sup>). Now, in the same state of disobedience, they audaciously array themselves to battle. It is ever true that when the flesh wishes to forget its own sin, it is quick to attack others. Whatever the motivation was, their ill-conceived notions eventuated in utter defeat.

It is interesting to note that they pitched camp beside Ebenezer. At this time, Ebenezer will prove a place of great affliction, even though the name means “stone of help.” Some twenty years after this defeat, Samuel will stack stones to make a memorial to victory over the Philistines. The meaning of the name will not change; the memorial will still mean that the Lord is their help. It is often the case with the child of God that the beginning of affliction is the beginning of God’s help for His people. How often have we been able to say what seemed to be evil was actually meant for good? Behind many a frown of providence shines the smile of God's grace. For the moment, however, this painful experience comes upon this nation for its rank abuse of those things that picture the glory of Christ and His work. No good result may be found if Christ is not honored and glorified (Lev. 26:15, 17; John 5:23<sup>2</sup>).

When the battle ensued, Israel was routed and lost 4000 men (v. 2). When the people returned to camp, they immediately began to assign blame for their loss (v. 3). Their question was one of astonishment and born of willful ignorance. To assess that the Lord had smitten them was

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<sup>1</sup> **Judg. 17:6**, In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

<sup>2</sup> **Lev. 26:15**, And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant: **17**, . . . I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies: they that hate you shall reign over you; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you. **John 5:23**, That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.

correct, and even to ask why was a legitimate inquiry. However, the tone of the question is that of a bruised sense of *entitlement*. They were, after all, God's chosen, and should have easily won this battle. Their question indicated that what transpired should not have happened the way it did. They did not even consider that their wicked corrupt worship and their tolerance of an evil priesthood might have been the source of their defeat.

They were not unlike the religion of this day which tells men that if they accept God and attend to religious activity (no matter how corrupted the activity is) that all troubles will magically disappear. In their question, there is no hint of repentance or even recognition that the problem might be of their own making. They presumed that God would bless their endeavors because they were not pagans like those Philistines. They had not heeded the words of Samuel and the fact that they went to war might well have been an effort to, by unbelief, prove that they were indeed the people of God (Num. 14:40<sup>1</sup>). They probably thought, as much of religion does, that if there is trouble between them and God, they have but to do some bold gesture to appease God and be returned to his favor.

Further proof of their wholesale ignorance is seen in their next notion. This matter of taking the ark from Shiloh to ensure a victory teaches two basic things about useless religion.

The first thing that is obvious is that religion thinks, not in the vein that "I'm wrong," but in the vein that "I'm not right *enough*." The loss of the four thousand men was *not* because they had done wrong and were under the judgment of God, but that they had not done *enough* right. They had forgotten something, and by taking the ark, their slight error would be corrected. They did not see their sin. They saw their

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<sup>1</sup> Num. 14:40, And they rose up early in the morning, and gat them up into the top of the mountain, saying, Lo, we be here, and will go up unto the place which the LORD hath promised: for we have sinned.

righteousness as needing a personal boost. This is proven by what they say about the ark (v. 3).

Secondly, they ascribed saving power to an object. They said “it” will save us (v. 3). Mark this well because the tendency is ingrained in our flesh. When we are humbled in defeat, the greatest manifestation of unbelief is to account anything that might be labeled as an “it” as being able to deliver us. Remember, Bible study is a good thing, but it is an “it.” Prayer is a good thing, but it is an “it.” Good work is a good thing, but it is an “it.” Only God can deliver. Only God can save. Only God can undo sinful guilt. These people had flashed a cross to ward off Dracula. They had turned the ark of the covenant into a superstitious artifact. They would take that which God declared to be his dwelling place in *Shiloh* and move it into *their camp*. They had made that which was ordained to be used in worship and made it a token of religious victory. They were in truth rubbing the rosary, hanging the gibbet around their neck, displaying their icons, and believing that “its” presence was the power of God.

If you look at what the Israelites did and the reaction of the Philistines, you make a very interesting discovery (vv. 3-8). As far as religious belief goes, both peoples believed the same thing. Their beliefs mirror each other and proved that paganism was not limited to the Philistines. They both believed that the ark would save Israel, and they both believed that this object—this box—was God. It was a man-made box, decorated with a crown and cherubim according to the design of God, but “it” was just a box! Its significance was that it was, when in Shiloh, or in the temple, where God communed with His people once a year above the mercy seat on the Day of Atonement. To put confidence in “it” was to discount everything that it *represented*. Just like those pagans at the foot of Sinai made a calf of gold, called it Jehovah, and ascribed deliverance to it, so these pagan enemies of each

other did the same (Ex. 32:1-6<sup>1</sup>).

Notice also that those who *carried* the ark were the ones whom God had determined to kill. The people had heard the prophecy, yet it was the doomed sons of Belial who carried it into the camp. Those who carried the ark in their superstitious confidence were the very ones who had hated the offering and caused the people to transgress (Ps. 78:58-61<sup>2</sup>).

What follows in verses 10-11 is the fulfillment of the words of Samuel. They did not “fall to the ground.” Hophni and Phinehas met their end, probably while they carried the ark on their shoulders. Thirty thousand Israelites died in confidence that all was well, and the enemy captured the ark of God. If you do anything or believe anything that can be called an “it,” the enemy will take it from you, and the cost will be devastating. The reason for their loss was never considered. They sought to undo the prophecy by means of their own righteousness. That is paganism and the result is death. If you have been humbled in defeat, camp out at mercy's door. Do not assume that anyone or anything can

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<sup>1</sup> Ex. 32:1-6, And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow is a feast to the LORD. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. 78:58-61, For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images. When God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel: So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among men; And delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand.

help. If you seek solutions by confiding in anything, you will go further into defeat. Fly to Christ. He is that way of escape provided by the father that will enable you to endure the trial, and when it is finished, your faith will come forth as fine gold.



# RIGHTEOUSNESS

## 1 Samuel 5:1-12

1, And the Philistines took the ark of God, and brought it from Ebenezer unto Ashdod.

2, When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon.

3, And when they of Ashdod arose early on the morrow, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the earth before the ark of the LORD. And they took Dagon, and set him in his place again.

4, And when they arose early on the morrow morning, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD; and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold; only the stump of Dagon was left to him.

5, Therefore neither the priests of Dagon, nor any that come into Dagon's house, tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod unto this day.

6, But the hand of the LORD was heavy upon them of Ashdod, and he destroyed them, and smote them with emerods, even Ashdod and the coasts thereof.

7, And when the men of Ashdod saw that it was so, they said, The ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us: for his hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon our god.

8, They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the Philistines unto them, and said, What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel? And they answered, Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried about unto Gath. And they carried the ark of the God of Israel about thither.

9, And it was so, that, after they had carried it about, the hand of the LORD was against the city with a very great destruction: and he smote the men of the city, both small and great, and they had emerods in their secret parts.

10, Therefore they sent the ark of God to Ekron. And it came to pass, as the ark of God came to Ekron, that the Ekronites cried out, saying, They have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people.

11, So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to his own place, that it slay us not, and our people: for there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there.

12, And the men that died not were smitten with the emerods: and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

**T**here is a wonder in this account that is very conducive to the worship of the one true God. It reveals God in the protection of things that He has sanctified for His use and for the honor of His holy name. We must be careful here and not fall into the error of both the Israelites and the Philistines by attributing power to these man-made objects. Dagon was an idol created by the artistry of pagan men. The ark of the covenant was a piece of furniture, designed by God, but made by the artistry of men. Though beautiful and made with precious metal, its significance rested wholly in what and whom it pictured and typified.

The ark, like all other elements of the temple, was never sufficient to accomplish what it typified. Though copious amounts of blood were sprinkled upon it, not one sin was ever remitted by all its yearly coverings. The accomplishing death of Christ, which the ark pointed to, effectually ended the use of the ark as well as all its attendant objects, rites, and ceremonies (Heb. 10:1-9<sup>1</sup>). This wondrous report is about

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<sup>1</sup> **Heb. 10:1-9**, For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there

the God of the ark and the result of men trying to establish their own righteousness as a rival to the righteousness that is Christ and is imputed to all the elect.

When the Philistines captured the ark after defeating Israel, they took it to Ashdod from Ebenezer. Ebenezer means “God, my help” and Ashdod means “powerful,” but in a particular way. It comes from a root word meaning “spoils” and indicates the *power* of the victor providing the proof of victory by taking the *spoils* of war. So, the ark, though held in superstitious esteem by the Philistines was brought to the temple of Dagon as a spoil of war to do homage to Dagon and to declare, as do all petty religionists, that “our god is bigger than your god.”

The Philistines afforded the ark a place of deity for a few reasons.

First, as with all false religion, its gods are *visible* and they could *see* the ark.

Secondly, as with all false gods, it can be transported from place to place. This element of transportability was useful in the mind of the pagans because they could bring their gods to a place where they deemed them helpful and useful. This element also suggests that the Israelites, at least to some degree, had turned the ark into an idol (4:3<sup>1</sup>).

Thirdly, as with all false religion, their gods are the product of their imaginations and made with their own

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is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

<sup>1</sup> 4:3, And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the LORD smitten us to day before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of Shiloh unto us, that, when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies.

hands. Dagon was the quintessential proof of the depraved Gentile mind (Rom. 1:21-23<sup>1</sup>).

Fourthly, the placement of the ark next to Dagon made it, to their minds, part of their pantheon.

Dagon was a god who was half man and half fish. Its upper body was a man with arms, and its lower body, from the waist down, was a fish. The robes of Dagon's priests resembled a fish with its head being the priests miter, and closely resembled the headgear of the pope, cardinals and the archbishops of many churches that came out of Rome in the reformation. Some images of Dagon etched on coins and crystals show him wearing a dome shaped hat that the papal and reformed hierarchy wear to this day. The dome hat was a phallic symbol suggesting masculinity and virility.

One of Dagon's temples was at Ashdod. When the Philistines brought in the ark and placed it next to Dagon, they attributed to it similar powers to the god of their own making. The record is that the next day they returned to the temple and found Dagon face down on the floor of the temple before the ark. Surely this should have suggested to them that there was a power at play greater than their ersatz deity, but the report is that they stood their god up in the place he was before.

What they did is revealing. It reveals that there is no logical reasoning in the mind of the idolater (Isa. 44:17-20<sup>2</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> **Rom. 1:21-23**, Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

<sup>2</sup> **Isa. 44:17-20**, And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god. They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand. And none considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten it: and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the

Upon their return the next day they found that their deity was nothing but a *stump*. Dagon was again fallen down, and “the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold” (v. 4). This was significant in what it suggested. The god they worshipped was now decimated, rendered without mental capacity and ability to perform any work. It is evident that superstition went into high gear.

The response to this event is not clearly discernable. The fact is that the priests and worshippers of Dagon never crossed that threshold again. There are two possible interpretations for their resolve. They may have been brought to an utter state of fear because their deity had been destroyed, or they made this a high holy place that no man should ever tread upon. In either case, a power beyond their god had visited them and they knew it. This refusal to step on the threshold became a superstitious, religious practice among many false Gentile religions that equated it with keeping them safe from the wrath of their Gods. It was a kind of pedal genuflection. When many false religionists thereafter came to any threshold, whether in a temple, house or even a place of employment, they hopped over it for good luck or to prevent bad luck. This threshold leaping became synonymous with somehow appeasing God. Even to the day of Zephaniah, the prophet, this practice was still going on (Zeph. 1:9<sup>1</sup>).

Because of the actions of the Philistines, God's judgment came upon them. The judgment handed down was a particularly unpleasant one. The LORD smote them and all the people in their surrounding territories with emerods or hemorrhoids, both internal and external. Among pagans this horrible affliction upon the Philistines went far beyond borders and time. According to history when many years later

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stock of a tree? He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?

<sup>1</sup> Zeph. 1:9, In the same day also will I punish all those that leap on the threshold, which fill their masters' houses with violence and deceit.

the Scythians plundered the temple of Venus at Ashkelon, they were smitten with hemorrhoids suggesting that this malady was a result or punishment of some severe sacrilege. The affliction caused the Philistines to want to get rid of the ark.

The sad thing is that the Philistines could never seem to attribute any of their sorrows to the God of the ark but to the ark itself. What else could they do? They could not conceive of a God that they could not see, therefore the ark, to them, was god. Their final assessment was that keeping the ark would not do, but they would send it back to its own place, meaning Shiloh. It would be returned, but not to Shiloh. Providence had set Shiloh aside. The destination of the ark was Zion. The lesson that providence teaches is that the Old Covenant would be set aside for the new.

Though this is a magnificent event and worthy of adoration to the God of all glory, it is an Old Testament story and its true significance must be viewed in light of Christ and His work. The interpretation of this event is best seen in the words of the apostle in Romans 1:16-23:

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.”

This is about righteousness and acceptance before God on the basis of that righteousness. Whether it is true or false religion, every religion believes that righteousness is essential for acceptance with God. As the Apostle Paul declares, men in nature do what they do to be righteous before God by the works of their hands. Their false righteousness is revealed by imagining and making a god like themselves that will accept them because in reality they have created him. One does not manufacture a deity that will require of them more than they can accomplish.

Dagon was not merely an idol; it was symbolically the righteousness of the Philistines. It was the work of their hands, the creation of their will and skill, the obvious and evident human merit that their god must readily accept, for they had imagined and created him for that purpose. It takes no stretch of the imagination to equate this thinking with the free-will, works religion of this day. This false, idolatrous religion has imagined and created a god that will accept them based on *their* works, *their* merit—*their* righteousness. Though they may all sing amazing grace, the deciding factor in their salvation is that primary and oh-so precious first work—the free exercise of their power of righteous decision. Without free will, they have no religion. The making of Dagon was the righteousness of the Philistines.

The ark of the covenant was a symbolic artifact that pictured the righteousness of Christ and His glorious work, declared to be “the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel.” This righteousness is Christ, and involves nothing from natural or even spiritual humanity. This righteousness is charged, imputed to, and indeed made to be the only righteousness by which men are accepted before God and

made fit for glory (1 Cor. 1:30<sup>1</sup>).

So, when the Philistines brought the ark into the same chamber as Dagon, they were rivaling human merit with the righteousness of God. The end of that effort was that *their* righteousness was a stump before the righteousness of God. *Their* righteousness had neither mental acuity nor physical ability to do anything. *Their* righteousness was a headless, handless stump. Thank God that He reveals this truth to His people in time and not at the judgment (Job 37:7; Isa. 64:6; Phil. 3:9<sup>2</sup>). There is no righteousness but Christ, and any other, imagined or created, is but a headless, handless stump.

The affliction the Lord put on the Philistines was hemorrhoids. Why so? It is because their efforts at righteousness made them enemies of God (Ps. 78:66<sup>3</sup>). Still another reason may be seen in the result. Hemorrhoids make it painful and often impossible for one so afflicted to sit down—to rest. This malady is a reminder. Anyone who would establish their own righteousness will never be able to rest. False religion is labor intensive, and men who practice it cannot rest. To sit down is painful to them, and they ache when they stand to work and continually prove that they are righteousness. There is no rest for the wicked, and the greatest manifestation of wickedness in this universe is self-righteousness. It is smoke in God's nose. It is abomination. The affliction with this malady is very appropriate to those who would be righteous by their will and their work.

By comparison and in opposition, those who are the

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. 1:30, But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.

<sup>2</sup> Job 37:7, He sealeth up the hand of every man; that all men may know his work. Isa. 64:6, But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. Phil. 3:9, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.

<sup>3</sup> Ps. 78:66, And he smote his enemies in the hinder parts: he put them to a perpetual reproach.

beneficiaries of Christ as their righteousness rest from their labors. They rest in the finished work of Christ because the work is finished, because there is nothing left to do, because there was never anything for them to do, because they are complete in Christ—their righteousness. They can sit down in sweet repose without pain or discomfort because they are without any malady that would cause them to feel as if they must avoid rest or that they must work to please God. In truth, they are perfect in their redeemer.

This great story is about true and false righteousness. This is about acceptance or rejection before God and by God!



# STRANGE OFFERINGS

## 1 Samuel 6:1-9

1, And the ark of the LORD was in the country of the Philistines seven months.

2, And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying, What shall we do to the ark of the LORD? tell us wherewith we shall send it to his place.

3, And they said, If ye send away the ark of the God of Israel, send it not empty; but in any wise return him a trespass offering: then ye shall be healed, and it shall be known to you why his hand is not removed from you.

4, Then said they, What shall be the trespass offering which we shall return to him? They answered, Five golden emerods, and five golden mice, according to the number of the lords of the Philistines: for one plague was on you all, and on your lords.

5, Wherefore ye shall make images of your emerods, and images of your mice that mar the land; and ye shall give glory unto the God of Israel: peradventure he will lighten his hand from off you, and from off your gods, and from off your land.

6, Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? when he had wrought wonderfully among them, did they not let the people go, and they departed?

7, Now therefore make a new cart, and take two milch kine, on which there hath come no yoke, and tie the kine to the cart, and bring their calves home from them:

8, And take the ark of the LORD, and lay it upon the cart; and put the jewels of gold, which ye return him for a trespass offering, in a coffer by the side thereof; and send it away, that it may go.

9, And see, if it goeth up by the way of his own coast to Bethshemesh, then he hath done us this great evil: but if not, then we shall know that it is not his hand that

smote us: it was a chance that happened to us.

**I** do not think it would be an overstatement to say this is a strange episode in the history of Israel. It is the report of the efforts of the Philistines to rid themselves of the ark of the covenant because God has not only made mincemeat of their gods, but He also smote them with emerods and evidently sent a plague of mice to wreak havoc on their crops.

Their efforts were three-fold.

First, they desire to rid themselves of their spoils of war—the ark—because the seven months that it has been in their midst has brought nothing but pain and sorrow.

Second, they want to know if the affliction which they suffer is truly from the God of Israel.

Third, if it is indeed God who has done it, they want to appease His wrath and be healed from their affliction.

The truth described in this chapter is a revelation of how pagans perceive and deal with the judgment of God. The first thing to note is that the Philistines were ignorant of God. There were times in the previous chapter that they could not quite conclude whether the ark itself was God or that there was a God that was greater than the ark. The fact that they kept sending the ark progressively further from them indicates they thought they could get some distance from God. Since God is omnipresent, there is no such thing as creating distance. Clearly, verse 2 declares their priests and diviners were of one mind. They believed the only possible remedy was to send the ark to Israel. Their language betrays their thoughts. They used the possessive pronoun “his” and the third person “it” to describe the ark (v. 2). That which was a blessing to Israel was a curse to them. Since the ark was a type of Christ and His work, we can see that their action toward the ark reveals the truth about what takes place when Christ and His work are declared in the gospel. “To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the

savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?" (2 Cor. 2:16).

Verses 3-5 reveals the perception the Philistines have of God and how they are to deal with Him concerning *their* afflictions. They agree upon a trespass offering which means that they had some knowledge of the worship that went on in Israel. The trespass offering was about sinning against God by sinning against His people. It was not only designed to appease God's holiness but moreover to make restitution to the offended above the requirement of blood. Their offering addresses not only His appeasement but also His government and care for his people. So, the Philistines would send back the ark and add to it symbolic golden representations of the judgments that God sent to them. I confess that I cannot imagine what a gold hemorrhoid would look like, and I am not sure I want to know.

This was however what they decided to offer to God along with the golden mice to appease him for taking the ark and hopefully turn His hand of wrath from them (v. 5). Their employment of the *trespass* offering revealed a basic error in their perception of God. This offering, as well as the sin offering, wave offering, and peace offering found their significance in the burnt offering. Apart from the *burnt* offering no other offering has any significance at all. All other offerings are based upon the fact that the offerer is already accepted because of the burnt offering. To offer the *trespass* offering without having made the *burnt* offering is to suggest that judgment is assuaged not by what God has done, but rather what we do and what God might do because of what we do. They believed that peace could be made by their *actions* and *gifts* when in fact they had no knowledge that peace was established with God by God Himself. They knew that God must be appeased but mistakenly thought that *they* could accomplish it. They did what they did to *be delivered*, not because they had *been delivered*. This is the pat response of legalism to the judgment of God.

The example the priest and diviners used was meant to teach the reason for Egypt's final judgment was because they hardened their heart against God (v. 6). If the Philistines do not harden their hearts, then according to their thinking, God will not continue with their afflictions. That being so, the way to show God they get the message is to return the ark along with their offerings.

They have a plan (vv. 7-8). They build a fine cart; place the ark on it with their offering in a little chest beside the ark. They take two milk cows, separate their calves from them, put a yoke on the cows, and attach it to the cart and send it on its way.

Verse 9 reveals the true heart of the Philistines and the true heart of all who believe God may be appeased with *their* sacrifices. They were not truly seeking to appease but were making the offering “just in case.” I remember an actor being asked, “Why do you read the Bible?” He gave two answers. He said 1st because he wanted to cover all his bases, and 2nd because he was looking for loopholes. The Philistines were covering their bases. They sent back the ark with their offerings just in case there really was a God who was causing their distress. Their *compass* was the *milk cows*. If the cows head for Bethshemesh then it was proof there was a God who was punishing them, and He would see their offering. If the cows went another way, then there was no such God, and all this trouble was just a chance happening—some roll of the dice. Every effort at appeasing God which comes from the work of our hands derives from an *unsure* mind. That is why the moment we do it we know that it is not enough, and we strike out to do more. The believer comes to God with the offering that God Himself has made, in assurance that God will hear, because He has already accepted the believer in Christ. We confess our sins knowing that God is just to forgive us because Christ has appeased Him for all our sin. Every other effort proceeds from a mind of “just in case”.

There ends the story, but I am very intrigued by the

offerings the Philistines sent. The golden mice and emeralds tell us something and I confess I'm not sure what this action says. There are some things that are, however, common to all natural efforts to appease God.

First, by the images used, we can see that what they have to offer God has to do with their *personal experience*. It is often the case that men, when they speak religiously, seek to prove themselves by setting forth their numerous experiences, especially those they have overcome through much prayer and dedication.

Secondly, by reproducing their afflictions, they assume that God must be reminded of their afflictions. It is ever the mindset of religion to count their sufferings as meritorious. No matter what comes our way, it is better than we deserve. They placed their emblems of suffering alongside the object that pictured the only suffering that ever honored God—the substitutionary suffering and death of Christ. The sufferings of men are not worthy of mention and are most surely not worthy of being placed alongside the sufferings of Christ.

Thirdly, by reproducing their afflictions, it is clear they “got it.” They understood that something outside their control had come upon them. The problem is that men can understand that something greater than themselves is affecting their lives while having no clue there is a greater purpose for it. Men, by nature, cannot get past the idea that everything is about *them*.

When sorrow comes to men, they are quick to ask, “Why *me*,” or “What did *I* do,” or “What can *I* do,” or “What might *I* have done”.

The believer says, “Why not *me*.” The believer says, “It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth good”.



# SECRET THINGS

## 1 Samuel 6:12-21

12, And the kine took the straight way to the way of Bethshemesh, and went along the highway, lowing as they went, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left; and the lords of the Philistines went after them unto the border of Bethshemesh.

13, And they of Bethshemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley: and they lifted up their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see it.

14, And the cart came into the field of Joshua, a Bethshemite, and stood there, where there was a great stone: and they clave the wood of the cart, and offered the kine a burnt offering unto the LORD.

15, And the Levites took down the ark of the LORD, and the coffer that was with it, wherein the jewels of gold were, and put them on the great stone: and the men of Bethshemesh offered burnt offerings and sacrificed sacrifices the same day unto the LORD.

16, And when the five lords of the Philistines had seen it, they returned to Ekron the same day.

17, And these are the golden emerods which the Philistines returned for a trespass offering unto the LORD; for Ashdod one, for Gaza one, for Askelon one, for Gath one, for Ekron one;

18, And the golden mice, according to the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five lords, both of fenced cities, and of country villages, even unto the great stone of Abel, whereon they set down the ark of the LORD: which stone remaineth unto this day in the field of Joshua, the Bethshemite.

19, And he smote the men of Bethshemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the LORD, even he smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men: and the people lamented, because the LORD had

smitten many of the people with a great slaughter.

20, And the men of Bethshemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy LORD God? and to whom shall he go up from us?

21, And they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjathjearim, saying, The Philistines have brought again the ark of the LORD; come ye down, and fetch it up to you.

**I**n Matthew 8:34<sup>1</sup>, the public's response to the presence of the Lord was to beseech Him to depart out of their coasts. The reason for their reaction was that the Lord had healed the demoniac of Gadara and put a serious dent in their swine commerce. Such power over man and beast simply was too much for them to bear. This same attitude is displayed in the passage we consider here.

The Philistines had paid dearly for their capture of the ark. After seven months of terror, the presence of the ark could be borne no longer. They invented a way to have it depart out of their land and sent trespass offerings with the ark to, in their mind, not only return the ark but also to make restitution for their deeds.

Their sacrifices were useless because they were not offered because of sin having been remitted. Instead, they sought to appease God and justify their behavior by the work of their hands and the wealth of their wallets. Such sacrifices were only for the people of God to offer, those who had been chosen, sanctified, and whose sin had been typically remitted by the burnt offerings. The Israelites were the elect and singularly represented those who would be saved by Christ. No matter what offering those who know not God might offer, no matter what sacrifice they might make, and no matter the intention, it is abomination to God (Prov. 15:8<sup>2</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 8:34, And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts.

<sup>2</sup> Prov. 15:8, The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD:

The Philistines were not the elect nation; therefore, they could do *nothing* to please God. The equation is simple and profound. “They that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Rom. 8:8).

They did not want the representative presence of the Lord in their midst. His power over man and beast meant nothing but trouble for them. When we observe them making offering to the Lord, we get a true understanding of why they offered the trespass offerings. They not only wanted to get *rid* of God, but also wanted to *pay* Him to stay away. Clearly, they thought that they had succeeded (v. 16).

I have often wondered just how much of my activity in useless religion to ease my conscience had a dark desire to get rid of God, get Him out of my mind, and out of my country. It is clear from the context that the Philistines saw the greatness of God. They experienced His judgment, and they saw the kine they hitched to the cart go straight to Bethshemesh. Once again, the Lord was seen to control the mind of man as well as beasts. The cows never veered from their appointed destination (v. 12).

The arrival of the ark in Bethshemesh was a cause of great rejoicing to the children of Israel (v. 13). They were not unlike the shepherds abiding in their fields when the heavenly host announced good tidings of great joy (Luke 2:15-16<sup>1</sup>). For seven months the Israelites have been without the visible representation of God dwelling among them, and now their hearts leap to know the ark has returned to them. The ark came to the field of *Joshua* where there was a great *rock* (v. 14). The Greek translation of *Joshua* is “Jesus,” and we know that *Christ* is our “Rock.”

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but the prayer of the upright is his delight.

<sup>1</sup> **Luke 2:15-16**, And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

The Bethshemites immediately called for the priests to take the ark off the cart, ripped up the cart to make a fire, and offered burnt offerings to the Lord. The joy of harvest was set aside for the joy of the presence of the Lord. However, there was a problem. Along with the burnt offerings, they also set the offering of the Philistines on the Rock, and there can be no mixture.

The location of Bethshemesh is important. Though it was a portion of the tribe of Dan, it belonged to Judah. The ark never left Judah after this because in this land was the mount of Zion. Shiloh, because of the horrible decline in the office of priest as revealed in the actions of Hophni and Phinehas, had been abandoned, and according to divine purpose, Judah was to be the center of worship. Our Lord was the only priest that sprang from the tribe of Judah. It was on the holy hill Zion that God set His King and gave Him the heathen for his inheritance. It was Judah who volunteered to be surety for Benjamin. Christ is the Lion of the tribe of Judah. It is here, on Zion, and in His person that the people are to worship God (Ps. 78:67-69<sup>1</sup>).

In verse 19 we see an amazing thing. Evidently, some of the men of Bethshemesh decided to look into the ark. To do so, they had to lift the mercy seat.

There were two crimes committed.

The first was that they *touched* the ark. This was absolutely forbidden for anyone. The priests charged with carrying the ark carried it on their shoulders supported by golden staves but were never allowed touch it. Not even the high priest who *saw* the ark once a year was allowed to touch it. To touch the ark was to symbolically take part in what the ark represented.

The second crime was to *look inside* the ark. To do so

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<sup>1</sup> Ps. 78:67-69, Moreover he refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim: But chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved. And he built his sanctuary like high palaces, like the earth which he hath established for ever.

pictured the presumption of entitlement to look into what God had covered with the mercy seat, which pictured Christ. God killed these men because they involved themselves in that which belonged to His secret work. What they did, symbolically, pictured some human being carrying a flashlight into those three hours of darkness on Calvary. We who have been given spiritual understanding know what was in the ark. We know because that Old Covenant has been set aside.

At the time of this criminal act, the *mystery* of Christ and His work was shrouded and covered. We know that under that mercy seat was the broken law, Aaron's rod that budded, and the golden pot of Manna. Respectively they represent sin, regeneration, and life-giving sustenance. All these things were addressed in those three hours of darkness on Calvary, to which even the child of God is not allowed to see. The principle remains. In the matter of sin and how our Lord was made to be sin, we are not allowed to see or touch (1 Tim. 3:16<sup>1</sup>). In the matter of regeneration, it is a secret work of the Spirit which we are not allowed to see or touch (John 3:5-8<sup>2</sup>). In the matter of the sustaining of life we are not allowed to see or touch (Col. 3:3<sup>3</sup>).

The message is plain. In the matter of our salvation God allows us neither to see nor touch. This work, though of eternal benefit to us, was accomplished in the secret councils of God and is totally a work of the triune Godhead. Though we, by faith, see things that those under the Old Covenant

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. 3:16, And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

<sup>2</sup> John 3:5-8, Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

<sup>3</sup> Col. 3:3, For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

could not see, both they and we cannot see, touch or have any part in the salvation of our souls.

The response of the people to the slaying of men is reasonable and understandable (v. 20). “Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?” I do not believe this to be a theological inquiry. This question is asked because God has slain these men who “merely” touched the ark, and just happy to see in. Their question was probably asked out of fear and indignation. We see this fact from the second question which they asked. They have asked the same as the Philistines asked (v. 20b; 6:2b). They, just as the Philistines, wanted to get rid of the ark and have no more dealings with “this holy Lord God.” The first question asked was a response to what the Lord had done *to* them. If their query were of a gracious nature having to do with approaching God, it is only answered by the gospel (Ps. 130:3; Rom. 4:6-8; Rev. 7:9<sup>1</sup>).

Verse 21 reveals that unless you know Christ, unless you approach God through a mediator, the one mediator who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, the holy Lord God will be someone that you want to get rid of, someone whose presence is nothing but trouble, sorrow, and death.

Thank God that He has satisfied Himself *for* his people and given them access into His presence by faith. The child of God rejoices in the *heavenly* ark and thanks God that he was never allowed to see it or touch it (2 Kings 5:20a<sup>2</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> **Ps. 130:3**, If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? **Rom. 4:6-8**, Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. **Rev. 7:9**, After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.

<sup>2</sup> **2 Kings 5:20a**, But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, Behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought.

# TWENTY YEARS

## 1 Samuel 7:1-17

1, And the men of Kirjathjearim came, and fetched up the ark of the LORD, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD.

2, And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kirjathjearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD.

3, And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.

4, Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the LORD only.

5, And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the LORD.

6, And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the LORD. And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh.

7, And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpeh, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines.

8, And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the LORD our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines.

9, And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt offering wholly unto the LORD: and Samuel cried unto the LORD for Israel; and the LORD heard

him.

10, And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel.

11, And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until they came under Bethcar.

12, Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us.

13, So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more into the coast of Israel: and the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

14, And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath; and the coasts thereof did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.

15, And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.

16, And he went from year to year in circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places.

17, And his return was to Ramah; for there was his house; and there he judged Israel; and there he built an altar unto the LORD.

**T**his chapter begins with the men of Kirjath-jearim retrieving the ark from Bethshemesh and putting it in the house of Abinadab. The thing that is immediately obvious is the difference in the attitudes of the men in Bethshemesh and the men of Kirjath-jearim and the consequences that followed. Concerning the men of Bethshemesh, their lax attitude and disobedience to the word of God cost many lives. The men of Kirjath-jearim evidently handled the ark according to the Word and it rested safe in its new location. As the ark is a type of the gospel, these two

attitudes toward it reveal the attitudes of men toward the gospel and the consequences that follow (1 Pet.2:6-8<sup>1</sup>).

Between the first and second verse, twenty years come and go. The ark is among the people, but all indications are that they have not longed for the ordinances and ceremonies that attend it. If it has been in this house for twenty years, then the high priest, for that period of time, has not attended to the Day of Atonement. Yet when we consider the words of Samuel in verse 3, they seem to indicate that the lamenting of the people in verse 2 did not take place until the end of the twenty year span. They seem to have been comfortable in their idolatry for many years practicing their abomination with a sense of security because the ark was among them. It is not unlike this world's religion that drops the name of God and continues on in numerous practices that defy Scripture, feeling that all is well because they have employed the name of God, as if it were a mystical incantation that guaranteed the proverbial cover for all the error they practiced (Jer. 7:8-10<sup>2</sup>).

We can be heartened that they *did* put away their false deities when confronted with the words of Samuel. What Samuel was doing during these twenty years is not reported, and it was not until the children began lamenting that he began to speak. During the years of idolatry such words would probably have fallen on idol-deafened ears. There is no indication that some other judgment had fallen from

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet.2:6-8, Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

<sup>2</sup> Jer. 7:8-10, Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit. Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not; And come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?

heaven. Samuel's words were "a word in season" that came because God had begun a work in the heart of the people that made them hunger for the ordinances of redemption and atonement. When Samuel spoke, the people had been given a hearing ear as is revealed in their response to what they heard (vv. 3-4). Note that the words of Samuel were conditional. This is so because they are operating under the Old Covenant.

Samuel's ministry of preaching was accompanied by the ministry of prayer (v. 5). Here Samuel pictures our Lord as intercessor. This act of drawing water and pouring it out before the Lord is an act of humble worship (v. 6). When David was in the cave Adullam fleeing from his enemies, his friends, disregarding their own safety, brought water to him to quench his thirst, and he poured it out on the ground. He did so to reveal that he was not worthy of such honor and sacrifice. Such honor belonged only to the Lord. When the children poured out the water before the Lord, they were worshipping Him. They were saying that they were poured out before the Lord, that they were thirsty for His presence, and the source of their satisfaction belonged only to God. By their action, they humbled themselves declaring that *they* were not important, and what they had been doing for twenty years only brought them sorrow and dishonored God. They symbolically poured out their souls before Him. Such is the case of the people of God when they have long forgotten their Lord. At the appointed time, He will make them sick of what they are doing and send them His Spirit, with His word, to hearts that He has prepared to hear.

Verse 7 is very important in understanding the mindset of the enemies of the gospel. When the Philistines received word that the Israelites were worshipping God, they immediately set themselves in battle array. For twenty years, they have not moved against Israel. Perhaps those twenty years have brought some relief to the judgment that God put on them, but I think this reveals more than that. The world

willingly accepts all manner of false worship because all false worship is included under the banner of tolerance as long as that worship doesn't infringe on them. But the minute the truth is preached, and the people of God begin to worship the true and living God, humbling themselves by giving all glory to God, all bets are off. The reason is that the true worship of God disallows all other gods, and repentance requires that those former gods be given no credence at all. So long as Israel was steeped in idolatry, even though they had the ark, the Philistines had no argument with them, because it was evident that the presence of the ark in the land had no real influence on the people. The threat of the enemy, even with the presence of the ark, did not bolster the confidence of the Israelites. They no longer believed that "it" would save them. Now they turned with eyes of faith to the singular source of salvation (vv. 7-8). They do not cry for the ark to be brought to the battle. They beseech Samuel to intercede for them. They know now that salvation belongs to the Lord, "He" will save us.

Samuel's response is the gospel. He offers a lamb as a burnt offering to fill God's view with the blood of the Lamb. He interceded for them on the basis of God being satisfied for their sin, and the word is clear—"the Lord heard him." When we sin, "we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1). When the Lord thundered from heaven, the enemy turned tail and ran. The people had not fought for themselves; they had sought the Lord to fight for them. They could say without reservation "Not by might or by power but by thy Spirit" (v. 10). Note that the Philistines attacked "as Samuel offered up the burnt offering." The gospel is an offense and is always the particular point of attack from the enemy. But be not afraid. While you worship the Lord, He hears (Isa. 65:24<sup>1</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> Isa. 65:24, And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.

As a memorial, Samuel raises a stone at Ebenezer, giving glory to God for His help, His deliverance, and His grace. This was especially memorable because it was here at Ebenezer that the Israelites lost 400,000 footmen when they were routed by the Philistines. It was here that the Israelites watched as the Philistines captured the ark. It was here the people were turned to their God. The result was that the Philistines did not come against Israel again as long as Samuel lived and judged Israel (v. 13; Hebrews 11:32-33<sup>1</sup>). Another result was that other enemies of Israel (the Amorites) did not dare attack Israel. The word was out. God was in the midst of Israel, and the man that He had appointed as judge had God's ear (Prov. 16:7<sup>2</sup>). The remainder of Samuel's life was spent in diligently pursuing the welfare of the people (Esther 10:3<sup>3</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> **Hebrews 11:32-33**, And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, . . .

<sup>2</sup> **Prov. 16:7**, When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.

<sup>3</sup> **Esther 10:3**, In the third year of his reign, he made a feast unto all his princes and his servants; the power of Persia and Media, the nobles and princes of the provinces, being before him.

# A KING

## 1 Samuel 8:1-22

1, And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel.

2, Now the name of his firstborn was Joel; and the name of his second, Abiah: they were judges in Beersheba.

3, And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment.

4, Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah,

5, And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.

6, But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD.

7, And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

8, According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee.

9, Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.

10, And Samuel told all the words of the LORD unto the people that asked of him a king.

11, And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots.

12, And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots.

13, And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers.

14, And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants.

15, And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants.

16, And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work.

17, He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants.

18, And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the LORD will not hear you in that day.

19, Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us;

20, That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.

21, And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears of the LORD.

22, And the LORD said to Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man unto his city.

**T**his chapter is the record of Israel pressing Samuel to name someone as king of Israel. Though the Lord had promised that He would raise up a king to rule the people in his time and according to His schedule (Deut. 17:14-15<sup>1</sup>), the children had taken it upon themselves to

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<sup>1</sup> Deut. 17:14-15, When thou art come unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say,

execute the promise of God. If God has promised something, He *will* perform it. It is not for the child of God to execute or accomplish the promise of God. It is the epitome of audacity to take upon one's self the achievement of God's promise.

If God has promised, it is the believer's duty to believe and wait upon the Lord. The believer as well as the unbeliever will be used in the accomplishment of what God has promised, but neither will be aware of it (Eccles. 3:11<sup>1</sup>). But the people wanted a king *immediately* and would not take "no" for an answer. They meant to put feet to their prayers. They, I am sure, felt they had the backing of the Lord based on their perversion of the words in Deuteronomy. The fact that the Lord said He would raise up a king to rule the people was subverted when "in His time" was conveniently lifted from the context to fit their desire. This is the heart's tool of those who despise the sovereignty of God (John 6:37; 2 Pet. 3:9<sup>2</sup>).

To demand a king of *their* choosing and according to *their* time schedule was a denial of the only true King (Ps. 89:18; Isa. 33:22<sup>3</sup>). Mark this well. To seek to accomplish God's purpose according to your schedule is to deny who He is. It is to presume sovereignty as your attribute and not His.

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I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me; Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother.

<sup>1</sup> Eccles. 3:11, He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.

<sup>2</sup> John 6:37, All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. 2 Pet. 3:9, The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

<sup>3</sup> Ps. 89:18, O LORD God of hosts, who is a strong LORD like unto thee? or to thy faithfulness round about thee? Isa. 33:22, For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; he will save us.

It is an affront to the God of Glory (v. 7). When God gave the people His choice of king, it would be David, and it would be to prefigure the son of David, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the King of kings. This vehement effort to persuade Samuel was a mockery to God.

This story begins with the declaration that Samuel was old (v. 5). This does not refer to chronology. Samuel was probably not yet 60 years old. They formed their words in this way for two reasons.

First, it was the perception of the elders (v. 5a). This was more of a convenient perception than a true one. It fit their plan that Samuel was no longer able to judge Israel. The fact that he had appointed his two sons was evidence enough to the elders that he was no longer a viable judge considering what they really wanted. Note that they still made their petition to Samuel though they opened the conversation with “you're old.”

The second reason might well be that Samuel appeared older than he was. He has *spent* himself in the service of the Lord. Samuel was judge during the time of the capture and release of the ark, and his time included the horrible declension of the priesthood. He had to be bearer of the news of the sure death of Eli's sons who were sons of Belial and was now witness to his own sons not walking in the way of the Lord. Considering all these things, it would certainly tend to put hoary hairs on his weary head. Our Lord dealt with much of the same hateful religion and the weakness of men, and though He was a relatively young man, it is evidenced that He appeared much older. Being a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief did not give our Lord's face a youthful glow (John 8:56-58<sup>1</sup>).

The use of Samuel's appearance was but a ploy in the

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<sup>1</sup> **John 8:56-58**, Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

elder's effort to get him to appoint a king. Another ploy was to approach Samuel about the ways of His sons (vv. 2-3, 5). It is not below the contempt of religion to use the preacher's kids to convince the preacher of his inadequacy. Verses 2-3 ought rather to remind us all that grace is not *hereditary*. God has children but no grandchildren. The desire of the believer is that his children would experience the grace of God just as he has, but he knows that the faith God has given does not go from one generation to the next. It is a wonderful thing when your parents or your children become your brothers and sisters, but grace cannot be conveyed from one believer to another—it remains the willful act of the sovereign God. Whatever the statement, the people were not really concerned with Samuel's age or the infidelity of his sons. They wanted a king to judge them, and their words were merely a ploy to justify their idolatry.

Make no mistake, what they desired was idolatry as is revealed by the Lord as he answered Samuel's plea. Samuel was displeased and employed the only thing that is truly available to the child of God. He came to the throne of grace (Heb. 4:14-16). Our Lord showed him that what the people desired was idolatry and it would come to a bad end because their desire for a king was really a desire to get rid of God (vv. 7-8). The Lord told Samuel that though they vented their anger toward him, they were against the Lord of Glory. Our Lord said to his disciples, "Marvel not that the world hate you, it hated me first" (1 John 3:13).

In verse 9 the Lord tells Samuel to give them their desire but warn them by solemnly protesting their erroneous desire and telling them what they could surely expect. The Lord warns before He judges that the people may not have reason to complain when the judgment comes. God gave them the desire of their hearts and sent leanness to their souls. Providence would reveal that this seeming concession from God was merely setting the stage to bring in the king that He

would ordain, a man after His own heart (Hosea 13:10-11<sup>1</sup>).

After Samuel told the people what would surely come (vv. 10-16), the true nature of the people and their ploy came to light. They were going to have a king even if it meant taxation and oppression and even if it meant the Lord would not hear their plea when their world came tumbling down. “We will have a king over us” (v. 19).

I am reminded of the obstinacy of religious men as they defend the concept of the king they desire in direct denial of God's word. The king they want, the sovereign they desire is one of their own choosing—the royal despot—“King Free Will.” He is who they have enthroned in their heart and is the master of their destiny (2 Thess. 2:3-4<sup>2</sup>). He is no king, but a temporary figment of sovereignty that will fall as every false king does. He will shuck his diadem, bend his knee and declare that Jesus, the Christ, is Lord and king to the glory of the father. Men assign power to King Free Will, but he is but a puny effort of the depraved mind to make men a god like unto themselves (Rom. 1:21-23<sup>3</sup>).

The true nature of their ploy is seen in verse 20. We want to fit in. We not only want to be *in* the world, we want to be *of* the world. We want men to see our leader as we see theirs. The invisible God does not fit with the concept of conformity. Give us a king to judge us. The judge of all the earth will not do. We want to join our future relatives and

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<sup>1</sup> **Hosea 13:10-11**, I will be thy king: where is any other that may save thee in all thy cities? and thy judges of whom thou saidst, Give me a king and princes? I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath.

<sup>2</sup> **2 Thess. 2:3-4**, Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

<sup>3</sup> **Rom. 1:21-23**, Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

cry, “We have no king but Caesar” (John 19:15). The kicker of their argument for a king of their own choosing reveals their willful ignorance of truth. For a man to deny the word of God, he must suspend any allegiance to truth. These people had, in the last chapter, begged Samuel to intercede for them that the Lord would fight for them against their enemies, and He did (7:8-10<sup>1</sup>).

They willfully forgot that the Lord had thundered, and the Philistines had fled. What a blasphemous affront the last of verse 20 is against the Lord of Hosts. *Their* judge would “go out before us and fight our battles.” They have willfully put from their mind the manifold deliverances of God. Our Lord, over and over in Scripture, admonished His people, “Thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee” (Deut. 15:15; 24:18). With such continual reminders, only willful ignorance can explain this desire for anyone other than God to fight for them.

Having heard the warning and still refusing to obey, they set themselves up for a great fall. Remember this; the design and intent of religion is to govern and control. The desire of the religionist is to be controlled. The design and intent of God is to, by the work of Christ, set His people free to live and walk in His good pleasure toward them. The believer wants to be governed by the true King, one of God's choosing, because the promise of God is that under that benevolent reign, there is nothing but good, rest, freedom, and gracious representation without taxation. “If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (John 8:36).

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<sup>1</sup> 7:8-10, And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the LORD our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines. And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt offering wholly unto the LORD: and Samuel cried unto the LORD for Israel; and the LORD heard him. And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel.

“Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee” (Ps. 73:23-25).

# THE PEOPLE'S KING

## 1 Samuel 9:1-27

1, Now there was a man of Benjamin, whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite, a mighty man of power.

2, And he had a son, whose name was Saul, a choice young man, and a goodly: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people.

3, And the asses of Kish Saul's father were lost. And Kish said to Saul his son, Take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses.

4, And he passed through mount Ephraim, and passed through the land of Shalisha, but they found them not: then they passed through the land of Shalim, and there they were not: and he passed through the land of the Benjamites, but they found them not.

5, And when they were come to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant that was with him, Come, and let us return; lest my father leave caring for the asses, and take thought for us.

6, And he said unto him, Behold now, there is in this city a man of God, and he is an honourable man; all that he saith cometh surely to pass: now let us go thither; peradventure he can shew us our way that we should go.

7, Then said Saul to his servant, But, behold, if we go, what shall we bring the man? for the bread is spent in our vessels, and there is not a present to bring to the man of God: what have we?

8, And the servant answered Saul again, and said, Behold, I have here at hand the fourth part of a shekel of silver: that will I give to the man of God, to tell us our way.

9, (Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to enquire of God, thus he spake, Come, and let us go to the seer: for he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer.)

10, Then said Saul to his servant, Well said; come, let us go. So they went unto the city where the man of God was.

11, And as they went up the hill to the city, they found young maidens going out to draw water, and said unto them, Is the seer here?

12, And they answered them, and said, He is; behold, he is before you: make haste now, for he came to day to the city; for there is a sacrifice of the people to day in the high place:

13, As soon as ye be come into the city, ye shall straightway find him, before he go up to the high place to eat: for the people will not eat until he come, because he doth bless the sacrifice; and afterwards they eat that be bidden. Now therefore get you up; for about this time ye shall find him.

14, And they went up into the city: and when they were come into the city, behold, Samuel came out against them, for to go up to the high place.

15, Now the LORD had told Samuel in his ear a day before Saul came, saying,

16, To morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel, that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me.

17, And when Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said unto him, Behold the man whom I spake to thee of! this same shall reign over my people.

18, Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is.

19, And Samuel answered Saul, and said, I am the seer: go up before me unto the high place; for ye shall eat with me to day, and to morrow I will let thee go, and will tell

thee all that is in thine heart.

20, And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them; for they are found. And on whom is all the desire of Israel? Is it not on thee, and on all thy father's house?

21, And Saul answered and said, Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou so to me?

22, And Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them into the parlour, and made them sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden, which were about thirty persons.

23, And Samuel said unto the cook, Bring the portion which I gave thee, of which I said unto thee, Set it by thee.

24, And the cook took up the shoulder, and that which was upon it, and set it before Saul. And Samuel said, Behold that which is left! set it before thee, and eat: for unto this time hath it been kept for thee since I said, I have invited the people. So Saul did eat with Samuel that day.

25, And when they were come down from the high place into the city, Samuel communed with Saul upon the top of the house.

26, And they arose early: and it came to pass about the spring of the day, that Samuel called Saul to the top of the house, saying, Up, that I may send thee away. And Saul arose, and they went out both of them, he and Samuel, abroad.

27, And as they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us, (and he passed on,) but stand thou still a while, that I may shew thee the word of God.

**T**his is the record of God giving the people the desire of their heart, a king to rule over them, judge them, and fight for them. Though they surely felt that they had overruled Samuel and thus outflanked God, they were merely

the instruments of divine providence. Though the events of this day seemed to fall out precisely to their liking, there was a dark pall hanging over the entire enterprise.

The chapter begins with a description of Saul, his heritage, his tribe, and his willingness to take up the task that his father had given. The description of him is glowing (v. 1-2). As far as humanity goes, Saul fits the bill. He is a political prize. He was a choice man, meaning he was a young man, full of vitality and vigor. He was a goodly young man, meaning he was handsome, had a pleasing personality, was well liked, likable, pleasant, and agreeable. Not only those things, but he was also tall, standing head and shoulders above every other man in Israel. In the vernacular of our day, he would be “all that and a bag of chips.” When he is presented to the people as their king, there will be no possibility of questions being raised as to his *immanent* qualifications. What the people do not know is that it is God who has chosen Saul in his anger to destroy him in his wrath.

There is another list of qualifications that Saul possesses, and they were listed by Samuel in our previous study on 1 Samuel 8:10-18<sup>1</sup>. These are the qualifications, the traits, and the equipment given Saul to bring him to his appointed end. To the people, Saul is the “cat’s pajamas,” but in the hands of

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Samuel 8:10-18, And Samuel told all the words of the LORD unto the people that asked of him a king. And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots. And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots. And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants. And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the LORD will not hear you in that day.

Him who made Saul, he is but a small cog that will turn in the machine of sovereign purpose, eventuating in God setting *His* King on Zion's holy hill. This is very important to remember as we look at the people's king. Saul's very existence, all his exploits, his character, and conduct are but tools in the hands of the Master to be employed by Him who "worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." As we observe the life of Saul, we must observe it under the frowning eye of providence and see every deed in contrast to the king who will picture Christ as King of kings. This is not merely history. It is a study in contrast between what religious people look for in a king and the king anointed for the good of the people. It boils down to the revelation that the flesh desires a king for one reason while the spirit desires the king for something else altogether.

With this in mind, we see that the events that take place all rest in the wise counsel of God (vv. 15-16). Unbeknownst to Saul and the people, there is an appointment that Saul must keep. He must meet Samuel and be named as captain and king. He has no idea of what awaits him; his future will begin with glory and end in shame and sorrow. How will he arrive at the place where Samuel will meet him and crown him?

The first thing to note is that God often uses the strangest of servants to do his will. Saul, the future king, will arrive at his appointment because God has put "escape" in the minds of a bunch of "asses." Their escape creates the first step in Saul's map that will bring him to where he needs to be. The course that he follows looking for these lost animals, if plotted out on a map, is his *road to coronation*. He was sent to find what was lost and the record stands forever that he could not find them, and not only that, but he also gave up the hunt (vv. 4-5). Immediately we see the king the people would desire is just the opposite of the King that God would anoint. Saul is unable to find that which is lost. In fact, they were found by someone else.

Is this not a picture of the false Christ? He cannot find the lost ones, and his only hope is that others will do his bidding. Will not the lost ones he cannot find be won by others? He seems to be a king whose only hands and feet are the hands and feet of others, a king who cannot do what he would. This is *not* the King whom God has anointed. *The* Christ always finds His lost ones and will not give up until He does (Luke 15:1-4<sup>1</sup>). He neither sleeps nor slumbers, and He will not fail nor be discouraged.

Those who reject God will have a king, but he will be unable to perform his duties. The gathering of the lost ones will be up to the people. They will have to invent means to bring them in, and the number of their inventions will be enormous. Their success will be notable, but the endeavors will be accomplished in the flesh and therefore will not please God. Our God said of His Christ, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 17:5). Unlike the pleasing looks and affable personality of the people's king, the true king has "no comeliness that men should desire him" (Isa. 53:2), but He is *God's* elect and will execute His purpose with absolute success. All that the father has given Him will come to Him, and He will not lose one.

Having failed in his effort to find the lost, Saul listened to the counsel of his companions. They gave him good counsel. They told him that he ought to go to Samuel, because the man of God always told the truth, and as a seer, everything he prophesied came to pass. The counsel was good, but the fact that Saul took it as a last resort for his failings indicates that he does not have the force of character to be a good king. The King of kings takes counsel from no

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<sup>1</sup> **Luke 15:1-4**, Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. And he spake this parable unto them, saying, What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

one. He is the counselor, and being God, what He purposes comes to pass (Job 4:18-19<sup>1</sup>). However, the counsel that Saul took lead him into the culmination of the plan.

Our Lord had put it in the hearts of the people to have a day of sacrifice and have Samuel to bless the sacrifice. Providence had brought this occasion to a place where the announcement of the new king would have maximum exposure.

When Samuel met Saul and told him that he was to be the future king of Israel, Saul was humbled. We will find in days to come that this kind of self-deprecating humility comes easy with Saul and is in fact a tactic used by him in defense of his wrong actions. The King of kings described himself as meek and lowly in heart, and His humility was a result of God taking on the form of human flesh and being obedient even to the death of the cross.

The Lord has pointed Saul out to Samuel and the process has begun. Saul will be made king, the glad desire of the people, and his reign will precisely follow the form to which God has shaped him. Little by little he will prove what is revealed when the people rebel against God and get themselves a king of their own design. Saul is a shadowy example of what a king ought not be and conversely an opposite of the King of kings.

“Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I

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<sup>1</sup> Job 4:18-19, Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly: How much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth?

set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him" (Ps. 2:1-12).

# ANOINTED

## 1 Samuel 10:1-27

1, Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the LORD hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?

2, When thou art departed from me to day, then thou shalt find two men by Rachel's sepulchre in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah; and they will say unto thee, The asses which thou wentest to seek are found: and, lo, thy father hath left the care of the asses, and sorroweth for you, saying, What shall I do for my son?

3, Then shalt thou go on forward from thence, and thou shalt come to the plain of Tabor, and there shall meet thee three men going up to God to Bethel, one carrying three kids, and another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine:

4, And they will salute thee, and give thee two loaves of bread; which thou shalt receive of their hands.

5, After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where is the garrison of the Philistines: and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy:

6, And the Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man.

7, And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee, that thou do as occasion serve thee; for God is with thee.

8, And thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal; and, behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings: seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come to thee, and shew thee what thou shalt do.

9, And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart: and all those signs came to pass that day.

10, And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them.

11, And it came to pass, when all that knew him beforetime saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets, then the people said one to another, What is this that is come unto the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?

12, And one of the same place answered and said, But who is their father? Therefore it became a proverb, Is Saul also among the prophets?

13, And when he had made an end of prophesying, he came to the high place.

14, And Saul's uncle said unto him and to his servant, Whither went ye? And he said, To seek the asses: and when we saw that they were no where, we came to Samuel.

15, And Saul's uncle said, Tell me, I pray thee, what Samuel said unto you.

16, And Saul said unto his uncle, He told us plainly that the asses were found. But of the matter of the kingdom, whereof Samuel spake, he told him not.

17, And Samuel called the people together unto the LORD to Mizpeh;

18, And said unto the children of Israel, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all kingdoms, and of them that oppressed you:

19, And ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto him, Nay, but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes, and by your thousands.

20, And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was taken.

21, When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was taken, and Saul the son of Kish was taken: and when they sought him, he could not be found.

22, Therefore they enquired of the LORD further, if the man should yet come thither. And the LORD answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff.

23, And they ran and fetched him thence: and when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward.

24, And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the LORD hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king.

25, Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house.

26, And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched.

27, But the children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace.

**A**s we saw in the last study, the only way to truly view the reign of Saul was in the sense that it was a result of the people rejecting God. Though we will see instances in this reign that can be applied to the reign of Christ, those typifications are generally to be viewed as antitypes, or *opposing* types of Christ. Let us not forget, Saul is king because the Lord gave the people the desire of their heart because of their rebellion against Him. The primary meaning is plain. The reign of Saul will be an example of what the people get when the people obtain a king of their own making.

Certain concepts such as anointing, the Spirit of God, and changing a man and his heart seem to picture the true

salvation of the soul. In the case of Saul, however, we will see that the acts and principles in reference to Saul do not ascend to the spiritual but remain in the carnal realm. Such anointing and changing have to do with *ordination* rather than *regeneration* (Rom. 13:1-2<sup>1</sup>). All that happened to Saul was ordained to change him from a farmer to a governor.

The story before us is self-explanatory. The events are recorded and readily understood as an accurate report of how Saul was presented to the people and accepted as their king. Several things here teach us that the underlying design is to reveal that the people's choice will end in woe and ultimately bring about the king that God has chosen to truly picture the Lord Jesus Christ.

The first thing to consider is the anointing (v. 1). Immediately this word brings us to thoughts of Christ. The title "the Christ" means "the Anointed" (Compare Ps. 2:2 and Acts 4:26<sup>2</sup>). The anointing of Saul did point to Christ in one aspect. There were three offices that were announced with anointing; prophet, priest and king. If Saul was to be king, he must be anointed. Christ's anointing was spiritual, and He received the *Spirit* without measure. Saul's anointing, though pointing to the spiritual, was not spiritual but natural, and the skills he received from God were in the realm of politics and not godliness. However, if he is to be king, he must be anointed. But this necessity of being anointed for the office is about as far as the typification goes. The kiss from Samuel was little more than a symbol of well-wishing. Though this seems to be the common way of anointing, there are important differences to be acknowledged.

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<sup>1</sup> **Rom. 13:1-2**, Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

<sup>2</sup> **Ps. 2:2**, The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, **Acts 4:26**, The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.

The first clue that this anointing was significantly different than common anointings is the amount of oil used. A general anointing used a markedly greater amount of oil (Ps. 133:2<sup>1</sup>). Two kings in Israel's history were anointed with a mere *vial* of oil, and both had very short reigns. Those two kings were Saul and Jehu. David and Solomon were anointed with *horns* of oil or copious amounts, and they had very long and prosperous reigns. With the use of a vial in the anointing, it is as if the Lord was revealing that the king the people accepted, by rejecting God, was destined for a short run. Some Jewish historians suggest this oil was balsam oil and not the oil prescribed in Exodus 30. Whether true or not is not truly known, but it does show that the historians viewed Saul's anointing as being of diminished quality in comparison to others. Nonetheless, this anointing did give sanction to Saul as king. The Lord had ordained him to be king but not a king that would be helpful to the people—not a king like the King of kings.

The second thing to consider is the mention of “the Spirit of the Lord” (v. 6, 10). This has often been a point of contention among theologians. Some say this reveals that Saul was a spiritual man, or a regenerated man. Others look at the Word of God and find that Saul was not a spiritual man at all. It is for sure that in this *instant*, the Spirit of the Lord upon Saul enabled him to prophesy. However, prophetic utterances have proceeded from others who were merely servants with temporary gifts. Baalim, as well as his beast, were employed as prophets, but no one would consider them to be spiritual creatures.

It is probable that Saul did not prophesy in any capacity other than the utterance of praise. The instruments mentioned (v. 5; tabret, pipe, and harp) were generally used in worship and praise—not prophecy. The reason the Spirit

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<sup>1</sup> Ps. 133:2, It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments.

of the Lord was upon Saul was to point him out as the one that God had ordained to be king. It was a means to bring him recognition prior to his inauguration and coronation. The Spirit of the Lord upon him was bestowed for political recognition (v. 11-12). The Spirit of the Lord may also have been recognition of advancement in rank (Numbers 11:16-17).

The third thing is that the Spirit of the Lord would turn Saul “into another man” (v. 6). Again, there are some who would assert that this spoke of spiritual conversion because in verse 9 the word declares that God “gave him another heart.” Surely such language suggests a spiritual conversion. Words are important and one word in this phrase is particularly important. The Lord does not say that Saul would be made a *new* man or given a *new* heart. The word “another” does not suggest a new creature but a lateral change. Saul would be given another heart and be turned to another man indeed. He will cease being a *farmer* seeking lost asses to become a *governor* seeking a kingdom. He will be turned to a man with royal responsibilities. His heart will be the heart of a ruler, not a follower.

What we will find is that this other man with another heart will be more interested in promoting himself than promoting the welfare of the people who have desired him as king. He will be turned from a poor man into a rich man, and his heart will be turned to prefer the court rather than the countryside. The gifts that he will be given will not be those of a new creature created in righteousness and holiness, but those of another man turned to the things of politics and administration. Remember the basis for Saul's reign. Samuel made a point to remind the people,

“Ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations”  
(v. 19).

Saul's coronation went off without a hitch (v. 23-24). The people were happy. Samuel again reminded the people of who they were choosing and wrote it down (v. 25).

The touched hearts in verse 26 are simply hearts to follow Saul, hearts of temporal change, reformation rather than regeneration, lateral rather than vertical, carnal, and not spiritual.



# UNCONDITIONAL MERCY

## 1 Samuel 11:1-15

1, Then Nahash the Ammonite came up, and encamped against Jabeshgilead: and all the men of Jabesh said unto Nahash, Make a covenant with us, and we will serve thee.

2, And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, On this condition will I make a covenant with you, that I may thrust out all your right eyes, and lay it for a reproach upon all Israel.

3, And the elders of Jabesh said unto him, Give us seven days' respite, that we may send messengers unto all the coasts of Israel: and then, if there be no man to save us, we will come out to thee.

4, Then came the messengers to Gibeah of Saul, and told the tidings in the ears of the people: and all the people lifted up their voices, and wept.

5, And, behold, Saul came after the herd out of the field; and Saul said, What aileth the people that they weep? And they told him the tidings of the men of Jabesh.

6, And the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard those tidings, and his anger was kindled greatly.

7, And he took a yoke of oxen, and hewed them in pieces, and sent them throughout all the coasts of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying, Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And the fear of the LORD fell on the people, and they came out with one consent.

8, And when he numbered them in Bezek, the children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand.

9, And they said unto the messengers that came, Thus shall ye say unto the men of Jabeshgilead, To morrow, by that time the sun be hot, ye shall have help. And the

messengers came and shewed it to the men of Jabesh; and they were glad.

10, Therefore the men of Jabesh said, To morrow we will come out unto you, and ye shall do with us all that seemeth good unto you.

11, And it was so on the morrow, that Saul put the people in three companies; and they came into the midst of the host in the morning watch, and slew the Ammonites until the heat of the day: and it came to pass, that they which remained were scattered, so that two of them were not left together.

12, And the people said unto Samuel, Who is he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? bring the men, that we may put them to death.

13, And Saul said, There shall not a man be put to death this day: for to day the LORD hath wrought salvation in Israel.

14, Then said Samuel to the people, Come, and let us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there.

15, And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal; and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace offerings before the LORD; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

**T**his chapter contains the record of Saul's true inauguration as king in Israel. Evidently, because his office was not a pressing need with the people, he had gone back to the business of husbandman to the herds of his father. This was often the general practice of judges in Israel. If they were not immediately needed, they took up the business of agriculture or animal husbandry.

In this account Saul lives up to the desire of the people. They wanted a king to fight for them, and Saul proves himself up to the task. As a result of this victory, Saul wins the hearts of the people. With one mind, they declare him their king and by unanimous vote gladly inaugurate him as the savior of the people and the king in whom they delight.

This is a true historical account, and on a military and governmental level, Saul's actions are praiseworthy. He acquits himself as a king, a captain, and a qualified leader. On this level, one cannot find fault with the things that Saul did.

Remember, the obvious story is not the underlying, invisible, and providential story. This king, adored and praised by the people, was given to the people by the God whom they had rejected. In fact he was given to them because they had rejected God. They had been called to be a separate people, and the laws and ceremonies given them were to distinguish them from the people surrounding them. They were commanded not to take up the practices of those pagan nations around them, but just as they incorporated the worship of false gods, they also sought to mimic the government of the surrounding nations. They had no desire to be separate but rather to fit in and were willing to compromise on many levels to be like those who hated God. As we have seen, this was all part of the providential purpose of God to ultimately reveal the king who was despised and rejected of men, rather than the “tall, dark and handsome” fellow that the people chose for themselves.

In the last study, I purposely did not deal with the last verse of chapter 10 because, to some degree, the incidents in chapter 11 have to do with the people disavowing those who despised Saul in 10:27.

“But the children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace” (10:27)

Then verse 12 of this study's text reads,

“And the people said unto Samuel, Who is he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? bring the men, that we may put them to death” (11:12).

The “before and after” of an incident always interests me.

Certainly, it was about time for the people to disown the children of Belial, but I find it interesting that there is no indication of such an inclination before Saul was made king, or while he was following the herd, or even during the years that Samuel judged Israel.

The fact is that the people were quite in tune with the children of Belial when they were acting in the office of priest, robbing God of His glory, and stealing from the people what was rightly designated by God for the people. Nor does one find such sentiment in the mouths of the people when Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of Eli but truly the sons of Belial, were transporting the ark to the battle accompanied by the shouts of the people. For sure, this attitude was not present as the people cowered before their enemy, their language betraying that they were not sure of victory and looking in the wrong place for it (v. 3). They did not even say we will apply to the king that they had declared would fight for them (8:20<sup>1</sup>). What is sure is that they sought for *a man* to do it and not *the God* who had delivered them from every enemy.

Yet here we see the people, after Saul had given them victory, suddenly desiring the death of the children of Belial. This seems to reveal two things. First, their vehemence against the sons of Belial revealed their faith was based on *proof*. Secondly, considering the way in which they were drafted into this battle, they proved themselves wise to throw all their support behind the king (v. 7). Whether the children of Belial were of the same ilk as the sons of Belial (the priesthood) is not clearly defined. But I find their attitude and language in 10:27 concerning Saul to mirror the attitude and language of the priests and religionists that lead up to our Lord's crucifixion, and when He called them sons of the devil (John 8:44<sup>2</sup>). They rejected his ability to save, despised him,

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<sup>1</sup> 8:20, That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.

<sup>2</sup> John 8:44, Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye

and refused to honor and praise him. There is not a dime's worth of difference between their attitude and that of Hophni and Phinehas in their pollutions of the sacrifice.

This record in the life of the children of God teaches us several lessons.

The first is simple and beautiful. God will not forsake His people whom He foreknew. Ultimately this applies to the spiritually elect but is typified for us in the gracious government of the affairs of the naturally elect. No matter how far afield the Israelites wander, no matter how they reject God, no matter how often they forget God, no matter how often they appeal to the power of the flesh, our Lord graciously delivers them. How often may we recall in our sad existence, when "prone to wander," we stray from our Lord? Yet He graciously delivers and watches over us even as our eyes are turned to the flesh.

Secondly, we see the utterly sad end of every compromise. The Ammonites were descendants of Lot and had been recipients of the kindness of God (Deut. 2:19<sup>1</sup>). But this kindness did not change their attitude toward those who had been given the Promised Land. This assault (v. 11) takes place on the other side of the Jordan where 2 1/2 tribes chose to remain for the wealth of the world. Rather than apply to God in prayer, the elders of Jabesh seek to surrender by forming a covenant whereby they would become tributaries of the Ammonites. They compromised their standing as the people of God to seek a false peace with the enemy, even to the point of bribing them with filthy lucre (v. 1).

The response of the Ammonites is typical of the enemy when they have advantage over you. The conditions for

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will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

<sup>1</sup> Deut. 2:19, And when thou comest nigh over against the children of Ammon, distress them not, nor meddle with them: for I will not give thee of the land of the children of Ammon any possession; because I have given it unto the children of Lot for a possession.

agreement to the covenant were brutal and exposes the real interest of the enemy. Destroying the right eye is an important military tactic. The right eye was considered the prominent eye, the eye of true sight. Battle helmets often had a metal or leather flap that covered the left eye revealing only the right eye—the one that could see things as they truly were. Our Lord may have used this analogy when He spoke of the single eye as full of light and the double eye as evil and full of darkness (Matt. 6:22-23<sup>1</sup>). The Ammonites, by requiring this condition, were saying they would not just accept tribute but would require that they *never* fight against them. They required unconditional surrender and absolute obedience. They wanted no tribute; they wanted all they had. This is the heart of the enemy and the ultimate cost of compromise designed to appease.

Thirdly, we see again the phrase “the Spirit of God” (v. 6). Again, we must be careful *not* to apply this to spiritual life. Saul was the reward to the people for rejecting God. Some earlier translations read, “the spirit of fortitude from the Lord fell on Saul.” In his anger against what the Ammonites had done, the Lord fortified him and encouraged him to fight against the Ammonites.

Fourthly we see prophecy fulfilled. The warning of God delivered by Samuel has come to pass (compare 8:11 with v. 7).

“And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots” (8:11).

“And he took a yoke of oxen, and hewed them in

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. 6:22-23, The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

pieces, and sent them throughout all the coasts of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying, Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And the fear of the LORD fell on the people, and they came out with one consent” (v. 7).

Fifthly, we see a marked difference in why the people serve the king of their choice as opposed to the King that God will ultimately raise up—His servant, His elect, “in whom His soul delighteth” (Isa. 42:1). Saul gains the single-mindedness of the people with the threat of death (v. 7). Notice his threats are not only of royal authority but also involve the authority of the divine. He not only uses his name but also invokes the name of Samuel. The easiest way to make sure that religious people follow is to threaten them with death and back it up with the wrath of God. The king that the people want controls them by holding the wrath of God over their head like a whetted sword. Merely the thought of the guillotine brought about immediate resolve to serve the French revolution. The King of kings does not employ such slavish means to move and motivate His people. He does not say, “Serve me or God will kill you.” He says, be free, be at liberty and serve me with gladness, I have won the battle, your warfare has ended, and when the war raises its head in your bosom, bring the battle to the one who has never lost a fight.” The believer does not serve the Lord out of slavish fear but out of pure reverence and with a heart of thanksgiving and praise. The consent of the people to Saul was made out of duress, not out of love.

Finally, I do not doubt that Saul was truly thankful to God for the victory, and he did well when he caused the people to thank God and give glory to the Lord for it. However, we will later see this humility of Saul will often prove a tactic rather than from a true heart of meekness. But for now, the rejoicing seems genuinely real, as well it should be. The Lord has graciously delivered these fearful

compromisers as He has done again and again.

The Lord is gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy, He hath not dealt with us after our sins nor rewarded us according to our iniquities—He knows our frame—He remembers that we are dust.

# THE PREACHER

## 1 Samuel 12:1-25

1, And Samuel said unto all Israel, Behold, I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said unto me, and have made a king over you.

2, And now, behold, the king walketh before you: and I am old and grayheaded; and, behold, my sons are with you: and I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day.

3, Behold, here I am: witness against me before the LORD, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you.

4, And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hand.

5, And he said unto them, The LORD is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that ye have not found ought in my hand. And they answered, He is witness.

6, And Samuel said unto the people, It is the LORD that advanced Moses and Aaron, and that brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt.

7, Now therefore stand still, that I may reason with you before the LORD of all the righteous acts of the LORD, which he did to you and to your fathers.

8, When Jacob was come into Egypt, and your fathers cried unto the LORD, then the LORD sent Moses and Aaron, which brought forth your fathers out of Egypt, and made them dwell in this place.

9, And when they forgat the LORD their God, he sold them into the hand of Sisera, captain of the host of Hazor, and into the hand of the Philistines, and into the

hand of the king of Moab, and they fought against them.

10, And they cried unto the LORD, and said, We have sinned, because we have forsaken the LORD, and have served Baalim and Ashtaroth: but now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, and we will serve thee.

11, And the LORD sent Jerubbaal, and Bedan, and Jephthah, and Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side, and ye dwelled safe.

12, And when ye saw that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you, ye said unto me, Nay; but a king shall reign over us: when the LORD your God was your king.

13, Now therefore behold the king whom ye have chosen, and whom ye have desired! and, behold, the LORD hath set a king over you.

14, If ye will fear the LORD, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall both ye and also the king that reigneth over you continue following the LORD your God:

15, But if ye will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall the hand of the LORD be against you, as it was against your fathers.

16, Now therefore stand and see this great thing, which the LORD will do before your eyes.

17, Is it not wheat harvest to day? I will call unto the LORD, and he shall send thunder and rain; that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness is great, which ye have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking you a king.

18, So Samuel called unto the LORD; and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day: and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel.

19, And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto the LORD thy God, that we die not: for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king.

20, And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not: ye have done all this wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your

heart;

21, And turn ye not aside: for then should ye go after vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver; for they are vain.

22, For the LORD will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people.

23, Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way:

24, Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you.

25, But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king.

**I**n this chapter, Samuel takes the pulpit to teach the people. In doing so, he portrays a picture of what it is to be a gospel preacher and the design and intent of his message. This is clearly seen in verses 23-25.

Now, the pattern for the preacher is the perfect preacher, the Lord Jesus Christ, whose ministry was summed up in the concept of intercession. What the preacher does whether in preaching, teaching or in prayer, he is not to do it for himself but for the glory of God and for the benefit of the people. He knows that his time is limited, but the message is not. He knows that what he has for the people is what he has been given, and what he is given was received through the preaching of the gospel. He can preach the truth and show the way because someone was sent of God to preach the truth to him and show *him* the way. He has no new scheme, plot, or plan that will appeal to the flesh. He has a story to tell, and it is a rehearsal of the old, old story. Though he admonishes, warns, rebukes, and reproves the people, he does not do so based on his own agenda. He stands as one who continually reminds the people of the great things that God has done (vv. 13, 24). He does not employ the law but points the people to

the great mercy and grace that God has shown them, so that their response and obedience will be born of love and gratitude—not of fear.

Every Old Testament type is a shadow and therefore is not a full revelation of the substance. According to the position of the light, a shadow may be short or long—revealing more or less detail of its substance. So, as this is a picture of preaching the gospel, it lacks certain things. The gospel is preached to faith and not sight. The gospel preacher seeks no display of the power of God but that which is accomplished in the invisible realm of the Spirit. In this passage, Samuel prays for God to display His power in thunder and rain that could destroy the harvest. We must remember that all this takes place under the Old Covenant and therefore the blessings and the cursings were conditional upon the obedience or disobedience of the people. Since our Lord obeyed God for the elect and they were viewed in Him, the believer has received all the blessings of God. The New Covenant is conditioned on obedience but only that obedience rendered by our substitute and representative, the Lord Jesus Christ. So, when we see these commandments to obey and hear warnings of wrath for lack of obedience, we are always to seek obedience while looking to Christ, believing, and being assured that in Christ we have fully obeyed and therefore no blessing is withheld from the elect (Eph. 1:3<sup>1</sup>).

So, what we have here is a shadow, a shape, if you will, of the preacher of the gospel. There are several things here that describe the preacher of the gospel.

First, the preacher of the gospel, the man whom God has sent, must be and is a free man. He must be free from suspicion as to the reason he preaches and the intent of his preaching. Though, Samuel received support of the people through free-will offerings to assure that he was fed, housed,

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<sup>1</sup> Eph. 1:3, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

and provided for, he did not *demand* support. Support was generated by the good will of the people for him and the Word he spoke to them. Though he is accountable to the people to declare only the truth, he is first accountable to God for their souls and must operate by God's command, to whom is his true allegiance. His accountability to God is singular, to preach the truth as it is in Christ, regardless of circumstance. Though the text does not address this subject particularly, Samuel makes it clear that the preacher is not to do anything that would hinder this freedom.

Samuel's words in the first 4 verses are not words of self-recognition or self-righteousness, but they are preparatory in nature. They are spoken to call to record that, in the execution of his office, he has never defrauded the people. He calls them to account of this truth that he might freely speak to them without their being able to call anything he says into question. In reading these words, we may be reminded of Paul's words in Acts 20:20-27,

. . . "I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house, Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God."

Paul proved himself free of their blood because he had faithfully run the course given him, he had executed the ministry which he had received of the Lord—to testify the gospel of the grace of God (1 Cor. 9:16-18<sup>1</sup>). The preacher of the gospel cannot be beholding to men. Many years ago, when I began to preach, Brother Henry Mahan gave me some sound advice. He told me that if a door was opened to preach, step through it, and preach. It might cost friendships, it might cost everything, but the preacher is never to allow the influence of anyone to prevent him from preaching. I have treasured that advice in the thirty some years I have preached. If I am invited, I go, unless the Holy Spirit forbids me by making it impossible to do so. Every preacher is to take the mantle of Paul as when the Lord, who separated him from his mother's womb, was pleased to reveal Christ in him, he immediately conferred not with flesh and blood (Gal. 1:15-16<sup>2</sup>). I treasure my friends and would never seek to hurt them, but their feelings must never enter the equation in the matter of my temporary assignment. “Necessity is laid upon me, yea woe unto me if I preach not the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:16).

Secondly, the preacher's message is a rehearsal (re-hears-all) of what God has done (vv. 6-10). Though the preacher will be honest about the people's sin, the message will always find its foundation in the great news that God always delivers His people, and the providential sorrows they have experienced will be revealed to have been a necessary aspect of their eventual return to their God. The basis of gospel

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. 9:16-18, For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me. What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.

<sup>2</sup> Gal. 1:15-16, But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.

preaching is to repetitively tell the people of the great grace of our God. This knowledge becomes the catalyst for every service, and the conviction for every wrong choice and error. Every sin of every believer must be seen as a sin against light and love, or the result will be self-righteousness rather than true repentance.

In the verses that follow, the preacher points out the people's sin in rejecting God for another king, admonishes them to obedience and warns *them* of the consequences of disobedience, even to the point of confession and repentance (taking sides with God against themselves—v. 19). These are all a revelation of an ungrateful heart toward the God who has continually delivered them. The display of God's power in the thunder and the rain threatening the harvest, their future, is but a shadow of the workings of the gospel. Scripture calls preachers “sons of thunder” (Mark 3:17), and “rain” is a description of the gospel throughout the Word of God. The result of the gospel upon the elect is to take from them anything they count on and turn their eyes to Christ alone.

Thirdly, the preacher of the gospel continually reminds the people that they belong to the Lord, and they are His people. Verses 20-21 are very telling. The wording makes it clear that their disobedience has not changed the relation that God has with *them*, but it has certainly changed their relationship with Him. When Samuel reminds them of their wickedness, he prefaces it with “fear not.” These two things do not seem to belong in the same phrase, but they do because if you are a child of God, your standing with God has nothing to do with your wickedness or your goodness—it has to do with God's grace. The legalists cringe at such a thought, but Samuel, by saying “turn not aside from following the Lord,” declares that they *are* following the Lord. This can only be comforting to one who is all too familiar with his own tendency to stray from the path.

To look to anyone other than the true King is vanity and

will not profit or deliver you. It will hinder and hold you back, but it will not change the Lord toward you (v. 22). “I am the Lord, I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed” (Mal. 3:6).

Fourthly, the preacher emulates Christ. The ministry of the gospel is not only teaching the good and right way, but also a ministry of intercession. The preacher prays for those whom God has entrusted to him (Luke 22:31-32; Eph. 1:16; 3:14-19; Phil. 1:3-4; Col. 1:3<sup>1</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> **Luke 22:31-32**, And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. **Eph. 1:16**, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; **3:14-19**, For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. **Phil. 1:3-4**, For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: **Col. 1:3**, We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,

# THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE

## 1 Samuel 13:1-23

1, Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel,

2, Saul chose him three thousand men of Israel; whereof two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in mount Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin: and the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent.

3, And Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba, and the Philistines heard of it. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, Let the Hebrews hear.

4, And all Israel heard say that Saul had smitten a garrison of the Philistines, and that Israel also was had in abomination with the Philistines. And the people were called together after Saul to Gilgal.

5, And the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the sea shore in multitude: and they came up, and pitched in Michmash, eastward from Bethaven.

6, When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait, (for the people were distressed,) then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits.

7, And some of the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he was yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.

8, And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed: but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him.

9, And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering.

10, And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made

an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him.

11, And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash;

12, Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the LORD: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering.

13, And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever.

14, But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee.

15, And Samuel arose, and gat him up from Gilgal unto Gibeah of Benjamin. And Saul numbered the people that were present with him, about six hundred men.

16, And Saul, and Jonathan his son, and the people that were present with them, abode in Gibeah of Benjamin: but the Philistines encamped in Michmash.

17, And the spoilers came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies: one company turned unto the way that leadeth to Ophrah, unto the land of Shual:

18, And another company turned the way to Bethhoron: and another company turned to the way of the border that looketh to the valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness.

19, Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel: for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears:

20, But all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock.

21, Yet they had a file for the mattocks, and for the coulters, and for the forks, and for the axes, and to sharpen the goads.

22, So it came to pass in the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan: but with Saul and with Jonathan his son was there found.

23, And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the passage of Michmash.

This chapter reveals the beginning of the end of the reign of the king that the people desired. The feelings of the people have changed since they whole-heartedly rejected God and sought to have another king fight for them (12:19<sup>1</sup>). Not only has the reign been doomed from the beginning, the kingdom is now in a place where the people are not confident in their king. We know that the Word of God will be fulfilled and are readily aware that, in the purpose of God, Saul is a goner. But here we also see that the providence of God has brought the people to disdain their choice. In the political realm, confidence in leadership is paramount. If a ruler loses it, his reign is fraught with failure and doomed to mediocrity. The way that providence operates in the dissolution of confidence is to set the people's heart to fear, and God does this by removing those things which they feel they ought to be able to count on (Read Is. 3).

Though it is not purely revealed in verse one because of the restrictions of language, this concept of mediocrity in the reign of Saul is set forth in the original language. In the original, the words of verse 1 imply that these first two years of the reign of Saul were as if a child were running the country

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<sup>1</sup> 12:19, And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto the LORD thy God, that we die not: for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king.

(Isa. 3:4<sup>1</sup>). These two years probably refer to the time span from when Saul became “another man”—a political man. Though no details are given, we see from the rest of the chapter that Saul's decisions and actions did not involve a great amount of thought, and certainly it is clear that in all he did, there was no consulting with or seeking the will of the Almighty. The adage “be careful what you ask for, you just might get it” holds true.

Verse 2 tells us much about this infantile despot. He sought to assault the Philistines with 3000 men. How strategic this was is not clearly known, but the fact that he sent all the other men to their tents indicates that he was under the misconception that God was with him. This reduction in number probably was his way of copying what Gideon had done when the Lord told him to reduce the army to a few men (Judg. 7:2-7<sup>2</sup>). Perhaps Saul thought that he would be like Gideon, make his name great, and viewed as a mighty warrior.

Two things were wrong with his thinking. First, Saul was

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<sup>1</sup> Isa. 3:4, And I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them.

<sup>2</sup> Judg. 7:2-7, And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me. Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand. And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go. So he brought down the people unto the water: and the LORD said unto Gideon, Every one that lapped of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink. And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. And the LORD said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the other people go every man unto his place.

not Gideon, a man who did what he did because God had directed him, and secondly, he did not himself seek the Lord as to the righteousness of such an endeavor. Though there is no record that he engaged the enemy, his son Jonathan did and slew them.

The result of this presumed victory made Saul toot his own horn. He, with the order of the trumpet to be sounded, was drawing attention to his military prowess. What he got however was not what he had presumed (vv. 3-7). Rather than the accolades afforded a hero returning from the battle, he incited the indignation of the Philistines and made the people to fear and run for their lives. With his unwise bravado, Saul had put the people in great jeopardy. When Samuel sought the Lord for the people, the Philistines were routed by the Lord with a great clap of thunder. Now, with the Lord unsought, the enemy is engaged, and the might of the king is seen as impotence as the indignant Philistines array themselves for battle to wreak vengeance on Israel. Mark this well; the believer is constantly in a state of war with the world, the Devil, and their religion. However, the believer is not to assume that he has power in himself. The demons of this world are cast out by much prayer and fasting, and in both things, there is no one sought but the Lord. The believer's mantra is, "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence" (Ex. 33:15).

There was another reason for the children's fear. They were unarmed to do battle. If weapons were available, they were few (vv. 19-22). It is to the benefit of a controlling country to remove the weapons of those they have defeated. When the Israelites had been in captivity to the Philistines, all the smiths, those who made and maintained arsenals of swords and spears, were removed from the defeated country. At this time, Israel was not under the rule of the Philistines, but the policy of "no smiths" remained. The weaponry of the Israelites consisted only of farm tools, and they trembled at the aspect of war. Though those who had held the children

of God in bondage no longer did so, they still held onto the notion that the Philistines still had rights of dominion over them.

This can be compared to the believer and the law. Though the law has no rights of dominion over the believer, he can still act as if it does. That mountain “might be touched” though the results are always fear and trembling. The children had given a power to the Philistines that they did not rightly possess. If you kowtow to the law because it once ruled your life, you are giving it power that it does not possess. Its rights of dominion were destroyed at the cross (Rom. 6:14<sup>1</sup>). Also, the lack of weaponry would not have been an issue if they trusted the Lord. But they have opted for another king, and when the rubber hit the road, they knew they were defenseless.

In verses 8-10, we again see the nature and character of this ersatz king Saul. His own courage reduced to jelly and the will of the people no longer behind him, he does what religion does best. He does something religious. This same action caused Uzziah to be turned into a leper. The king decides to do that which pertains to the priest. He is not interested in forgiveness of sin or thanking God for what He has done for him; he is trying to cover his tracks. He again tries to appear repentant by taking upon himself to do what he cannot do.

This is a clear reflection of the activity of deliverance based on human merit. The burnt offering offered by the *priest* was a declaration that God had accepted the substitute, and the peace offering was an offering of praise and thanksgiving for God's deliverance. *Saul's* actions picture works religion that looks to self rather than Christ. Saul had not sought the Lord, failed in his personal pursuits, and the offerings were a mockery to God because they were offered

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<sup>1</sup> **Rom. 6:14**, For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

by Saul to justify his actions. They were, in fact, Adam's fig leaves and his self-justifying accusations against the wife who God gave him.

When Samuel arrived and saw what Saul had done, Saul immediately began to justify his actions. In verses 11-12, Saul blames Samuel, the people's fear, and finally God for his actions. He even claimed that he had appeased God by *forcing* himself to *disobey* God. Self-justification knows no depths. He was caught in his pride and pretended it to be humility.

Samuel's rebuke of Saul was the fulfillment of the promise of God. This king, chosen of the people in their rebellion against God, was soon to be removed from the throne. God had a king for the people, a Shepard, a poet, a man after God's own heart. Though some time would pass before David was coronated, the fact remained that Saul was rejected as king. Saul was *done*, just as everyone who would exalt himself against God. God's king was waiting to be revealed, and when He was, the king chosen of the people would be finally removed.

The King of kings *has* come, and the people's chosen kings, impotent creatures all, are *done*. They may seem to reign for a bit, the people may yet give them homage, and they may seek religion to justify their behavior, but they are corpses walking as dead men to their graves. True hope is only in the King of God's own choosing. Of His kingdom there will be no end.



# KEEP THEM HUNGRY

## 1 Samuel 14:24-45

24, And the men of Israel were distressed that day: for Saul had adjured the people, saying, Cursed be the man that eateth any food until evening, that I may be avenged on mine enemies. So none of the people tasted any food.

25, And all they of the land came to a wood; and there was honey upon the ground.

26, And when the people were come into the wood, behold, the honey dropped; but no man put his hand to his mouth: for the people feared the oath.

27, But Jonathan heard not when his father charged the people with the oath: wherefore he put forth the end of the rod that was in his hand, and dipped it in an honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth; and his eyes were enlightened.

28, Then answered one of the people, and said, Thy father straitly charged the people with an oath, saying, Cursed be the man that eateth any food this day. And the people were faint.

29, Then said Jonathan, My father hath troubled the land: see, I pray you, how mine eyes have been enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey.

30, How much more, if haply the people had eaten freely to day of the spoil of their enemies which they found? for had there not been now a much greater slaughter among the Philistines?

31, And they smote the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon: and the people were very faint.

32, And the people flew upon the spoil, and took sheep, and oxen, and calves, and slew them on the ground: and the people did eat them with the blood.

33, Then they told Saul, saying, Behold, the people sin against the LORD, in that they eat with the blood. And he said, Ye have transgressed: roll a great stone unto me

this day.

34, And Saul said, Disperse yourselves among the people, and say unto them, Bring me hither every man his ox, and every man his sheep, and slay them here, and eat; and sin not against the LORD in eating with the blood. And all the people brought every man his ox with him that night, and slew them there.

35, And Saul built an altar unto the LORD: the same was the first altar that he built unto the LORD.

36, ¶ And Saul said, Let us go down after the Philistines by night, and spoil them until the morning light, and let us not leave a man of them. And they said, Do whatsoever seemeth good unto thee. Then said the priest, Let us draw near hither unto God.

37, And Saul asked counsel of God, Shall I go down after the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into the hand of Israel? But he answered him not that day.

38, And Saul said, Draw ye near hither, all the chief of the people: and know and see wherein this sin hath been this day.

39, For, as the LORD liveth, which saveth Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die. But there was not a man among all the people that answered him.

40, Then said he unto all Israel, Be ye on one side, and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other side. And the people said unto Saul, Do what seemeth good unto thee.

41, Therefore Saul said unto the LORD God of Israel, Give a perfect lot. And Saul and Jonathan were taken: but the people escaped.

42, And Saul said, Cast lots between me and Jonathan my son. And Jonathan was taken.

43, Then Saul said to Jonathan, Tell me what thou hast done. And Jonathan told him, and said, I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that was in mine hand, and, lo, I must die.

44, And Saul answered, God do so and more also: for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan.

45, And the people said unto Saul, Shall Jonathan die,

who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid: as the LORD liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for he hath wrought with God this day. So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not.

**T**his passage does not lend itself well to much more than an exposition of the history and the facts. It is a story of bad commands, bad decisions, obedience and disobedience, arrogance, and honor. To assign to these words a central theme is nearly impossible. But this is God's report and there is something here for the child of God, something about his Savior and something about his life.

The important thing to remember is that this is the fulfillment of Samuel's prophecy concerning the consequence of the people's choice of a king. The life of Saul is a treatise on what a king should *not* be and should *not* do. In this negative capacity, he, by contrast, reveals what a king should be. This does not suggest that everything Saul did was a colossal error, but the tenor of his life is a reminder of what it is to reject God and worship the creature rather than the creator.

This part of the story begins after the day of warring wherein Jonathan became a great hero and proved himself a man who trusted God. While his father, the king sat in the shade, he and his armor bearer defeated the Philistines and sent them packing. When news of his heroics reached the people, they came out of the caves and from behind the rocks and joined the battle. Sometime during this trek to the battlefield, Saul sent an edict with a curse attached for disobedience. For some reason, certainly not a military one, Saul sent word to those that joined the fray that they could eat nothing until the enemy was defeated (v. 24). An army travels on its stomach, and because the people obeyed Saul, they were very weak as the day approached its end (v. 28c).

In verses 24-26, it is easy to see that what Saul did

pictures the religious who have rejected God for a king of their own choosing. Saul *forced* this fast upon the people. There could be no rationale for starving an army, so why this commandment? The reason is quite simple. To survive, false religion must come up with a way to perpetuate itself. The people were not coming to Saul, they were not seeking their king, and they had begun to look to another. They were coming out of the rocks because there was news of a savior, a mighty warrior who, by himself, had put the Philistines on the run. The king who was reposing under the tree must act quickly and decisively, or he will lose the allegiance of the people. He institutes this fast with the curse attached to control the people. Ultimately this means their next meal will be by his good graces. In a flash, by setting forth a law, he turns the people's future to depend on him. They follow; they obey, not out of love for their king but out of fear of loss (v. 26). If the king you have is the one you desired instead of God, you have given him rightful rule over you, and he will make sure that you believe that your life is in his hands.

Even when the honey and the honeycomb of the word of God is right before you, religion will tell you when you can eat and keep the army near starvation so it can be controlled, lest you begin to feel that what is freely given can be freely enjoyed. The gospel does not tell you not to eat, nor does it tell you, "If you eat, you'll be punished." The gospel sets the table with a feast of fat things—wine on the lees and well refined—and declares "Come and Dine" (Isa. 55:1<sup>1</sup>). To restrict these warriors from food is the same as religion regulating people's lives—it will always end in empty stomachs and weary bodies, waiting for royal permission to eat.

Though the king's command was unjust and unreasonable, it was nonetheless the word of the king. Such

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<sup>1</sup> Isa. 55:1, Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

authority belongs to the king and unquestioned obedience is absolutely required. We may look at the actions and words of Jonathan and, being good ole American rebels, feel that what he did was warranted. His logic was sound, and he ate because he was hungry and had not heard this law (v 27). But ignorance of the law is not an excuse and logical argument can never be applied to undo a royal command. Jonathan acted as if he was a free agent, but he was under the rule of Saul. Jonathan's actions in open disobedience against the king may have been a galvanizing influence for the people to rebel against God in eating the meat raw, with the blood. Because they were near starvation and weak is enough reason for them to act in such rebellion but seeing the son of the king act as he did certainly did not serve to inhibit their doing. On a purely human level, the command of Saul brought the people to devour the flesh of beasts with the blood—which signifies life, and not having been properly killed and bled.

Saul's response was the right one. He made the people to slaughter the beasts properly. Whether this stone was the beginning of the altar or merely a butcher block is not known for sure. What is sure is that as with most of what Saul did, it never came to fruition—he was a good starter but never finished much (vv. 18-19<sup>1</sup>; 35-36).

Saul sought sanction from the Lord to go on and finish the Philistines. When the Lord did not answer him, he reasoned that there must be sin in the camp (v. 38). It is obvious that Saul already knew that Jonathan had eaten some honey during the time of prohibition (v. 39). This is guile wrapped in hyperbole. Saul's plan is to turn the eyes of the people from Jonathan, the one who had delivered them, and

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<sup>1</sup> vv. 18-19, And Saul said unto Ahiah, Bring hither the ark of God. For the ark of God was at that time with the children of Israel. And it came to pass, while Saul talked unto the priest, that the noise that was in the host of the Philistines went on and increased: and Saul said unto the priest, Withdraw thine hand.

remind them that he was king. He would prove it by killing his own son. Whether Saul realized it or not (though I think he did) the response of the people said a lot. With a show of *silence*, they revealed that they preferred Jonathan over their king. To keep up the ruse Saul says, “Let's let the Lord decide” whether the sin lies with me and Jonathan or with the people. (v. 40).

Saul's words in verse 41 reveals his arrogance. He as much as charges God with not always giving a perfect lot. Religion says, “It isn't fair.” (Ezek. 18:29; 33:17; 33:20<sup>1</sup>). God gave a perfect lot and revealed the people were innocent of disobeying the oath of Saul. Then the lot was cast between Saul and Jonathan. Jonathan came up guilty because he was. Verse 43 reveals that Jonathan really didn't believe what he did was worthy of death. But the law is the law, and death is the only answer (v. 44). There is no indication that Saul was unhappy about the outcome. Why? This was always his intention (v. 39)!

Remember what God had said about Saul and his reign. It would not benefit but would hurt the people. Now providence deals another blow. God has rejected Saul as king, the people have confessed that theirs was a horrible choice, and now the people reject their king (v. 45).

If we see this in light of the believer's attitude toward the one who has saved them, delivered them, and defeated their enemies, they reject the king that had ruled over them—sin and death had reigned. The prince of the power of the air had reigned and they all sought to turn eyes from the Savior. Now, the rubber hits the road and the people with one accord, completely and absolutely, turn their backs to their

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<sup>1</sup> Ezek. 18:29, Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal? 33:17, Yet the children of thy people say, The way of the Lord is not equal: but as for them, their way is not equal. 33:20, Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. O ye house of Israel, I will judge you every one after his ways.

former religion. The believer does not rescue Christ, but he stands for the defense of the gospel against all comers.



# THE REAL SAUL

## 1 Samuel 15:1-35

1, Samuel also said unto Saul, The LORD sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel: now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the LORD.

2, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt.

3, Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.

4, And Saul gathered the people together, and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand men of Judah.

5, And Saul came to a city of Amalek, and laid wait in the valley.

6, And Saul said unto the Kenites, Go, depart, get you down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them: for ye shewed kindness to all the children of Israel, when they came up out of Egypt. So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites.

7, And Saul smote the Amalekites from Havilah until thou comest to Shur, that is over against Egypt.

8, And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword.

9, But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.

10, Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying,

11, It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night.

12, And when Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning, it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel, and, behold, he set him up a place, and is gone about, and passed on, and gone down to Gilgal.

13, And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the LORD: I have performed the commandment of the LORD.

14, And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?

15, And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.

16, Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the LORD hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on.

17, And Samuel said, When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel?

18, And the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed.

19, Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD?

20, And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites.

21, But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal.

22, And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight

in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

23, For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

24, And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice.

25, Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD.

26, And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD hath rejected thee from being king over Israel.

27, And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle, and it rent.

28, And Samuel said unto him, The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou.

29, And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent.

30, Then he said, I have sinned: yet honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD thy God.

31, So Samuel turned again after Saul; and Saul worshipped the LORD.

32, Then said Samuel, Bring ye hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites. And Agag came unto him delicately. And Agag said, Surely the bitterness of death is past.

33, And Samuel said, As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal.

34, Then Samuel went to Ramah; and Saul went up to

his house to Gibeah of Saul.

35, And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death: nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul: and the LORD repented that he had made Saul king over Israel.

**T**his chapter contains the death knell to the reign of Saul. His reign is not physically ended, but it is sentenced to death, and it will be but a little while until the sentence is carried out. The true character of Saul is brought to open display, and his actions in the face of adversity reveal that he has no character at all. It has been said that struggle and suffering reveal character, and this is a sure example of it. The gist of this story is that it was his lack of character that brought about Saul's dilemma, and his dilemma revealed that he lacked character.

The word of the Lord came to Saul through the prophet Samuel, and the word was clear. Saul was to avenge Israel against the Amalekites. The words of Samuel in vv. 1-3 are meant to carry the greatest gravity to Saul. He is assured that this is God's word, the very God who anointed him as king. The employment of these words will determine that Saul did not honor the God who commanded him, and therefore, did not hold the God who anointed him in high esteem. Saul's disobedience was not only to the command of God but also a barometer of what he thought of his own anointing. His actions proved that he felt that he was king and sovereign, and God was, at best, a secondary player in the entire episode. The command was to search, destroy, take no prisoners, and kill everything that had breath among the Amalekites. There were to be no surgical attacks, no concern for collateral damage. All enemies, man, woman, child, and infant were to be destroyed along with everything they owned. No spoils of war were to be taken. This command from God was to eventuate in the removal of any evidence the Amalekites ever existed upon the earth, and the command could not have

been misunderstood.

The facts are clear. Saul blatantly disobeyed the Lord's command (vv. 7-9). The wording of verse 9 is interesting. The Holy Spirit records that "Saul *and* the people" spared Agag, the king of the Amalekites, along with the *best* of the flocks and herds, while destroying everything else. It may be that the Holy Spirit is merely recording an agreement between king Saul and the people, as if a vote was taken. Perhaps the words indicate a more sinister agreement along the lines of mutual collusion to disobey God as if their sheer number might somehow disallow the command. It seems to me, by what takes place later, that this was probably a ploy of Saul to reduce or remove (in his own mind) *his* obvious guilt, or by involving the people, to spread the guilt around. When confronted with his guilt, he immediately blamed the people (v. 15).

In verses 11 and 35 it is recorded that the Lord "repented" that he made Saul king. What does this "repented" mean? It does *not* mean the same as when repentance is attributed to man. The context declares such in verse 29. When these words speak of God repenting, it simply means that He will deal with Saul in a manner that He has not dealt with him before. It is not a change of mind but a change of dispensation or action. God's gifts and calling are *without* repentance. God's words to Samuel meant that God was putting Saul out of business, and the end was not far away. The news devastated Samuel, much of the reason being that it would be Samuel who would have to deliver the bad news (w. 10-11). When Samuel went out to meet Saul, verse 12 reveals that Saul had already set up a place, probably a monument to his victory.

Verse 13 begins this revelation of the character of Saul, and it is likewise a revelation of false religion in its attempt to circumvent the command of God in relation to destruction of the enemy.

Immediately revealed is Saul's uses religion to cover his

lie. “Blessed be thou of the LORD.” This employment of hyperbolic rhetoric often accompanies the denial of guilt. Those who use “praise the Lord” as a punctuation mark to end their sentences are suspect. Saul's religious words did not cover the fact that he was obviously lying (v. 14). This is analogous to the claim of religion that Christ paid the sin debt of all men (completely destroyed the enemy), but at the judgment, the sinful sheep begin to bleat, and the one for whom Christ died is cast into hell. If every one of the enemies of the elect were not fully destroyed by Christ, then His claim to have saved His people is a lie (Jer. 50:20<sup>1</sup>)! Saul is a false king and savior because the enemy is not destroyed at all. False religion is glad to destroy the vile and the refuse and to cast out the demons of drunkenness and adultery, but they will hold fast to what they think they can offer God for sacrifice—their own merit, their own righteousness, and their own self-denial.

Next revealed of Saul's character is his employment of “the blame game” (v. 15). As Adam blamed his wife for his own actions (Gen. 3:12<sup>2</sup>), Saul blames the people for his. “*They* [the people] have brought them [the sheep] from the Amalekites: for the *people* spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.” They, the people, saved the good stuff for Jesus—save that which was condemned. This disobedience is at its heart, ingratitude (vv. 16-19).

What kind of God will accept what he has condemned? — the kind of God that will accept disobedience as if it were obedience (vv. 20-21). There is nothing in or about man, as born in this world, that is acceptable to God. The old man must die. Nothing about him is worthy of anything but

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<sup>1</sup> Jer. 50:20, In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. 3:12, And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

death. He has nothing to offer that God will accept. He has nothing to offer of his doings. God has condemned it as utter and complete disobedience and rebellion (vv. 22-23).

Saul's false repentance, and all false repentance, seeks absolution from men (vv. 24-25), but only God can pardon. Only God can forgive. False repentance is about getting caught with your hand in the cookie jar. True repentance is granted by God and it is not about fear of wrath but the thanksgiving wrought in the heart by the goodness of God.

Saul was rejected. He will soon be removed from office. Someone better is coming (vv. 26-28).

God will not repent of his requirement. The enemies of the elect must be destroyed—every one of them without exception. If one enemy or sin remains, salvation does not exist. All religious excuse, hyperbole, promise, and repentance is just manifold expression of disobedience.

The servant of God takes no prisoners (vv. 32-35). Obedience is better than sacrifice.



# JESSE'S SON

## 1 Samuel 16:1-13

1, And the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons.

2, And Samuel said, How can I go? if Saul hear it, he will kill me. And the LORD said, Take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the LORD.

3, And call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will shew thee what thou shalt do: and thou shalt anoint unto me him whom I name unto thee.

4, And Samuel did that which the LORD spake, and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, Comest thou peaceably?

5, And he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice unto the LORD: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice.

6, And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the LORD'S anointed is before him.

7, But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

8, Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this.

9, Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this.

10, Again, Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, The LORD hath

not chosen these.

11, And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither.

12, And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he.

13, Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

**A**s we have seen in previous studies, the desire of the people for a king and to be as other nations, proved a horrid choice. To have an earthly king of their choice was a wholesale rejection of God as their king. God had promised to raise up a king after His own heart, but they, like most of religion, believed they had something to do with the fulfillment of God's promise. They decided to put feet to their prayers, and consequently, God gave them their desire and sent leanness to their souls.

They had their king. Saul was tall, dark, and handsome and was rejected by God and finally even rejected by the people. They wanted a king to be like everybody else, but God had chosen this nation to make them like nobody else. God has a king for them, and that king will serve a singular purpose—establishing a royal line for the coming Messiah, King Jesus. The promise began in the garden with the slain beasts, was declared in the promise of the seed of woman, continued in the promise of a redeemer through Abraham, to the promised priest typified by Aaron, and finally here, in the son of Jesse. The prophet and the priest is the king.

In a true sense this is a culmination of the types and pictures of the promised Messiah. This is God's king, and his

name will be tied to the name of Christ from henceforth (Isa.11:1; Jer. 23:5-6; Luke 1:31-33; 2:10-11, Mic. 5:2; Rev. 5:5; 22:16<sup>1</sup>). When Paul defined the gospel of Christ under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he alluded to this king (Rom. 1:1-4<sup>2</sup>).

So, in this chapter begins the fullest typical representation of Christ and His work, of his church and His people. The record begins with God rebuking Samuel because Samuel continues to mourn for the king that God has rejected (v. 1). When God reveals the true king to you, there may be a period of mourning for what *seems* to have been *previously*. I remember that for many years I grieved over those years I spent in useless religion, but that grief has got to go. There was nothing there but the rejection of truth and

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<sup>1</sup> **Isa.11:1**, And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. **Jer. 23:5-6**, Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. **Luke 1:31-33**, And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the LORD God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. **2:10-11**, And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. **Mic. 5:2**, But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. **Rev. 5:5**; And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. **22:16**, I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

<sup>2</sup> **Rom. 1:1-4**, Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

nothing worthy of consideration. God has shown of the true king, and you will not see him aright until the old king is utterly rejected. Rolf Barnard used to say, "If I'm going to show you the true God, I'm going to have to kill the god you worship now" (v. 1). God had provided *them* a king, now He will provide *himself* a king. Their king was an abysmal failure. God's king will be a glorious success!

Because Samuel feared Saul more than he feared God, the Lord winked at his frailty and provided a means whereby Saul would not be suspicious of Samuel going out to anoint another king. The ruse was to call the sons of Jesse to a sacrifice to the Lord, and while they come to appear before Samuel, the Lord would show Samuel who the king of His choosing was (vv. 2-5).

Verse 7 reveals an intrinsic problem with man. He simply does not see as God sees. His thoughts are not God's thoughts, neither are his ways God's ways (Isa. 55:8<sup>1</sup>). Man lives by *sight* unless God gives him faith to see the *invisible*. The sons of Jesses who were paraded before Samuel were very comely, strong, and their appearance was winning. Samuel reacted to Jesse's sons just as the people had reacted to Saul. These all were comely, but they were not God's choice. Man looks on the outward appearance; God looks on the heart (v. 7).

It was said of our Lord that He was a root out of dry ground, and there was no comeliness about Him that men should desire him. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief (Isa. 53:2-3<sup>2</sup>). Yet he was God's King on Zion's holy hill. Men rejected him and esteemed Him not, but he was *God's King*. Likewise, the choice that God has made from

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<sup>1</sup> Isa. 55:8, For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. 53:2-3, For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

among humanity is not what natural man would assume is reasonable and good (1 Cor. 1:26-30<sup>1</sup>). There are no winners among God's elect. By human standards they are all losers. but they are whom Christ has made to be kings and priests unto God (Rev. 1:6; 5:10).

God has a King, and he is not among the first seven sons of Jesse. There is another, the eighth son (v. 11). Those who put stock in numerology say the number 8 means a new beginning. Whether numerology is a valid thing or not, this is a new beginning. It is the beginning of the revelation of the never-ending reign of Christ. There is yet another son of Jesse.

He is a shepherd (v. 11; John 10:11, 14; Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 5:4, 2:25; Zech. 13:7<sup>2</sup>).

Though there is no beauty in Him to the natural eye, when God reveals His King to his people, they are captivated by His beauty. He is “ruddy.” This means “red” and may refer to his hair, but more, it refers to his humanity. “Adam,” literally means “red dirt man,” and the last Adam, the one who sits on David's throne, is the last “red dirt man,” the wondrous mystery who is fully God and fully man—God

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. 1:26-30, For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

<sup>2</sup> John 10:11, I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. 14, I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. Heb. 13:20, Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, 1 Pet. 5:4, And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. 2:25, For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls. Zech. 13:7, Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.

manifest in the flesh! He is the fairest and the chiefest among 10,000, the lily of the valley, the rose of Sharon, the bright and morning star—He is altogether lovely!

The Lord said to Samuel, arise; anoint him, for “this is he” (v. 12). One cannot get much clearer than that. This is the word of the Lord concerning Christ (Matt. 3:17; 17:5<sup>1</sup>). This is the heart's cry of the elect (John 1:45; Song of Sol. 5:10-16<sup>2</sup>). “This is He!”

Not only did Samuel anoint David with oil, but God anointed David with His Spirit (v. 13). This anointing pictures the work of regeneration by the spirit, through the word. It is the identification of every child of God. They are called Christians and are those who believe that Christ is the anointed of God. As my dear friend Joe Terrell said, “They are not Jesusians or Lordians, but Christians”).

But more, it pictures the Lord Jesus who had the Spirit *without measure*, the Lord's anointed, the Christ. *This* is God's King. (Read Ps. 2).

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<sup>1</sup> **Matt. 3:17**, And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. **17:5**, While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

<sup>2</sup> **John 1:45**, Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. **Song of Sol. 5:10-16**, My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand. His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy, and black as a raven. His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set. His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers: his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh. His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl: his belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires. His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold: his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars. His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.

# AN EVIL SPIRIT

## 1 Samuel 16:13-23

13, Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

14, But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him.

15, And Saul's servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit from God troubleth thee.

16, Let our lord now command thy servants, which are before thee, to seek out a man, who is a cunning player on an harp: and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well.

17, And Saul said unto his servants, Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring him to me.

18, Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, that is cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the LORD is with him.

19, Wherefore Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, and said, Send me David thy son, which is with the sheep.

20, And Jesse took an ass laden with bread, and a bottle of wine, and a kid, and sent them by David his son unto Saul.

21, And David came to Saul, and stood before him: and he loved him greatly; and he became his armourbearer.

22, And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favour in my sight.

23, And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with

his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

**I**n this passage, we have the first real encounter of the two kings in Israel. The one is a king, the people's choice, who has rejected the Lord and whose reign and person has been rejected of God (15:23<sup>1</sup>). The other is the king of the Lord's choosing, a man after God's own heart, freshly anointed to the throne that will one day be inhabited by the King of kings. According to the flesh, this King of all kings is the son of David and is also the Son of God. The rejected king Saul has no idea that who he has called to comfort him is the neighbor that has replaced him, and the king that will rule in his stead (15:28<sup>2</sup>). Here once again, the blessed providence of God rules the affairs of men and overrules the wicked deeds of men.

Many have found difficulty explaining the words of verse 14. The difficulty is that most view the work of the Spirit to be found singularly in the realm of the redeemed and regenerated soul. Men, especially religious men, have trouble attributing anything evil to the Spirit of God or the Spirit's operation upon men that does not eventuate in regeneration. Saul, as we have seen previously, has been made "another man," given "another heart" and given the spirit of prophecy (10:10<sup>3</sup>). All these things were the work of the Spirit of God upon a rejected man, a rebel who never changed except when caught in some evil deed. There is no indication that Saul was ever a regenerated man. These things were given to fit him

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<sup>1</sup> 15:23, For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

<sup>2</sup> 15:28, And Samuel said unto him, The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou.

<sup>3</sup> 10:10, And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them.

for political rule. The Spirit gave Balaam's ass utterance and it prophesied. The Spirit gave men slumber so that they would not hear the gospel. The Spirit of the Lord is God, the sovereign God, and He is the invisible mover and manipulator of all that is for the glory of the Savior. God is Spirit, and it is not the natural events that we see which control the tides, it is the Spirit moving upon the face of the deep, stirring the waters of history to fulfill the will of God.

Notice that the Spirit of the Lord is declared to have departed from Saul (v. 14). Again, this informs us that the Spirit's work is not always that of regeneration, because that work is eternal and never changes. This simply means that Saul is now without help in the execution of his duties as king. He is on his own (1 Sam. 28:6). The record states that once the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him (v. 15). This evil spirit is not capitalized (v. 14) because this does not speak of the Holy Spirit, but rather a specific frame of mind administered by God.

This evil spirit was the spirit of depression and anxiety. The marginal reading for the word "troubled" is "terrified." Saul was coming face to face with the failures that attended his reign, and his conscience had become a severe accuser to his mind. Shakespeare said, "Conscience makes cowards of us all." This is an evil spirit from the LORD, and He is the author and creator of it (Isa. 45:5-7; Amos 3:6<sup>1</sup>). This evil spirit from the LORD is designed to make those around the king, his advisers, and the king himself to seek relief from the discomfort.

The court advisor's response to his problem is an insight

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<sup>1</sup> Isa. 45:5-7, I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things. Amos 3:6, Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done it?

into natural thinking (vv. 15-16). The adage “music soothes the savage beast” is evidently timeless. It is not unusual to call for the soothing influence of music.

What *is* revealing here is what is *not* called for. These advisors do not tell their troubled sovereign to repent of the evil he has done so that God might relieve his terror. They do not call for Samuel to come and pray for the anxious king. They do not, themselves, cry to the Lord in supplication on behalf of their depressed despot. They apply to the wisdom of their flesh. How many troubled souls have been further ruined by the advice of those who think the pleasures of the flesh can remedy the screaming of the conscience. The sad thing is, because of the shallowness of the unredeemed soul, a little music may do the trick. “Eat, drink and be merry” may momentarily solve the problem, but that which soothes the flesh will never fully calm the disquieted spirit. However, for the troubled man, adrift on the roiling sea, any port in the storm will do. So, Saul agrees (v. 17).

The providence of God is a wonderful thing to behold (v. 18). Whether this man had David in mind all along or the Spirit of God suddenly filled his thoughts with Jesse's son is not revealed. The word “behold” suggests this servant’s thought was spontaneous. However, in all this, the Lord is setting forth the glories of Christ with what is on this man's mind. Notice well the qualifications listed by this man indicate that the reputation of this young shepherd, though not known in the higher echelons of society, is of some renown among the people. He is known, indeed, as a gifted musician but also known as a “mighty valiant man, and a man of war” (Exod. 15:2-3<sup>1</sup>). He is “prudent in matters [speech] (v. 18, Matt. 7:28-29; John 6:63<sup>2</sup>). He is “comely” (Song of

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<sup>1</sup> Exod. 15:2-3, The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him. The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 7:28-29; And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings,

Sol. 5:10, 16<sup>1</sup>). “The Lord is with him” (Isa.11:1-5; John 3:34<sup>2</sup>). With the utterance of such a glorious report, how could Saul resist (v. 19).

Jesse sends David to Saul, but he sends with him a gift of good will (v. 20). Some have stated that Jesse sent these gifts to Saul because he suspected that Saul might harm David, and the gifts were a sort of appeasement. Though that may be the case for him personally and may be the direction of his thoughts, there is no denying that what he did pictures the mercy of God toward troubled sinners in a troubled world. David was not sent with weapons of war but with tokens of kindness. Does this not picture the heavenly Father sending forth His Son into the world that the world might be saved? The Word declares that God “sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world” (John 3:17). Our Lord was sent on a mission of mercy for the elect, and He came bearing the gift of eternal life, the singular thing that soothes the heart of the ruined sinner.

Verse 21 declares that David came to Saul and stood before him. Here the true king stands before the rejected

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the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. **John 6:63**, It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

<sup>1</sup> **Song of Sol. 5:10**, My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand. **16**, His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup> **Isa.11:1-5**; And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. **John 3:34**, For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.

king. But the true king has not come to be ministered to but to minister. Our Lord came into this world, the very God walking among men, the rightful heir of David's throne, the King of kings, and He came not to be ministered to but to minister and give His life a ransom for many. Saul's immediate response was that "he loved [David] greatly" and made him "his armor bearer." He loved him! Why? He loved him because God would have it so. The heart of this rebel king was not under his own control. Though men may say they know their own heart, they do not. "The heart is deceitful . . . and desperately wicked: who can know it" (Jer. 17:9)? Only God knows the thoughts and intents of the heart. Saul loved David because God controlled his heart (Prov. 21:1<sup>1</sup>).

David *must* be in Saul's court. Here he will see the ways of politics and learn what must be avoided as well as what must be done. He must bear the armor of the king because on the horizon awaits a giant that must be slain. Likewise, our Lord must have served, though He was king. He must suffer and enter into His glory. He must be made of no reputation, though it was not robbery for Him to be equal with God, because on the horizon awaits a giant, the prince of the power of the air whose head must be crushed under the heel of the King of kings.

Unlike Saul who opted for sacrifice rather than obedience, David was obedient to the task before him (v. 23; compare Matt. 25:21<sup>2</sup>). Though our Lord was troubled in Gethsemane about the cup that was given Him, He was obedient even to the death of the cross and highly exalted because of it. In verse 23 we also see that though the music of David soothed Saul's trouble for a season, the word "when"

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<sup>1</sup> Prov. 21:1, The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 25:21, His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

reveals the condition was reoccurring and the music of David was only a temporary fix. It is by design that lost men may find temporary comfort from their trails by the pleasures of the flesh, but the soul of a lost man will never be satisfied, and the soul of the redeemed will be satisfied only with holiness. Troubles are the steady companion of men, and though there may be moments of relief, there is no cure save the blood of Christ.



# DAVID AND GOLIATH

## 1 Samuel 17:1-58

1, Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle, and were gathered together at Shochoh, which belongeth to Judah, and pitched between Shochoh and Azekah, in Ephesdammim.

2, And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and pitched by the valley of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines.

3, And the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side: and there was a valley between them.

4, And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span.

5, And he had an helmet of brass upon his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail; and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of brass.

6, And he had greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders.

7, And the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam; and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron: and one bearing a shield went before him.

8, And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them, Why are ye come out to set your battle in array? am not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me.

9, If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us.

10, And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together.

11, When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid.

12, Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehemjudah, whose name was Jesse; and he had eight sons: and the man went among men for an old man in the days of Saul.

13, And the three eldest sons of Jesse went and followed Saul to the battle: and the names of his three sons that went to the battle were Eliab the firstborn, and next unto him Abinadab, and the third Shammah.

14, And David was the youngest: and the three eldest followed Saul.

15, But David went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem.

16, And the Philistine drew near morning and evening, and presented himself forty days.

17, And Jesse said unto David his son, Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched corn, and these ten loaves, and run to the camp to thy brethren;

18, And carry these ten cheeses unto the captain of their thousand, and look how thy brethren fare, and take their pledge.

19, Now Saul, and they, and all the men of Israel, were in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.

20, And David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and took, and went, as Jesse had commanded him; and he came to the trench, as the host was going forth to the fight, and shouted for the battle.

21, For Israel and the Philistines had put the battle in array, army against army.

22, And David left his carriage in the hand of the keeper of the carriage, and ran into the army, and came and saluted his brethren.

23, And as he talked with them, behold, there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, out of the armies of the Philistines, and spake according to the same words: and David heard them.

24, And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid.

25, And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come up: and

it shall be, that the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel.

26, And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?

27, And the people answered him after this manner, saying, So shall it be done to the man that killeth him.

28, And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle.

29, And David said, What have I now done? Is there not a cause?

30, And he turned from him toward another, and spake after the same manner: and the people answered him again after the former manner.

31, And when the words were heard which David spake, they rehearsed them before Saul: and he sent for him.

32, And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.

33, And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.

34, And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock:

35, And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him.

36, Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and

this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God.

37, David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee.

38, And Saul armed David with his armour, and he put an helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail.

39, And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them. And David put them off him.

40, And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine.

41, And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield went before him.

42, And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance.

43, And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.

44, And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field.

45, Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.

46, This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.

47, And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD'S, and he will give you into our hands.

48, And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine.

49, And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth.

50, So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David.

51, Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled.

52, And the men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines, until thou come to the valley, and to the gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim, even unto Gath, and unto Ekron.

53, And the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines, and they spoiled their tents.

54, And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem; but he put his armour in his tent.

55, And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said unto Abner, the captain of the host, Abner, whose son is this youth? And Abner said, As thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell.

56, And the king said, Enquire thou whose son the stripling is.

57, And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand.

58, And Saul said to him, Whose son art thou, thou young man? And David answered, I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Bethlehemite.

It is apparent from verse 15 that Saul, at this time of the gathering of the Philistine army, had not been, for some time, in need of the services of David's harp to soothe his disconsolate temper. David is not involved with this preparation for war because he has returned to the field to shepherd his father's flock. It is not unusual for folks who are in trouble to seek the help of those they think are in touch with God, and as soon as the trouble is over, they stop calling. David went back to the flock because he was no longer desired in the presence of the king.

This fact also gives us some sense of the man who was “after God's own heart” (13:14; Acts 13:22<sup>1</sup>). Though, as far as political instruction goes, David would have benefited from hanging around even though his services were not needed. We find however that David, though the true king, exhibited the behavior of a man who understood the timetable of God. He would wait in the sheepcote until the appointed time of coronation. David's action also pictures the blessed Savior who, amid the warring factions of the earth and the onslaught of Satan, is found in the midst of His church, tending the flock. This is all part of the preparation of David to be the king he must be. While he cares for the sheep, the Philistines have heard of Saul's mental troubles and that Samuel had washed his hands of the king and decided that it would be a good time to exercise a little vengeance against Saul. The enemies of the people of God seek any advantage when they perceive vulnerability. But the child of God knows that no weapon formed against him shall

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<sup>1</sup> 13:14, But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee. Acts 13:22, And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.

prosper (Ps. 76:10<sup>1</sup>).

This is probably one of the most familiar stories in the Old Testament, and nothing can be added to the general knowledge and the beauty of the story itself. It stands as a definitive example of heroism, employing the actual concept of the hero who faces the enemy alone for the welfare and salvation of his people. One does not have to stretch their imagination to see that David is a type of our blessed Lord, who trod the wine press alone as one who is mighty to save. He faced the enemy alone, by himself, and bruised his head for the salvation and welfare of His people.

Goliath was a giant—a giant from Gath (v. 4). This bears some importance because it was this particular trait of some of the men of Gath that the Israelites used to declare their unbelief in the wilderness (Num. 13:32; Joshua 11:21-22<sup>2</sup>—Anakims remained in Gath—Goliath was of Gath). Goliath, with his bravado and mockery of Israel, pictures the enemy of the people of God. His enormity and his armor were a threat to a people who had rejected God for the king that now trembles in their presence. When Goliath called the people “the servants of Saul” (v. 8), he was speaking more truth than he realized. They were no longer bowed to the Lord (8:7<sup>3</sup>), and their king who had showed such valor in battle before, was now just a quivering mass of yellow Jell-O.

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<sup>1</sup> Ps. 76:10, Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.

<sup>2</sup> Num. 13:32, And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. Josh. 11:21-22, And at that time came Joshua, and cut off the Anakims from the mountains, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel: Joshua destroyed them utterly with their cities. There was none of the Anakims left in the land of the children of Israel: only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, there remained.

<sup>3</sup> 8:7, And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

They were servants of man and therefore not the servants of God (v. 11; Gal. 1:10<sup>1</sup>).

This verbal abuse from the mouth of Goliath went on for forty days (v. 16). “Forty days” in the Word of God always has to do with testing and trial, a period designed to *prove* something. In this case it proved the impotency of the people and their king. Saul, who had defeated the Philistines previously, refused to go out against Goliath. Jonathan, who with his armor bearer had slain twenty men, refused to take up Goliath's challenge. Abner, the captain of the host, cowered before the words of the Philistine giant. Men in their best state are just men. The believer knows that he is no match for Satan and seeks only that the Lord would rebuke him.

Here again we see the glorious providence of God. Consider that the Lord has anointed His true king, the man after his own heart, but has not yet publicly coronated him in the presence of the people. It is often the way of grace to bring a person to desire what he needs even though he does not even know what his need is. The Lord arranges events and employs men, even enemies, to do his bidding and bring his people to *ask* Him for what they, up to that point, didn't know they needed (Ezek. 36:37<sup>2</sup>). Now, the people have not asked the Lord for David, but this episode is one facet of the diamond of desire that the Lord is creating in his people. He began by openly rejecting their choice of Saul and bringing them to admit that they had made an awful choice. He then takes His Spirit from their king and gives him an evil spirit of depression and anxiety, which could only be remedied by the man whom God had chosen.

God first introduced David as a person of skill and artistry who could bring peace to a troubled soul. In this

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<sup>1</sup> Gal. 1:10, For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

<sup>2</sup> Ezek. 36:37, Thus saith the LORD God; I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them.

chapter we find our Lord bringing His people to a state of utter terror before a seemingly undefeatable enemy. Though they have not asked for and will not, they need a hero, a savior, to stand between them and the death that will surely ensue. God will provide them with what He has brought them to desperately need. This grand providence is revealed in the choice of David to take food to his brethren in battle (v. 17).

Jesse had eight sons. Three were with Saul in the army and five were at home. David was tending the sheep, being about his father's business. The only possible reason for David being chosen by his father for this task is that God is running this event. David must be the hero of the people—it is ordained, and Jesse's mind must be manipulated to put David in the place where he can fulfill his destiny. So, he is laden with the victuals needed by his brethren because there is a giant to be defeated, and not one in Israel's army will engage or is able to engage that enemy. For this moment of extreme crisis, there is but one man prepared to do the work. There is but one savior. There is but one that is capable. There is but one qualified, one who has slain bear and lion to protect the flock (vv. 33-35). Thus, our Lord Jesus came to save His people. He came with gifts and sustenance for His elect, but the true nature of His mission was to bruise the serpent's head (v. 49). Before the world was, He was the lamb slain. From the first moment of recorded spiritual history, He was called forth as the light and was pictured as the slain substitute for the trembling pair that hid in the bushes (Gen. 3:9<sup>1</sup>).

When David arrived on the field of engagement, he did not find an army befitting the army of the God of Israel. Though they were arrayed in armor and had taken up their place on the field, they were frozen in fear (vv. 23-24). David,

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<sup>1</sup> Gen. 3:9, And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?

the man who with God's help had slain the most feared beasts of the land, was astonished as those who supposedly served the omnipotent God stood shaking in their boots. His words in verse 26 are not in reply to the rich offer of the king to anyone who would fight Goliath (v. 25). David was not interested in fame and fortune, and he is not asking this question for information. His question is a *declaration* that there is not here an issue of quid pro quo, but the glory of God.

David sets forth three things as an argument for someone to come forward and engage this giant infidel (v. 26).

First, Goliath was making the chosen people a reproach (v. 26c). As they cowered before this man, they were showing they had no confidence in the God who was a man of war. They were reproached because they trembled in unbelief.

Second, Goliath was a pagan (v. 26d). He was not one of God's chosen. He was an uncircumcised Philistine! He had no part in and was not included in the covenant God made with Abraham.

Third, Goliath was mocking God's glory (v. 26e). The gods of the Philistines, Baal, Baal-Peor, Ashtaroth and the rest of their pantheon, were but stumps whittled with the skill of the artisan or formed in the forges of the smithy. This giant stump worshiper was defying the armies of the *living* God, the King of kings and the Lord of lords. David was amazed that the *armies of God* did not consider God, the very God who had delivered them time and time again. This is the case when those who profess to know God chose a king other than God and in doing so reject God. This is the case when the Spirit of God has forsaken the king in whom the people trust.

The response of David's oldest brother, the firstborn, reveals the jealousy of the firstborn when he finds out that the elder is to serve the younger (v. 28). He accuses David and does so from a heart of envy. He sees no value in the argument of David and tries to discount him as a mere

*spectator* in the scheme of things. As our Lord, “He came to his own, and His own received Him not” (John 1:11). The world cannot understand faith. Sometimes, even those who are of God can be in such a low estate as to question the motives of one who tells them the truth. But David, as our Lord, “when He was reviled, reviled not again” (1 Pet. 2:23). He simply asked, “What have I now done” (compare John 18:23<sup>1</sup>).

Then David confronts his brother with a question that gets to the heart of the matter. He declares, “Is there not a cause?” This is a question that addresses the very core of the reason for telling the truth and preaching the gospel in the face of a pagan, false king choosing, stump worshipping world—“Is there not a cause.” This will be my subject and the title of the next study.

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<sup>1</sup> **John 18:23**, Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?



# IS THERE NOT A CAUSE

## 1 Samuel 17:28-29

28, And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle.

29, And David said, What have I now done? Is there not a cause?

**T**hese words are David's answer to the jealous accusations of his brother in verse 28. This accusation leveled against David was due to David's response to the news of the blasphemy vented by Goliath against the God of Israel and his people (v. 26c). Eliab's cowardice, born of unbelief, was revealed by the words of David. Eliab had not taken up the sword to defy this giant pagan but instead sat cowering with the rest of the mighty captains of Israel. The conscience of Eliab was stung with the words of David and his response was in the manner that the conscience often reacts. Conscience, being a matter of sin and law, will always seek to justify self and generally do so by shifting blame or redirecting the accusation from self to someone else.

What David had said was merely stating the obvious, but since conscience make cowards of us all, Eliab heard the words as an accusation against *his* bravery. David had merely, even naively, spoken the truth. His interests were not convoluted, and they were not pointed to or about any individual in the armies of Israel. They were centrally, particularly, and precisely rooted in one single grand truth that is the heart and soul of every believer and ever preacher

who has, does and will reside on this planet. The issue is the glory of God and that in a particular manner. David was not speaking of God's glory in creation or providence. He was speaking of that which both creation and providence serve—the salvation and deliverance of His people.

This glory is especially seen in the bruising of Satan's head by the king, prophet, and priest that the Lord sent to save His people. Israel lies in fear because they have rejected God in the choice of their king, and the Lord has rejected their king because he has openly disobeyed God. Though the order of these events is divinely set in predetermined purpose and will go precisely according to plan, part of the instruction is that these things come to be because the king and the people refuse to call on the omnipotent God for help.

Despite their unbelief, God will yet save His people. He will do it by His anointed king. One man, void of worldly armor, a lowly shepherd will bruise the enemy's head as he sets himself between the people and the enemy. A single hero will win the day, but first he comes to his own and his own receive him not. They of his own house will turn against him and accuse him of all manner of evil. We will look at this great victory next week, but for now, we will consider David as the believer, the preacher who simply tells the truth and what he may expect, even from those who are closest to him.

If you are a believer, if God has given you faith to believe the gospel, you have a single, plain, and unencumbered message. Though, by revelation, your knowledge and understanding of God and the manner of His grace exceed anything that can be taught in the vaunted halls of theological academe, you have a single and plain message. The message is the *cause*, and the *cause* is “to God be the glory.” To every question the answer is Christ and Him Crucified. Every debate ends here; all theology meets the principle of reduction here. It is just as the old beggar who received Christ answered his many religious detractors in the simplest and most naive terms declaring, “I'm a poor sinner and nothing

at all, but Jesus Christ is my all and all.” To be so bold as to say that Christ is all of salvation, from beginning to end, from election to glorification, is to remove yourself from the equation of glory. It is to declare that you had nothing to do with it, no part in its planning, its execution, its accomplishment, or its consummation; that you didn't even know you were saved until God, by His Spirit through the preached gospel, revealed what Christ *had* done and *had* accomplished for you.

God deserves and will receive all the glory for salvation, and this is the *cause* of every believer. Such singular thought, aim and motive will not sit well with those who trust that salvation is up to them, or at least a cooperative effort between them and God. The believer is unflinching here because there is indeed a *cause* when the message is “to God be the glory,” and especially when the truth of it stings the conscience of those seeking to find another way to win the day, and especially when you stand alone between the religious pagan and those who profess to know God but refuse to give him glory.

The attack that will ensue will *not* be against the truth that God is to be glorified. Men don't really attack the truth, because they are unable to do so for risk of the validity of their own profession. Generally, they jump on the messenger, and like Eliab attacked David, they have specific weapons in their arsenal that are designed to make the believer question himself as to motive. The arrows in the attacker's quiver go to the heart of what every believer knows of his own estate. Satan's attack, his system of accusation has been millenniums in preparation. The buttons that he pushes, or employs his minions to push, have been researched to get maximum results and many mea culpas.

The attacks never come as accusations of illicit behavior, seeking false idols, or partaking in the world's perversions. Most believers are not guilty of such overt behaviors. The darts are pointed at a sure target. They are aimed at facts of

our being. They are accusations that find purchase in our hearts because we know that these things are within us and are the source of the continual struggles and plagues of our mind. One may accuse me of adultery, and I can answer “not guilty.” One may accuse me of pride, and all I can say is “guilty”.

These accusations come in many forms, sometimes subtle and sometimes not so. Someone once asked our friend Crowe, “Why doesn't your church join in with the rest of the churches?” A man once said to me at a funeral, “You folks down at Sequoyah don't want anything to do with the rest of the churches, do you?” Another said to me, “What makes your little group think it's so special?” Such things are subtle ways of accusing us of pride and always have a stinging affect because they appear to be reasonable. There is no answer that will satisfy because these are not *questions*; they are *accusations* that address something that tortures every believer—our damnable pride. To these accusations we can only say “is there not a cause.” The glory of God is at stake.

Eliab's words are full of accusation, and they reveal that he was well schooled by Eden's tempter.

First, Eliab accuses David of showing up where he is not wanted, “Why camest thou down hither?” (v. 28). David's very presence was a reminder that Eliab was a coward and had forgotten the glory of God. Eliab could not attack David's *words*, but he could get to David. What he was really saying was, “We don't want to be reminded of our impotency—why don't you just go away?”

Secondly, Eliab accused David of irresponsibility, “and with whom have you left those sheep” in your charge (v. 28). “It is not your place (if you were where you ought to be) to confront us with our unbelief.” The declaration of truth puts things in their proper place. When David said, “Who is this pagan that he should blaspheme God”, Eliab heard, “Why are you sitting on your haunches and doing nothing.” Believers neither give nor withhold assurance, but the

message they preach is so absolute that it immediately convinces the hearer as to where he stands in relationship to the truth. Sometimes it is a scary thing to realize that when you tell someone the truth, it immediately discovers where the hearer is—in or out. David declared that God must be glorified, but Eliab was immediately disclosed to have no interest in glorifying God. It is no wonder that Paul, as he considered the absolute success of the truth to save or to slay, declared “Who is sufficient for these things?” The believer naively tells the truth because it is the truth, because there is a cause. Doing so often brings out the worst in the enemy.

Thirdly, Eliab brings out the big gun. He accuses David of *pride* (v. 28). This always hits home. It is the big, ugly banshee that resides all too prominently in our bosom. There is no real answer to this accusation because if it is against us there is always an element of truth to it. David had not acted in pride when he stood for God's glory, but the generic truth is that David was a human being and therefore pride was always with him. We get some sense of that truth when we look at the first part of David's answer. He answered, as a man will. Though he was not guilty of pride in what he had said, he still, to some degree, immediately defended himself—“What have I now done?” (v. 29). David had done nothing amiss, but the word “now” suggests that this was not the first time he had been accused, or that if he had not spoken in pride at this time, he had perhaps detected it in his own heart prior to this. The only viable response is his second phrase, “Is there not a cause?” Or, “This isn't about me, it is about the glory of God.”

Fourthly, Eliab accuses David of an evil motive. He spoke of the naughtiness of David's heart (v. 28). That word “naughtiness” means “evil.” David was sent with groceries to feed his brethren. David spoke of God's glory. Eliab told David that his heart was evil. Those who know the truth and gladly give God all glory for their salvation and disdain any thought of exalting man, will sometime in their lives be

accused of evil motives—even be accused of preaching the Devil's doctrine. The subtle accusations we have already addressed suggest that we have an evil motive in our separation unto the gospel. If we refuse to join with the multitudes who deny and defy God, if the love of Christ constrains us to allow no quarter, if we cannot abide man claiming for himself that which belongs only to God, if we refuse to sit by while He whom we love is defamed, then we will be labeled as evil, sectarian, cultist, and our motives will be questioned. Is there not a *cause*?

Finally, the evil motive is set forth by Eliab as an ulterior motive. He accuses David of not truly being interested in God's glory, but that what David said was actually for his own glory (28e). These words “come down that thou mightest see the battle” suggests two possible things.

First, they could mean that David was just a spectator. He did not mean anything that he had said but rather said it to see what kind of rise he could get out of the folk. He was possibly being accused of just trying to start a fight so he could watch the melee. To this David answered, “Is there not a cause.”

Secondly, Eliab knew that David was a fierce warrior, having slain bear and lion. The more probable meaning of this last accusation ties in with Eliab's previous mention of pride. Eliab is accusing David of seeking to extend his own fame and win the hearts of the people by his bravado. David is not so motivated. He had simply declared the truth. God must be glorified and so he declared, “Is there not a cause”.

We live among the religious. We, with the truth, assault the very gates of the giant Satan. We are doing nothing more than bringing food to the brethren and seeking to say that God is to be glorified. When Satan hurls his darts and those of our own household accuse us of all manner of pride and evil, we must not defend ourselves even though we have done no wrong. Our words must ever be plain; our motive must be without guile; our motto and mantra plain and simple—“IS

THERE NOT A CAUSE?”



# DEATH BY POET

## 1 Samuel 17:30-58

30, And he turned from him toward another, and spake after the same manner: and the people answered him again after the former manner.

31, And when the words were heard which David spake, they rehearsed them before Saul: and he sent for him.

32, And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.

33, And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.

34, And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock:

35, And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him.

36, Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God.

37, David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee.

38, And Saul armed David with his armour, and he put an helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail.

39, And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not

proved them. And David put them off him.

40, And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine.

41, And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield went before him.

42, And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance.

43, And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.

44, And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field.

45, Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.

46, This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.

47, And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD'S, and he will give you into our hands.

48, And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine.

49, And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth.

50, So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David.

51, Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled.

52, And the men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines, until thou come to the valley, and to the gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim, even unto Gath, and unto Ekron.

53, And the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines, and they spoiled their tents.

54, And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem; but he put his armour in his tent.

55, And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said unto Abner, the captain of the host, Abner, whose son is this youth? And Abner said, As thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell.

56, And the king said, Enquire thou whose son the stripling is.

57, And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand.

58, And Saul said to him, Whose son art thou, thou young man? And David answered, I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Bethlehemite.

**T**here is no need to rehearse this great episode because it is a true tale of heroism that all the world, whether believer or not, is familiar with. But as is every line and every story in the Old Testament true and factual, the value of the story lies not in the incident itself, but the spiritual truth it declares about Christ, His work, His gospel, and His people. The adage says, “The New Testament is in the Old Testament concealed, the Old Testament is in the New Testament revealed.” This story is not only for us but also about us. It is about our Savior. It is about what He did *alone* on Calvary and how He, by the power of God, *single handedly*

defeated the foe, won the day, and *saved* His people. It is about the battle that church militant is engaged in every day. It is about the *only* weapon available to and employed by the child of God. It is about the glory of God revealed in the face of Jesus Christ.

I'm not going to do an exposition of these verses, but considering that you are familiar with what takes place here, I want to look at three things.

1. Trembling Israel as the sinner awakened to his helpless estate.
2. David as a picture of our great and beloved Savior.
3. David as a picture of the believer going into this world with the gospel.

1. Trembling Israel as the sinner awakened to his helpless estate.

We have seen in previous messages that not one in all the army of Israel was willing to meet the challenge that was before them. We can rightly gather that this is evidence of their collective cowardice, a cowardice born of their unwillingness to call upon God. Though this is so, we need to remember that this is God's elect nation, and they picture the kind of folks that God has elected unto salvation. They are not noble and heroic, and when they are faced with the fact that they cannot save themselves, they become a mass of trembling humanity. This is a picture of the elect sinner to whom God has revealed that his estate is utterly hopeless. The enemy must be met and defeated. Sin and the Devil must be put down and the trembling mourner has neither wherewithal nor ability to meet the task.

The sinner whom God has chosen to salvation becomes the beggar whose only hope is that someone will fight for him. God requires righteousness and the sinner cannot produce it. God requires faith and he cannot work it up. God

requires payment for sin and an eternity in hell will *not* meet the payment for a *single* sin. The great Saul of Tarsus was once full of confidence and bravery, but on the road to Damascus, he was cast in the dust by a greater than he. For his entire life he had exhibited life as a keeper of God's law, but when the law was shown to be spiritual to him, he declared, "Sin revived, and I died" (Rom. 7:9).

Among these trembling chosen ones is the realization that they have no equipment to save themselves. They may will to (want to) but discover they are not heroes. Instead, they are victims of their own impotence (1 Cor. 1:26-29<sup>1</sup>). Like Isaiah, who spent his life decrying the sin of the people, pronouncing woe upon woe against them; when he saw the Lord, he cried "woe is me, for I am undone." Like Daniel whose prayers and prophecies gave him great position and power in Babylon; when he saw the Lord said, "there remained no strength in me, for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption and I retained no strength." These tremblers have not yet seen David deliver them, but they have seen their *weakness* in the face of an enemy they cannot defeat.

## 2. We see David as a picture of our great and beloved Savior.

In vv. 30-31 we see David speaking. Here the poet and sweet psalmist, the defender of God's glory, speaks, and the people find that his words have gravity. They rehearse what he says among the people. When the Lord spoke, it was said of Him that, "Never [a] man spake like this man" (John

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. 1:26-29, For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence.

7:46<sup>1</sup>). The multitude said of Him, “[He speaks as] one having authority and not as the scribes” (Matt. 7:29). David's words were about the glory of God as was our Lord's, who was always about the Father's business.

David was uniquely qualified for the task of defeating the foe. He had saved the flock many times by putting himself in harms way, standing between the flock and defeating the bear and the lion. Our Lord was uniquely qualified for the office and title of the Savior (Heb. 5:7-9; 7:21-25<sup>2</sup>). His interest was the welfare of the flock (Read John 10). Though in appearance Christ was no match for the enemy, He was stronger than the foe and able to defeat him (Luke 11:20-22<sup>3</sup>). In what appeared to be our Savior's weakest moment, He with words that carried the weight of eternal purpose, cried with a loud voice “It is finished,” and in that moment every one for whom he engaged the enemy was redeemed, justified, sanctified and made to be the very righteousness of God (Heb. 1:2-3<sup>4</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> **John 7:46**, The officers answered, Never man spake like this man.

<sup>2</sup> **Heb. 5:7-9**, Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; 7:21-25, (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:) By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

<sup>3</sup> **Luke 11:20-22**, But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you. When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.

<sup>4</sup> **Heb. 1:2-3**, God . . . Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and

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Goliath was, to Israel, the Devil and death. David *destroyed* him. So, our Lord did (Heb. 2:14<sup>1</sup>). David fought Goliath *alone*. The enemy was not defeated by a corporate effort. As those who were to be saved trembled in their tents, the mighty Poet (Christ) went out alone, without the weapons of man but with the power of God (v. 46-47). The proof of this is that the rock slung by David *pierced* the brass helmet of Goliath and crushed his skull. Some writers have tried to explain this amazing, physiological phenomena away. Some have said that Goliath had taken off his helmet, but there is no such indication in the Scripture. Some have said the rock went through the eyehole of the helmet and entered Goliath's brain ocularly. The Word says the stone entered and "sunk into his forehead" (v. 49), and that means it went through the brass helmet to do so. This stone was slung by a young shepherd boy, and it was a guided missile, empowered by the Spirit of the Lord. Stunned and dying, the enemy was beheaded by his own sword and hoisted on his own petard. The glory belongs to God alone for the salvation of His people.

3. David pictures the child of God going into this world, confronting the enemy with only the gospel.

The world's view of the true church is that of Goliath. They count the "little flock" of God as an affront to their power and dignity. To send out this little hodgepodge of miscreants against the power of organized religion is the same as slandering them (vv. 42-43). This naive youngster, that calls itself the servant of God, is unworthy to do battle in this giant's arena of organized religion. But God's elect

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upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

<sup>1</sup> Heb. 2:14, Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.

come. Having suffered violence, they take the kingdom by force. They reject the armor of the world (vv. 38-39); the tricks, the simple plans, the programs, policies, the Roman road, and invitation systems devised to give visible results. They march with invisible armor (Eph. 6:12-18<sup>1</sup>).

God's chosen ones know the battle is not theirs but the Lord's. The Word they preach is the power of God unto salvation. It is the power and wisdom of God. The stone they cast is the stone the builders refused that has become the head of the corner. It is the report of the demise of the enemy. It is the report that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth, that the enemies have been made the footstool of Christ, and the last enemy destroyed is death (1 Cor. 15:25-26<sup>2</sup>). The people of God shout and go into battle with the deeds of their hero upon their lips. Their enemies do not stand a chance; their head has been removed; their champion decapitated. They do not go into the world with a plea for sinners to *let* God save them; they go with the shout of the king—"Oh death, where is thy sting, oh grave, where is thy victory" (1 Cor. 15:55). We serve no beggar. We serve no impotent fraud that waits on the affirmative will of some trembling creature. We serve the only success story in the annals of human history. We speak of Him who "*shall* save His people from their sins"

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<sup>1</sup> Eph. 6:12-18, For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. 15:25-26, For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

(Matt. 1:21). We look to our heavenly David and cry, “Tis done, the great transactions done” (2 Tim. 1:9; Eph. 1:3-7<sup>1</sup>).

To the Lord belongeth salvation.

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<sup>1</sup> **2 Tim. 1:9**, Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, **Eph. 1:3-7**, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.



# A PICTURE OF GRACE

## 1 Samuel 18:1-4

1, And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.

2, And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house.

3, Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul.

4, And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.

**T**his passage of Scripture records the grace of God working in the heart of Jonathan and knitting his soul with David. There is an obvious reason that Jonathan's love for David must be attributed to the *grace* of God. Jonathan was the son of King Saul, the crown prince and heir apparent to his throne. By all intents and purpose, Jonathan should be the sworn enemy of the man who will not only be the next king but the man who rips royalty from Jonathan's future. Providence must have its day.

This man, Jonathan, will play an integral part in the life of David, and only love will override any natural obstacles that might hinder David's rise to the throne. Another way this is a picture of grace is that other than his affection for David, there is no real indication that Jonathan was interested in the things of God. This may be the universal truth that God uses people who have no interest in Him to befriend His elect and make their life easier in this world. It was said of our Lord that He grew in stature and favor with men. God used ravens to feed His prophet, Joseph found

favor with the keeper of the prison, God gave the Israelites “favor in the sight of the Egyptians,” and Esther found favor in the eyes of Ahasuerus because God works all things for the good of His people. It is also interesting that this mutual love and dedication between David and Jonathan is between two true *heroes* in Israel. Their long-lasting friendship would immediately find favor with the people.

In verse 2, we find further evidence of the providence of God. Saul makes David a member of His household. The sweet psalmist will not return to the sheepfold for he is destined to shepherd a much bigger flock as he pictures the Great Shepherd of the sheep, our blessed Savior.

The beauty of this passage is truly seen, not in the maneuvering of men by God's hand for political purposes, but in the story of our salvation by the might and power of our Great Substitute, the Lord Jesus Christ.

First, Jonathan's love for David is the love of a trembling sinner for his Savior. David has just saved Israel! Without human armor, with only the power of God, he has slain the giant, bruised his head, and removed it in the sight of the people. His heroic victory is singular. He, by himself, has stood in the breach and by slaying the enemy has saved his people. The soul of Jonathan is knit to the soul of his savior. This is what Rolf Barnard used to call “sweetheart love for Christ.” It is a love born of thanksgiving and adorned by praise. Had David not stepped in between Goliath and the people, had he not whipped the strong man, no such love, adoration and dedication could be.

We hear people speak of love for Christ, yet they speak of him in pitiable terms and account that their salvation was due to *their* choice and *their* will. Such language reveals that no love or worship toward *that* Jesus is possible because what he did was only make salvation possible. Jonathan loved David because David had *finished* his salvation, and so it is with the true believer. The believer's love for Christ is because Christ actually redeemed and saved him, answered the law's

demands against him, propitiated God for him, and informed him of that great transaction by His Spirit through the good news and glad tidings of the gospel. Love for Christ is because He *has* redeemed us, not because He made it possible for us to save ourselves. When Jonathan saw what David had done, his heart was knit to David in love.

David and Jonathan's relationship was a covenant relationship. The relationship between the elect and Christ is a covenant relationship. *That* covenant established that relationship before the world was ever made. That covenant was ratified by the death of the testator, and by that death, the heirs according to promise received all that the testator had assigned them in that testament. Our Lord is the testator of that will and the mediator and executor of that covenant. The elect's names were written in that will before the world was, and it was all of their salvation and included all that was given them as the heirs according to promise (2 Sam. 23:5; 2 Tim. 1:9<sup>1</sup>). David made this covenant with Jonathan because he loved him as his own soul.

Does this not picture the love of Christ for those for whom He is the covenant mediator? Christ fulfilled the law by loving us (his neighbor) as He loved Himself. There can be no doubt of that fact because He laid down His life for us, and “greater love hath no man than this, that he would lay down his life for his friend” (Jer. 31:3; 1 John 3:16-18<sup>2</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Sam. 23:5, Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow. 2 Tim. 1:9, Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.

<sup>2</sup> Jer. 31:3, The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee. 1 John 3:16-18, Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in

Jonathan did not deserve David's love. Because he trembled in fear with the rest of Israel, he was not worthy of David's love. So, if David loved him, it is the love of grace and unmerited favor. David deserved Jonathan's love. He had saved Jonathan and deserved unending love and adoration. David's love for Jonathan was *of* grace; Jonathan's love for David was *for* grace or because of grace.

Verse 4 is full of instruction. It is a beautiful picture of substitution, and it is also a wonderful picture of the saved sinner's love for Christ.

The first thing seen is that Jonathan strips himself of all that he has. His clothing represents his *righteousness*, now nothing but filthy rags. His sword represents his *confidence* in the flesh and his girdle represents his *strength*. In effect, he gave all he had to David. He stood bare and naked before him as a picture of every ruined sinner who has nothing of his own to count on, stripped of all—he has only Christ. “Nothing in my hand I bring.” One has said that the way of Christ is so narrow that you can't take any baggage with you. Another said that when you come to Christ, you go immediately to the graveyard and bury all that you have (Matt. 13:45-46<sup>1</sup>).

Secondly, David takes these things from Jonathan. This has two precious applications. That David took these things suggests that he put them on. This pictures our Lord taking on himself our human nature. Christ was very God and very man, and though He was God, He became a man that He might die our death. There is no true human understanding of that wonder. It is the great mystery that Paul referred to as “God manifest in the flesh” (2 Cor. 4:11). Christ, though equal with God, made himself of no reputation, became a man, became a servant, and died the death of the felon. He

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truth.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 13:45-46, Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

took not on Himself “the nature of angels; but he took on Himself the seed of Abraham” (Heb. 2:6). David had refused the king's armor, which pictured our Lord laying aside His glory to tabernacle among sinners (17:39<sup>1</sup>).

Finally, and most important of all, David's taking of Jonathan's wares pictures the Bible doctrine of imputation. When David took Jonathan's wares, it pictured our sins being imputed to Christ (Isa. 53:6; 2 Cor. 5:21<sup>2</sup>). No sinner is capable of understanding what took place on Calvary. We *can* understand the way our Lord was treated by men reflects our carnal minded hatred for God, and we can even understand why our Lord bore the wrath of God when our sin was imputed or charged to Him. But, as sinners, we can never understand what it is to be made sin. We receive by faith that the immaculate, spotless Son of God, was made to be sin for us, and we stand with mouth agape, in utter awe of it. The precious Lamb, without spot of blemish, was made to be sin (corruption) for us. Were it not the clear declaration and very heart of Scripture, we could never believe it. This is great mercy for great sinners. He died for our sins according to the scriptures.

In this passage we can see why Jonathan loved David. There can be no doubt, that by His deeds, David proved his love for Jonathan. “We love Him because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19).

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<sup>1</sup> 17:39, And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them. And David put them off him.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. 53:6, All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. 2 Cor. 5:21, For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.



# THE PRICE OF VICTORY

## 1 Samuel 18:5-11

5, And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, and behaved himself wisely: and Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants.

6, And it came to pass as they came, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of musick.

7, And the women answered one another as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.

8, And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands: and what can he have more but the kingdom?

9, And Saul eyed David from that day and forward.

10, And it came to pass on the morrow, that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house: and David played with his hand, as at other times: and there was a javelin in Saul's hand.

11, And Saul cast the javelin; for he said, I will smite David even to the wall with it. And David avoided out of his presence twice.

**T**his passage begins with a description of David as a hero and willing servant to the king (v. 5). Here, David pictures the humanity of Christ our Lord in His sojourn among sinners, “made of a woman made under the law” (Gal. 4:4). Our Lord pleased not himself but was always about His Father's business (Rom. 15:3; Luke 2:49<sup>1</sup>). Christ

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<sup>1</sup> Rom. 15:3, For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The

rendered unto Caesar what was Caesar's. He came “not to do [His] own will, but the will of Him that sent [Him]” (John 6:38). He became a servant and was obedient even unto death (John 5:30<sup>1</sup>). It is said of Christ our Lord that He “increased in . . . favor with God and with man” (Luk. 2:52). Similarly, the word “all” (v. 5c) is a generic term as is the term “man” in Luke 2:52 and refers to a general attitude rather than an inclusive one. Later in this chapter, many will side with Saul against David. We also see in our text this description of David; “He behaved himself wisely” (v. 5a), and our Lord, as the servant of God, was said to “deal prudently” in Isaiah 52:13.

David was made captain over what probably amounted to a brigade. Abner was captain of the entire army. But because of David’s defeat of Goliath, he was regarded as a great man of war. The Song of Moses likewise declared that our Lord is a “man of war” (Ex. 15:3). When David returned from the battle with the Philistines, he was met with great adoration that soon turned to the venom of the King Saul (v. 6). Our Lord made His triumphant entry into Jerusalem with shouts of “hosanna”, but the same crowd was soon shouting, “Crucify him”, and the kings, Herod and Pilate, turned on Him.

Verse 7 is the catalyst for what follows in this passage. The words of the women of Israel are very telling. The Bible teaches that “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh” (Matt. 12:34), and they that are “of the world . . . speak they of the world” (1 John 4:5).

We have seen this theme repeated many times. Israel had fallen to such a low estate that there is no language as that of

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reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. **Luke 2:49**, And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

<sup>1</sup> **John 5:30**, I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

## Miriam on the Canaan side of the Red Sea.

“And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the LORD,  
for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider  
hath he thrown into the sea” (Exo 15:21).

Instead, the accolades are given to men, and one would seek uselessly to find mention of the glory of the Lord. They were occupied with human victories (Ps. 10:4<sup>1</sup>). Hero worship is rampant in this world today, and we can be assured that there is nothing new under the sun. There has risen in the psychiatric community a new field of study and treatment that deals with a generation of young men and women who actually believe their life is a reality series in which they are super-heroes who deserve the accolades of men. When those accolades are not given, they suffer severe anxiety and depression because they cannot understand why the world does not see their great worth.

Religion is big in hero worship, and their language betrays them. When someone asks the seemingly innocuous question “How big is your church”, they are making a comparison of you to mega churches. They are saying as it were, “Saul has slain his thousands and David his ten thousands” (v. 7). The words of praise for David were words of division whether that was their intent or not, but knowing human nature, it is a revelation of the way the depraved human mind works. Everybody, by nature, believes that being on the winning side somehow gives them credence. Had God been in the women's thoughts, no such language would have proceeded from their mouths. The order of the day for the child of God is, “Cease ye from man” (Isa. 2:22), and give glory to whom it is due.

The response of Saul to the ceremonial embrace of David by the women reveals that, “They that are after the flesh do

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<sup>1</sup> Ps. 10:4, The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts.

mind the things of the flesh” (Rom. 8:5). Their flesh exalted David and in the process abased Saul. His flesh was provoked to jealousy because he now saw David as a threat to his throne. This is not unlike the visceral response of religion that Christ is the true victor in salvation. The offence of the cross is that it is an affront to men's pride, men who believe they deserve some recognition for their will and their choice.

If you cannot rejoice in the total success of Christ, you are in the flesh. Likewise, if you cannot rejoice in the success of your brother or sister, mark well, your response flows from a heart of unbelief. If someone is better, then the rest are less. Let Christ be exalted and let us find our abode in the dust from whence we came and to whence we shall return. Remember the words of John the Baptist when his disciples came to him with the report that the whole world was following Jesus. There is no doubt that John's disciples perceived their influence was about to diminish, but John simply replied, “He must increase and I must decrease” (John 3:30).

In the women's praise of David, we see again the providence of God. Some might wonder why God did not stop the mouths of these women before their words could kindle this fire in the bosom of Saul. The “wrath of man shall praise him and the rest he will restrain” (Ps. 76:10). This promotion of the flesh is but a tool of God to promote the spiritual good of David. The fact is that two kings cannot rule together. A showdown must come and the sure victor must be the very one whom God has anointed. But Saul is not interested in the things of God; he sees his career at stake (v. 8). He, not realizing it, speaks prophetically; there is nothing left for David but the throne. This has always been the case. David must have this throne, for a greater than David shall inherit the throne and rule God's people.

But now the wheels begin to turn in Saul's mind, and the seeds of resentment and retribution begin to grow. What a picture this is of human depravity! It is revealed in the human

attribute of mutability. Only a short while before this, Saul loved David. It was not real love, but a love born of what Saul hoped David could do for him by relieving his anxiety. Sadly and generally speaking, this is what most people think love is. Now we see Saul's love turn to hate born of jealousy and envy. Human love is about *me*. Spiritual love is about *you*. The Bible tells us the truth about ourselves and the picture isn't pretty. The Bible gives us wise instruction concerning trusting in man (Ps. 146:3-4; Jer. 9:4; 17:5; Micah 7:5-6<sup>1</sup>)

From the moment Saul was exercised in his own maliciousness, he eyed David (v. 9). He did not merely watch him; he watched him with clandestine purpose. He *eyed* him, waiting for the moment that he could end him. How much this is like the religious men who watched Christ, seeking some way to catch him in an error, looking for the moment that they could end Him. Remember too, that this is the heart of all hatred and malice. As the old adage says, "Having malice is like taking poison and waiting for your enemy to die."

David did not have to wait long for Saul to show out his true heart. Once again, the Lord sent Saul an evil spirit. Our God is great and does all things well. He controls the universe and rules the invisible. All angels, even those who hate God, are ministering spirits, and do his bidding—not willingly—but they do it nonetheless. God will employ whatever means that He deems suitable to bring about His eternally good

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<sup>1</sup> Ps. 146:3-4, Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish. Jer. 9:4, Take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother: for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will walk with slanders. 17:5, Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD. Micah 7:5-6, Trust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide: keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom. For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter in law against her mother in law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house.

purpose. This does not make God Machiavellian; it makes Machiavelli a pretender to the throne of deity. This evil spirit sent to Saul was first used to knit his heart to David; now it is used to set Saul on the course of his ruin.

When this evil spirit from the Lord came upon Saul, he prophesied (v. 10). Now this word “prophesy” can be specific to the prophets who speak God's word, but it is also a generic term that can mean any kind of utterance. More than likely the prophesying that Saul did came as a result of his anxious depressed mind. That this prophesying was, more than likely, the ramblings of a deranged mind is seen in the fact that as Saul went about prophesying in the house while carrying a javelin in his hand. I will leave the graphics to your imagination, but it certainly paints a strange picture. In my mind, I see a blithering king going through the house, jousting, thrusting, and paring while blabbering.

Notice that David immediately came to the service of the king (v. 10). I would not be so bold as to say that the praise of women did not affect David, but we see here that he still willingly takes the place of a servant whose desire is the welfare of his king. He played upon his harp to soothe Saul, but Saul's intentions were to literally nail him to the wall (v. 11). Our Lord came into this world to save sinners, to do them good, but the sweet song of mercy and grace was discordant in their ears, and they fulfilled their bloodlust by nailing him to the cross.

It is evident that Saul threw the spear twice and both times David avoided it (v. 11). This is very interesting. No one really knows how it is that David avoided the javelin, much less twice. Maybe this was Saul's normal behavior and David was accustomed to such strange actions from Saul. Some have said that he dodged the first bullet but came in a second time only to have the behavior repeated. That seems like a stretch to me. If you look at chapter 19:9<sup>1</sup>, you will see

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<sup>1</sup> 19:9, And the evil spirit from the LORD was upon Saul, as he sat in his

that David was again about the business of soothing Saul as he walked about with a javelin in his hand. One writer has said that perhaps David was so intent in his playing that he did not see the javelin thrown, and both misses were merely the exercise of God's providence in moving David from danger without him even knowing it. What we know for sure is that it happened twice, and David came back to do his duty. If nothing else, it pictures the attitude of our Lord toward the abuse of men (Isa. 50:5-6; 1 Pet.2:23<sup>1</sup>). Maybe the simplest explanation is that David trusted God to perform what He had promised.

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house with his javelin in his hand: and David played with his hand.

<sup>1</sup> Isa. 50:5-6, The LORD God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting. 1 Pet. 2:23, Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:



# SUSPICION

## 1 Samuel 18:12-29

12, And Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, and was departed from Saul.

13, Therefore Saul removed him from him, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people.

14, And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and the LORD was with him.

15, Wherefore when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely, he was afraid of him.

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

17, And Saul said to David, Behold my elder daughter Merab, her will I give thee to wife: only be thou valiant for me, and fight the LORD'S battles. For Saul said, Let not mine hand be upon him, but let the hand of the Philistines be upon him.

18, And David said unto Saul, Who am I? and what is my life, or my father's family in Israel, that I should be son in law to the king?

19, But it came to pass at the time when Merab Saul's daughter should have been given to David, that she was given unto Adriel the Meholathite to wife.

20, And Michal Saul's daughter loved David: and they told Saul, and the thing pleased him.

21, And Saul said, I will give him her, that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him. Wherefore Saul said to David, Thou shalt this day be my son in law in the one of the twain.

22, And Saul commanded his servants, saying, Commune with David secretly, and say, Behold, the king hath delight in thee, and all his servants love thee: now therefore be the king's son in law.

23, And Saul's servants spake those words in the ears

of David. And David said, Seemeth it to you a light thing to be a king's son in law, seeing that I am a poor man, and lightly esteemed?

24, And the servants of Saul told him, saying, On this manner spake David.

25, And Saul said, Thus shall ye say to David, The king desireth not any dowry, but an hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged of the king's enemies. But Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines.

26, And when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to be the king's son in law: and the days were not expired.

27, Wherefore David arose and went, he and his men, and slew of the Philistines two hundred men; and David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full tale to the king, that he might be the king's son in law. And Saul gave him Michal his daughter to wife.

28, And Saul saw and knew that the LORD was with David, and that Michal Saul's daughter loved him.

29, And Saul was yet the more afraid of David; and Saul became David's enemy continually.

**I**n the verses above, we see the nature of suspicion in the heart of Saul. It is an account of history, but as well, we have the Holy Spirit who makes us privy to the thoughts of Saul and the various machinations that he employs to be rid of his enemy. There are numerous parallels to Saul's treatment of David to the treatment of Christ by religion and royalty.

This incident occurs on the heels of Saul's effort to kill David twice. Because of the intervention of God's providence, the javelin never hit its intended mark. Saul, though a wicked man, was not a stupid man. He saw, as much as a lost man can, that David was under the protection of a power that far exceeded his. Though he attributed this power to the Lord (v. 12), the route that he pursued reveals the heart

and mind of the infidel (Rom. 8:7-8<sup>1</sup>). Everything Saul does in this passage is designed to out-do and undo the power that protects David. The end of suspicion is to destroy but not in an overt manner. Since the beginning, carnal man has spent himself in efforts to frustrate the purpose of God.

If you are not bowed to the Lord, you are actively trying to destroy Him and take His place on the throne. Mark well this truth; unbelief is not a mere matter of a difference of opinion; it is rebellion against the King. It is a desire to engage in a coup d'état. Though it is not plainly declared, I think the chickens of Saul's conscience are coming home to roost and he is beginning to believe that what was prophesied concerning his kingdom is all about David (15:23, 28<sup>2</sup>).

Verse 12 shows the source of Saul's suspicion; it is *fear*. The fear that he felt was the single thing that is common to all that are afraid. It is fear that things are occurring that are outside your control. The only cure for fear is to, by the grace of God, realize that *everything* is outside your control but completely controlled and ordered by your merciful Lord. None but the loved ones, those who have been beneficiaries of His grace, can know this and find rest and peace there. A great part of our Lord's words to His disciples was that he often repeated, "Fear not."

A true reason for the success of the world's religion is that they have succeeded in keeping their flocks in line by keeping them fearful of the judgment of God. They do so by being judgmental and with watchful eyes they intimidate and cause fear of censure and loss. Saul was afraid of David because the Lord was with him and had departed from himself. His fear

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<sup>1</sup> Rom. 8:7-8, Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

<sup>2</sup> 15:23, For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king. 28, And Samuel said unto him, The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou.

was not born of spiritual insight but of natural logic. He had twice thrown the javelin with intent to kill but had missed. The only logical explanation, to the king, was that the Lord was with David and not him. If this had been spiritual thinking, Saul's would have been driven to his knees in confession of his sin, but being natural thinking, it put him in a mind to lay down the gauntlet against God. His *fear* bred *suspicion* and that bred action against David. This is always the case. Our enemies cannot get to God, so they seek to destroy His servant. "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you" (1 John 3:13).

Saul is a potsherd striving against his maker and the result of such an endeavor always ends in the defeat of the striver (vv. 13-16). Though Saul's intention in making David captain over a thousand is not stated here, from what follows we know that his desire is to see David *dead*. He hoped that by putting him in the front of battle that some arrow or javelin would strike him down. The plan backfired. David did his duty, did it well and didn't die. Once again, for Saul, things were out of control, or rather not in *his* control. What he had invented to bring an end to David brought David into greater favor with the people.

Again, this incident reveals that Saul was a carnal man. He has no recognition of his own impotence, his blatant inadequacy, and continues to enjoin a useless and futile fight with the God who made him. In the first sentence of verse 17, Saul waxes eloquent and sounds very magnanimous. His words are meant to invoke trust from David. He first states his intention to honor what he promised the man who defeated Goliath (17:25<sup>1</sup>). Secondly, he applies to David's love for the glory of God by asking David to be valiant as he fights the LORD's battles. The enemies of God know the

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<sup>1</sup> 17:25, And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come up: and it shall be, that the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel.

way to the heart of God's people is to speak of glorifying God. It is an effective weapon in Satan's arsenal (Matt. 4:5-6<sup>1</sup>). In the last phrase we go into the mind and heart of the wicked king (v. 17b). He thought to remove guilt of his murderous intention by shifting the blame and guilt to someone else. David may have been recalling this incident when he wrote the words of Ps. 55:21;

“The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords.”

David's response (v. 18) reveals again that David is a man after God's own heart. David is not trying to sound humble. He *is* humble. It is David who wrote, “What is man that thou art mindful of him” (Ps. 8:4). Though he was the anointed king, he humbled himself. Though he was valiant and courageous, he was lowly in heart. But his humble words were lost on the ears of Saul. The wickedness of the king is further revealed when he gives the daughter he promised to David to be wed to another. This was surely meant to anger David, but it was to no avail. That union ended with the five sons born to it being hanged, but that is not the message here. The message is that the natural man cannot change himself (Jer. 13:23<sup>2</sup>). Saul's *life* is about killing David.

When fortune presented itself again, Saul was ready to continue his cruel plan (vv. 20-21). Michal, Saul's daughter, fell in love with David, and Saul saw another way to take advantage. He was pleased, not by his daughter finding love, but with another avenue to get David. He thought this was a

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. 4:5-6, Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

<sup>2</sup> Jer. 13:23, Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.

way to ensnare David and to have him fall in battle. Being the son-in law of the king would paint a bigger target on David's back. He even capped his notion of murder with flattery and lies (v. 22). There are no depths that depravity will not plumb in its effort to dethrone God. But no matter the effort, the word of the Lord shall stand, and Saul's thoughts of using Michal to ensnare David will fail, as in coming studies, we will see Michal deliver David from the plot of the king.

David's response continues to be humble, but now he speaks more to his poverty and inability to offer the king a dowry for the hand of Michal (v. 23). His own poverty, to David's mind, made him unworthy to be called the son-in-law of the king. How much more should this be the thoughts of our hearts as we consider the wonder of us being the sons and daughters of God (1 John 3:1)! To this humble confession from David, Saul attached another advantage (vv. 24-25).

David saw the king's proposal as a thing by which he could honor the tradition of the dowry and gain Michal for his wife. Though he could not pay a dowry, he could fulfill the command of the king. David was a warrior and saw no problem with this task. In fact, he gave *double* what the king required. Once again the hand of the Almighty readily destroys the silly efforts of men.

God's purpose cannot be frustrated. To try is to reveal the innate insanity of the carnal mind. Don't fight God—you can't win. As Rolf Barnard has said, "Stack your guns in the corner and bow to the King of kings." Don't be afraid because fear breeds suspicion. The Lord does what is best for His people and will bring every one of them to their expected end. Nothing and no one will prevent it.

# HIS NAME

## 1 Samuel 18:30-19:10

30, Then the princes of the Philistines went forth: and it came to pass, after they went forth, that David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul; so that his name was much set by.

1, And Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should kill David.

2, But Jonathan Saul's son delighted much in David: and Jonathan told David, saying, Saul my father seeketh to kill thee: now therefore, I pray thee, take heed to thyself until the morning, and abide in a secret place, and hide thyself:

3, And I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where thou art, and I will commune with my father of thee; and what I see, that I will tell thee.

4, And Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David; because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works have been to thee-ward very good:

5, For he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine, and the LORD wrought a great salvation for all Israel: thou sawest it, and didst rejoice: wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause?

6, And Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan: and Saul sware, As the LORD liveth, he shall not be slain.

7, And Jonathan called David, and Jonathan shewed him all those things. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence, as in times past.

8, And there was war again: and David went out, and fought with the Philistines, and slew them with a great slaughter; and they fled from him.

9, And the evil spirit from the LORD was upon Saul,

as he sat in his house with his javelin in his hand: and David played with his hand.

10, And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with the javelin; but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, and he smote the javelin into the wall: and David fled, and escaped that night.

**H**ere, we once again see the jealousy and envy of Saul against David. There is a progression here. Saul is no longer seeking to covertly destroy David. His secretive blood lust for David has not met with success, so now he makes his clandestine designs to be common knowledge. The command from the king is now open, blatant, and violent (v. 1). The progression of Saul's hatred is directly proportional to the acclaim of David. The more popular the name of David has become, the more virulent Saul's detestation is revealed. The more beloved that David has become to the people, the more hated has David become to the king.

This is proven if we look at the last phrase of verse 30 in chapter 18. "David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul and *his name* was much set by." This is a picture of what happens when the elect come to know and know *of* the great Savior. They hear of Him through word of mouth of those who have learned of His heroism, His might and His wisdom. God has sent His preachers into the world to tell the story again and again, to rehearse and repeat with sublime redundancy the magnitude of the skill of the mighty Christ, who accomplished the salvation of an innumerable company by Himself. When the elect *hear* the story, they spend their life seeking to know more of Him (Phil. 3:8-10<sup>1</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> Phil. 3:8-10, Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the

The longer they know Him the narrower their scope becomes, until they cannot bear to hear of anything else. His name becomes “much set by.”

When the hearer requires such a narrow scope, the problem begins to truly escalate. The enemies of the gospel have no objection to those who preach and believe the gospel so long as they show some tolerance, if not acceptance, for their views and remain silent about the truth. I have been many places where men have said the gospel is finding a foothold, only to have the same men sidle up to me and whisper, “Don't be so open and obvious with the message”, as if you can sneak up on someone with the truth and have them believing it before they know they do.

The gospel knows nothing of footholds, it comes with *violence* and *force* against the very gates of hell, and those gates are torn asunder bolt and bar (Matt. 11:12<sup>1</sup>). The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. Christ and Him crucified is the power and wisdom of God. We do not and cannot persuade men to do anything but change *religions*. It takes the power of God for a sinner to change *gods*. But when God slays the interloper, the believer's mind and heart are set on Christ. His name is “much set by”, and so much so that any other name pales in value. Religious denominations, creeds, regulations—things that are held near and dear to the heart of false believers—mean nothing when the name of Christ is “much set by.” That name, to the believer, is the only name “under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

Speak to a believer of peace, hope, righteousness, good works, the law, holiness, duty, acceptance or perfection, and there is but one thing they have to say. “Christ is all.” When this becomes reality, when the heart of the believer is fixed on *His name*, the false king and his court are filled with anger,

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fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 11:12, And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

hatred, and the desire is to kill. (Comp. Acts 4:12, 16-18; 5:40<sup>1</sup>). Religion wants flesh; the believer is fully satisfied with manna. Religion wants recognition; the believer wants his Savior to be recognized. He must increase and I must decrease. Some will say that there is more to preach than Christ, but for the believer, that name is *much* set by. The phrase “much set by” is often interpreted “precious” (margin; see also Prov. 18:10; Song of Sol. 1:3; Phil 2:9; Heb. 1:4; 2 Pet. 2:7<sup>2</sup>). Saul's previous plots have come to naught; now his heart is set on murder. He is the enemy of the savior (John 11:53, 55-57<sup>3</sup>).

In verses 2-3, Saul has sought to involve Jonathan in his hateful plot, but Jonathan loves David and has made a covenant to protect him. This carries great weight in that he is the *heir* to the throne setting himself *against* the throne. Is this not an example of what happens to a sinner when he sees

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<sup>1</sup> Acts 4:12, Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. 16-18, Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it. But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. 5:40, And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

<sup>2</sup> Prov. 18:10, The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe. Song of Sol. 1:3, Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee. Phil 2:9, Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: Heb. 1:4, Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. 2 Pet. 2:7, And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:

<sup>3</sup> John 11:53, Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death. 55-57, And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves. Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast? Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where he were, he should shew it, that they might take him.

the value and honor of Christ? He cares not for the things of this world. Though he might have been heir of great things, in the sight of Christ the things of the earth grow strangely dim; family and future are set aside for his relationship with Christ. For Jonathan, the defense of David was everything. Believers are “set for the defense of the gospel” (Phil. 1:17).

In verses 4-5, Jonathan intercedes for David. Notice well that Jonathan does not plead his friendship with David, or the covenant they had made with each other, or even the trump card of his royal standing in the court. He declares the merits of David and how he has well served the king for the good of the king. He declares that Saul had once loved David and rejoiced in his accomplishment, and there was no cause upon which Saul might seek David's life. Our Lord said “they hated me without a cause” (John 15:25). The thief on the cross, who that very day was in paradise with Christ, did not speak of himself but pleaded the merits of the one that hung beside him saying, “this man hath done nothing amiss” (Luke 23:41). To those for whom His name is “much set by”, their testimony is not a rehearsal of what they have done for the master, or the many evidences they have produced to prove that they are Christians proving they may be trusted. Their testimony is that Christ is precious; He is the pearl of great price, the one true and living God who alone is worthy of praise. If men hate Him, they do so without a cause.

Verse 6 reveals that men can be persuaded in the conscience and yet never converted in their heart. The world holds reformation in high esteem. Men account that their turnings and reformations have spiritual value. Saul, in his promise, even invokes the name of Jehovah as his witness. His mock repentance is but a temporary blip on the radar of his malice. But it was enough for David. Like every believer, he cannot know the heart of another, and every reformation is accepted as true change by one who knows Christ. We do not set up ourselves as judges of men. We do not wait for men to prove themselves or form a committee to assess

whether their change is real. Though it often causes heartaches, the believer is more ready to show mercy than to indignantly be a suspicious judge. How oft shall I forgive—70 times 7.

David returns to the service of the king, to be his captain and to play his harp. He returned evil with good, but the good times would not last for long. A man can be persuaded to change his direction. A man can be persuaded to change his behavior. Conscience can bring temporary reformation, but out of the heart come the issues from death. An Ethiopian cannot change the color of his skin, nor can a leopard change his spots. An unbeliever cannot be persuaded to believe. Faith is a gift of God. As soon as David's name is again set by because he proved himself again to be heroic in battle, and as soon as the enemy fled from the face of David, the wrath and hatred of Saul once again roiled in his heart (2 Pet. 2:22<sup>1</sup>). When David returns in victory to take his place as the soothing servant of the king, Saul once again fills his hand with his javelin and aims for the heart. But no weapon formed against David shall prosper (Ps. 34:7<sup>2</sup>). The javelin stuck in the wall. David slipped out and escaped.

Some might consider David's action as cowardice, thinking that he should have chosen martyrdom. If martyrdom is something you can choose, then it is not martyrdom! It is nothing more than a self-righteous *effort* to make one's sufferings or death to seem *meritorious*. There is but one suffering and one death that has merit and that is the death of God's dear Son. That death had merit enough to fully satisfy God's holy demands. David escaped because he believed God (Matt. 10:16-23<sup>3</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Pet. 2:22, But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. 34:7, The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. 10:16-23, Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for

When the name of the King of kings is “much set by”,  
the enemy's heart is fully set to do evil.

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they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.



# OBSESSION

## 1 Samuel 19:11-24

11, Saul also sent messengers unto David's house, to watch him, and to slay him in the morning: and Michal David's wife told him, saying, If thou save not thy life to night, to morrow thou shalt be slain.

12, So Michal let David down through a window: and he went, and fled, and escaped.

13, And Michal took an image, and laid it in the bed, and put a pillow of goats' hair for his bolster, and covered it with a cloth.

14, And when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, He is sick.

15, And Saul sent the messengers again to see David, saying, Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may slay him.

16, And when the messengers were come in, behold, there was an image in the bed, with a pillow of goats' hair for his bolster.

17, And Saul said unto Michal, Why hast thou deceived me so, and sent away mine enemy, that he is escaped? And Michal answered Saul, He said unto me, Let me go; why should I kill thee?

18, So David fled, and escaped, and came to Samuel to Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth.

19, And it was told Saul, saying, Behold, David is at Naioth in Ramah.

20, And Saul sent messengers to take David: and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as appointed over them, the Spirit of God was upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied.

21, And when it was told Saul, he sent other messengers, and they prophesied likewise. And Saul sent

messengers again the third time, and they prophesied also.

22, Then went he also to Ramah, and came to a great well that is in Sechu: and he asked and said, Where are Samuel and David? And one said, Behold, they be at Naioth in Ramah.

23, And he went thither to Naioth in Ramah: and the Spirit of God was upon him also, and he went on, and prophesied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah.

24, And he stripped off his clothes also, and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Wherefore they say, Is Saul also among the prophets?

**D**avid's name is becoming much more precious and the danger of Saul continues growing proportionally. Saul is *obsessed* with killing David. He has become the poster boy for James 1:14-15;

“But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”

As David's name and character receive honor, Saul's nature and character come to the fore. His hypocrisy, false repentances, and self-interest grows in leaps and bounds until all his mind can conceive is the destruction of his sworn enemy. David is his enemy only in the mind of Saul. He hates David “without a cause” (John 15:25). Saul has seen his son choose David over him, and in this passage, we see that Saul is bent on the destruction of David. But time and again his weapons and plots against David are thwarted by the iron wall of providence. In this passage, he is shut down by his own daughter and the religious nature of his messengers (hitmen), and finally done in by his own malleability in the hands of the mighty God. David is immortal on this earth

until God has caused him to fulfill the purpose of his anointing. God will employ carnal men and women to do his will, and His anointed will rise to the throne that God has ordained for him. These episodes are but a catalogue of the impotency of man's *will* in the presence of the mighty God (Isa. 45:9<sup>1</sup>).

Saul's first obstacle is his own daughter Michal, whom he has given David to wife (vv. 11-14). When Saul's javelin once *again* missed its mark, he sends assassins to David's house. Michal, having found out about the plot, helps David escape with his life and sets up a ruse to turn the assassins back. She takes an image, a teraphim, and placed it on David's bed. A Teraphim is an idol, a house god, if you will, that was used in magic by sorcerers to supposedly bring peace and tranquility to a household. The idol was probably a bust with head and shoulders that were the size of a normal, man.

God strictly forbade idolatry and magic, but from the first chapters of Samuel, we have seen that Israel has fallen into gross idolatry and put salvation in the hands of men rather than God. Israel's religion had become a mixture of the false and the true with a decidedly stronger emphasis on the false. Michal could readily put her hands on a false god to fake out the assassins. There is no indication that she had a true interest in David's welfare, as we will see when Saul confronts her later in the chapter. There is no real use in discussing Michal's idolatry except to glorify the true God in His overriding power to use the basest things of men and religion to fulfill his purpose. We have but to consider the cross of Christ to see that sin at its worst yet serves the Master's plan. Here, the Sovereign uses the gods of man's imagination to deliver His anointed king. Man proposes and God disposes.

When Saul's assassins arrived, Michal told them that

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<sup>1</sup> Isa. 45:9, Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?

David was sick, and they returned to Saul. Even in this we see the hand of God. What better opportunity could assassins have than a compromised target. Killing a man in his sick bed should make the task that much easier, but evidently their resolve was not equal with Saul's. God put in their mind to accept the word of Michal as sufficient to shut down their mission.

When the men returned to Saul with news of David's sickness, Saul told them to bring David in his sick bed and he would kill him himself (vv. 15-16). Of course, when the shoddy assassins arrived, they found an idol in David's bed and knew they had been hoodwinked. When news of this trick reached Saul, he confronted Michal with what he saw as her betrayal (v. 17). Saul's words reveal much about the heart of sin and hatred. He is angry with Michal because she deceived him and prevented him from committing *murder!* Sin has finished and brought forth death—death to Saul's reason and logic.

Like the perverts in Sodom, who after being blinded by God “wearied themselves to find the door of their prey” (Gen. 19:11), our greatest deceiver is our own heart. Sin is exceedingly deceitful, and when it finds purchase in our souls, it becomes the obsession of our heart. Saul now refers to the very one who had soothed his savage breast and depressed heart with his harp, as his enemy.

To Saul, David is his enemy because David has become the people's choice. Michal proves her character by covering her tracks with a lie to her father. She claimed that she did what she did because David said he would kill her if she didn't. Her interest is self-interest and not the welfare of David. Though men and women may make moral choices, even in defense of the gospel, when it come to their own reputation, they will readily deny Christ, and “Whosoever will save his life shall lose it” (Matt. 16:25).

David fled to Ramah and told Samuel of Saul's numerous efforts to kill him, and he and Samuel go to Naioth (v. 18).

That was the location of a school or college of prophets. This was not a theological seminary but a place where prophets could rest, a place of peace and calm where these men could repose and fellowship. The Targum calls the place “the house of doctrine.” This is fitting because the believer finds comforts and fellowship in the Word of God. In our greatest times of trials, we find our sweetest solace in what God has taught us concerning what Christ has done for us.

Saul received word of their location and sent his assassins three times to capture David (v. 20-21). Again, his plot came to naught. Each time the assassins arrived they joined in with the prophets in their worship. The word “prophesied” here is often used as “a time of praise and singing.” The messengers were so consumed in the worship they forgot why they came. Here again we see the overpowering majesty of God. He *can* give men a worshipful heart for a time without ever bringing them to salvation. These were *assassins*, and they were having a Holy Ghost meeting. Religion, even true worship, can enthrall men and women, but they may remain unconverted. I have seen many enamored with the systematic nature of truth that have left it altogether when it began to cost them something—especially their reputation or when it did not meet the agenda of their own self-interest. “Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world” (2 Tim. 4:10). Like the old preacher said, “Time and the devil will tell.”

When Saul's hired killers did not return, he travelled to Ramah himself and inquired of the whereabouts of Samuel and David. Finally, Saul plans are thwarted by himself. He is *king*. He is a *murderer*. His intent is to kill the one God has anointed. Some Jewish writers suggest that the prophecies and worship heard and joined by the assassins included the fact that David had been anointed and that Saul would not be able to kill David. For Saul, this knowledge, if he had it, made no difference—his heart was set on killing David. On his way to do his dirty deed, the Spirit of the Lord fell upon him, and he prophesied also, all the way from Ramah to

Naioth. God didn't slay him nor cripple him. He put Saul in a trance, a state of ecstasy, until he stripped himself of his outer garments and took up headquarters in the dust, praising and singing all night long. In the Arabic language, the term "naked" often refers to one who is insane or in a trance. Man, even a king, is but *putty* in the hand of God. He makes a murderer cease in his hatred for a time if that serves his purpose. That is precisely what this all-night religious upheaval did. It served God's purpose of giving David some time to escape (20:1<sup>1</sup>). The fame of this incident went abroad, and once again, Saul is placed among the prophets, not in the sense that he was really a prophet, but in the sense of irony and sarcasm. God has used men to prophesy that he has never shown saving grace. Balaam prophesied truth but was forever used as an example of a gainsaying man (2 Pet. 2:15; Jude 1:11; Rev. 2:14; Also Caiaphas, John 11:49-51<sup>2</sup>).

Jonathan, Michal, the assassins, and even Saul himself were used to deliver David whether it was their intent or against their intent. God does "His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth" (Dan. 4:35). When the threats of the enemies of the gospel come at you, when the trials of faith seem overwhelming, flee to the house of doctrine and there find rest and freedom from fear. If God is

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<sup>1</sup> 20:1, And David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said before Jonathan, What have I done? what is mine iniquity? and what is my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life?

<sup>2</sup> 2 Pet. 2:15, Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness. **Jude 1:11**, Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core. **Rev. 2:14**, But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. **Also Caiaphas, John 11:49-51**, And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation.

for you, even your enemies will serve for your good.

Saul will not relent, but his anger and hatred are always controlled even as our Lord speaks to the mighty ocean and says, “Hither shalt thou come and no further” (Job 38:11). David trusted the Lord.

\*David wrote of this incident in Psalm 59.



# A MAN

## 1 Samuel 20:1-42

1, And David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said before Jonathan, What have I done? what is mine iniquity? and what is my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life?

2, And he said unto him, God forbid; thou shalt not die: behold, my father will do nothing either great or small, but that he will shew it me: and why should my father hide this thing from me? it is not so.

3, And David sware moreover, and said, Thy father certainly knoweth that I have found grace in thine eyes; and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved: but truly as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death.

4, Then said Jonathan unto David, Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee.

5, And David said unto Jonathan, Behold, to morrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat: but let me go, that I may hide myself in the field unto the third day at even.

6, If thy father at all miss me, then say, David earnestly asked leave of me that he might run to Bethlehem his city: for there is a yearly sacrifice there for all the family.

7, If he say thus, It is well; thy servant shall have peace: but if he be very wroth, then be sure that evil is determined by him.

8, Therefore thou shalt deal kindly with thy servant; for thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of the LORD with thee: notwithstanding, if there be in me iniquity, slay me thyself; for why shouldst thou bring me to thy father?

9, And Jonathan said, Far be it from thee: for if I knew certainly that evil were determined by my father to come upon thee, then would not I tell it thee?

10, Then said David to Jonathan, Who shall tell me? or what if thy father answer thee roughly?

11, And Jonathan said unto David, Come, and let us go out into the field. And they went out both of them into the field.

12, And Jonathan said unto David, O LORD God of Israel, when I have sounded my father about to morrow any time, or the third day, and, behold, if there be good toward David, and I then send not unto thee, and shew it thee;

13, The LORD do so and much more to Jonathan: but if it please my father to do thee evil, then I will shew it thee, and send thee away, that thou mayest go in peace: and the LORD be with thee, as he hath been with my father.

14, And thou shalt not only while yet I live shew me the kindness of the LORD, that I die not:

15, But also thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever: no, not when the LORD hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth.

16, So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, Let the LORD even require it at the hand of David's enemies.

17, And Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him: for he loved him as he loved his own soul.

18, Then Jonathan said to David, To morrow is the new moon: and thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty.

19, And when thou hast stayed three days, then thou shalt go down quickly, and come to the place where thou didst hide thyself when the business was in hand, and shalt remain by the stone Ezel.

20, And I will shoot three arrows on the side thereof, as though I shot at a mark.

21, And, behold, I will send a lad, saying, Go, find out the arrows. If I expressly say unto the lad, Behold, the arrows are on this side of thee, take them; then come thou: for there is peace to thee, and no hurt; as the

LORD liveth.

22, But if I say thus unto the young man, Behold, the arrows are beyond thee; go thy way: for the LORD hath sent thee away.

23, And as touching the matter which thou and I have spoken of, behold, the LORD be between thee and me for ever.

24, So David hid himself in the field: and when the new moon was come, the king sat him down to eat meat.

25, And the king sat upon his seat, as at other times, even upon a seat by the wall: and Jonathan arose, and Abner sat by Saul's side, and David's place was empty.

26, Nevertheless Saul spake not any thing that day: for he thought, Something hath befallen him, he is not clean; surely he is not clean.

27, And it came to pass on the morrow, which was the second day of the month, that David's place was empty: and Saul said unto Jonathan his son, Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat, neither yesterday, nor to day?

28, And Jonathan answered Saul, David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Bethlehem:

29, And he said, Let me go, I pray thee; for our family hath a sacrifice in the city; and my brother, he hath commanded me to be there: and now, if I have found favour in thine eyes, let me get away, I pray thee, and see my brethren. Therefore he cometh not unto the king's table.

30, Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, Thou son of the perverse rebellious woman, do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion, and unto the confusion of thy mother's nakedness?

31, For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die.

32, And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said unto him, Wherefore shall he be slain? what hath he done?

33, And Saul cast a javelin at him to smite him: whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to slay David.

34, So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat no meat the second day of the month: for he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame.

35, And it came to pass in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little lad with him.

36, And he said unto his lad, Run, find out now the arrows which I shoot. And as the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him.

37, And when the lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried after the lad, and said, Is not the arrow beyond thee?

38, And Jonathan cried after the lad, Make speed, haste, stay not. And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master.

39, But the lad knew not any thing: only Jonathan and David knew the matter.

40, And Jonathan gave his artillery unto his lad, and said unto him, Go, carry them to the city.

41, And as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of a place toward the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded.

42, And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD, saying, The LORD be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever. And he arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city.

**I** do not intend to do an exposition of this entire chapter because in truth it is an introduction to a sad episode in the life of David. Though David is often a picture and type of the Christ (as the anointed king), though he is a man after God's own heart, and though he is a child of God and

his place in the history of believers is secure, in this twentieth chapter we are privileged to be once again reminded that the best of men are yet men. The biographies and autobiographies penned by men often leave the reader feeling that the subject of the story is without fault. I confess that I used to read the stories of great “Christians”, and all it led to was depression over the fact that I could never reach the heights of spirituality which they supposedly reached.

When the Lord gave me faith, I stopped reading them and began to read this blessed book, where real men and women with real frailties are seen, warts and all. David is a great hero, and he is a frail impotent creature. He is a saint who is a sinner. He is like Rahab, who was delivered by God, but referred to throughout the Old and New Testaments as a harlot. The believer will always be, as long as he lives on the earth, a whore/saint—flesh and spirit. He will sometimes sin with utter abandon and at other times worship with a heart made pure by grace. One unaware of this truth will see David loading his sling with that river stone and hearing his words (17:45-46<sup>1</sup>) in contrast to his behavior in this chapter (v. 1) and think that he is not a child of God at all or that he has lost his salvation. Know this, as a believer born of God by His will, by His Spirit, through His word, nothing you do will affect God's relationship with you, but everything you do affects your relationship with Him.

What David will experience in these next few chapters is what he will refer to in Psalm 51 as losing the joy of his salvation. The equation to reach this place is simple. All that one has to do is try to accomplish in the flesh what can only be accomplished by the grace of God. David had been

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<sup>1</sup> 17:45-46, Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.

delivered by God many times, from lions, bears, the sword of Goliath and from the javelin of Saul, but now we see him cowering in fear and inventing lies and schemes to save himself.

David is real. He is a sinner saved by grace whose reliance on self in this episode will cost the lives of many. His kingdom will be marked by the sword and not the plowshare. He will show himself to be a great hero and a frail creature. Troubles do not end when a person is brought to faith in Christ; they begin. When Abraham was buried, on one side of his grave was Isaac, the son born of promise. On the other side of the grave was Ishmael, the son born of the flesh. You may have times when you stand as a fortress against all that is false, but rest assured that there will be as many, if not more times, that you will be a beaten and cowardly creature. You are not alone in your dilemma. Elijah stood as a giant against the 400 prophets of Baal on Carmel but cowered in fear and fled in terror when Jezebel threatened his life. Simon Peter stepped out of a ship to walk on water but later denied the Lord three times, trembling at the accusation of the young maid. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12). Remember, it is easier to trust God when you are overcoming than when you are overcome.

This part of David's life is an admonition, a warning, and a reminder of the course we often take that leads to shame and dishonor. Verse 1 gives us a sense of where David's mind is centered. He is about the business of saving his life, which, in and of itself, is not necessarily a bad thing. It *is* evidence however that the man who has *heretofore* committed his way to the Lord is now charting a different course. "I," "mine," and "my" have taken over David's thoughts.

How did this happen? The error is seen in the first phrase. "David fled from Naioth in Ramah." There it is. It is plain and painfully obvious. He left the house of doctrine. He left the counsel of Samuel, the man whom God had used to

anoint him above his fellows to be king. He left the fellowship of the prophets. This is where sin always takes us. It takes us from our help and causes us to rely on our impotent selves. Sin is a deceiver, and when it begins to control our thoughts, we absent ourselves from what would help us the most. I have seen time and time again over the years that when a believer ought to stay fast in the place where other believers reside, clinging to the things that attend the worship of God, whether because of fear, discovery or shame, for some reason, the first thing abandoned is the house of God, and it is the worst thing that we could do (Heb. 10:25; Acts 2:42<sup>1</sup>). The greatest help and support that God has provided for our sojourn here is the doctrine and the fellowship. Worshipping the Lord in spirit and truth with fellow sinner/saints is the sweetest of things. David himself related this to us under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Isa.42:1-2; Ps. 84:10; 137:4<sup>2</sup>). David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and there was nothing left but to wander in the wilderness.

When this first fateful step is taken, every avenue of self-reliance opens to the believer. David reveals who he is now trusting by going immediately to Jonathan (v. 1). Here we also see that once this progression begins, our eyes are blinded by our self-interest, so much so that we cannot see what is before us. Jonathan knew that his father was out for David's blood, but he defends Saul (v. 2). David should have immediately known that Jonathan had mixed loyalties at the

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<sup>1</sup> **Heb. 10:25**, Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. **Acts 2:42**, And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

<sup>2</sup> **Isa.42:1-2**, Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. **Ps. 84:10**, For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. **137:4**, How shall we sing the LORD'S song in a strange land?

least, or was a blatant liar at the worst. Why trust in Jonathan? Perhaps it was because he loved Jonathan, but verse 3 seems to indicate that David was so consumed with fear for his life that turning to Jonathan was done by desperate choice. He even invokes the name of the LORD as an oath of proof that he is standing at death's door. I find it interesting that he speaks the name of Jehovah, the Savior of the people, as an assurance that he cannot be saved unless he colludes with another human being. Jonathan relents and promises to help David (v. 4)

What follows is the natural course of turning your eyes from Christ. If you leave the truth, there is nothing left but the lie. David spins a lie about going to Bethlehem to prove Saul's intentions (vv. 5-7). David, knowing Jonathan's allegiance, even tells Jonathan to kill him himself if what he says is not so (v. 8). Jonathan agrees to help David and concocts a plan to let David know the outcome of his lie. But, as this is all done without any seeking of God's help, it all ends in Jonathan becoming the target of his father's hatred (v. 30). The bit about Jonathan's mother's nakedness means her shame when her son does not ascend to the throne. Saul tells his son to fetch David so that he can kill him. When Jonathan tries to defend David, Saul chucked his javelin at Jonathan and he finally knew, without a doubt, that His father was out to kill David.

In the end, David continues to flee. He must leave his friend Jonathan and wander in fear of Saul. This was the beginning of this episode in David's life, and this bad beginning will bring about much worse things.

We are privileged to have the end of the story and see that history is God working all things for the good of his elect. Though he is not acting thus, David is still the apple of God's eye, and though he suffers him to fall into this temptation, he will be delivered at the time appointed. Patience will have her perfect work. We do not know what

God is doing at present, we cannot know (Eccles. 3:11-15<sup>1</sup>). But He has put us in the cleft of the rock and shown us the hinder parts (what he has done). This weakness of David, brought about a covenant concerning Jonathan's family (v. 14-15, 42). The result of this covenant will bring a crippled, dead dog, named Mephibosheth to sit at king David's table (Col. 3:1-4<sup>2</sup>).

It is David, a man whose steps are directed by God that will write:

“Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass . . . The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand. I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread. He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed. Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore. For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever” (Ps. 37:5, 23-28).

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<sup>1</sup> Eccles. 3:11-15, He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end. I know that there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoice, and to do good in his life. And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God. I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him. That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past.

<sup>2</sup> Col. 3:1-4, If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.



# FEAR

## 1 Samuel 21:1-9

1, Then came David to Nob to Ahimelech the priest: and Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David, and said unto him, Why art thou alone, and no man with thee?

2, And David said unto Ahimelech the priest, The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know any thing of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee: and I have appointed my servants to such and such a place.

3, Now therefore what is under thine hand? give me five loaves of bread in mine hand, or what there is present.

4, And the priest answered David, and said, There is no common bread under mine hand, but there is hallowed bread; if the young men have kept themselves at least from women.

5, And David answered the priest, and said unto him, Of a truth women have been kept from us about these three days, since I came out, and the vessels of the young men are holy, and the bread is in a manner common, yea, though it were sanctified this day in the vessel.

6, So the priest gave him hallowed bread: for there was no bread there but the shewbread, that was taken from before the LORD, to put hot bread in the day when it was taken away.

7, Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the LORD; and his name was Doeg, an Edomite, the chiefest of the herdmen that belonged to Saul.

8, And David said unto Ahimelech, And is there not here under thine hand spear or sword? for I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me, because the

king's business required haste.

9, And the priest said, The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the valley of Elah, behold, it is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod: if thou wilt take that, take it: for there is no other save that here. And David said, There is none like that; give it me.

**F**ear debilitates. When the child of God takes his eyes off Christ, it will not be long until fear ensues. With eyes turned from Christ, all that is left is employment of the flesh. Christ is singular and complete and all that is necessary for the child of God to grow and be filled. One cannot be confused looking to Christ, but the things available to the flesh are manifold and the avenues that can be traveled look like a big city grid. All the roads that may be traveled lead father and farther from Christ, and time and distance feed the fear of the heart. For the child of God, these forays into the realm of fear will prove to be a vital part of the trial of faith. Providence, for the child of God, is always viewed in hindsight.

The believer knows that God's sovereign providence is guiding his steps, but the minutia of the particulars cannot be discerned. The believer's life mirrors the children of Israel who took forty years to make an eleven-day journey in the wilderness. We might think that we are bright for a moment, but if God suffers us some liberty to be on our own for a bit, we will find that He has indeed chosen the foolish and the base things of this world rather than the wise and the noble. God suffers his children to fall into diverse temptations, and it is always for their good, though during the trial we are sure to find out our consummate weakness and impotency.

During the trial we may think, say, and do things that we would never have thought ourselves capable of (Ps. 77:1-9<sup>1</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> Ps. 77:1-9, I cried unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice; and he gave ear unto me. In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: my sore ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted. I

These reminders of our weakness are the gold of faith being refined in the fires of trial. Our embarrassing acts are the dross that must be consumed, that the gold may be refined (Mal. 3:1-4; 1 Pet.1:5-9<sup>1</sup>). We thank God that, though we fall, we will not be utterly cast down and sin will not have dominion over us. During the trial, it may seem that we are goners, but we are not; we are being made ensamples (not examples 1 Thes. 1:4-7<sup>2</sup>).

As we saw in the last study, the Lord suffered David to be overcome by his circumstances. The Lord lifted, as it were, His hand of restraint and David immediately began to make

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remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Selah. Thou holdest mine eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak. I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times. I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search. Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Selah.

<sup>1</sup> Mal. 3:1-4, Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years. 1 Pet.1:5-9, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Thes. 1:4-7, Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.

crippling choices. The same man who, in the Spirit, slew the giant, killed bears and lions, and slew his ten thousands now cowers at the thought of Saul. He began to avail himself to the avenues of the flesh, and the trial of his faith began in earnest. In David's actions, in this brief bit of history, we are allowed to view a child of God amid trial and his course as he applies to the flesh to solve his problems. Herein is a great lesson, an expose' of the lengths to which we will go, by the flesh, to undo what only the grace of God can.

There are four things here that somewhat reveal to us the pathology of the flesh. Before we look at them, there is one thing that must be seen. David is full of fear and fleeing from Saul, but there is no indication that Saul is actively pursuing him. The Word says, "The wicked flee when no man pursueth" (Lev. 26:17). Fear has turned a mighty hero into a fearful, foolish man. Shakespeare said, "Conscience makes cowards of us all." The flesh invigorates the conscience; the conscience directs the flesh to undo its dilemma, and the flesh applies to works and religion to aid in its recovery. The result is not deliverance but greater and more consuming fear. What we have before us is the fool's path and the fool is us.

First revealed is that the flesh leaves the fellowship and communion of the house of doctrine (20:1<sup>1</sup>). The flesh and the Spirit are always contrary to one another. If one walks in the Spirit, he will "not fulfill the lust of the flesh". Conversely if one walks in the flesh, he cannot operate in the realm of the Spirit (Gal 5:16-17<sup>2</sup>). "If we say we have fellowship with God and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth" (1 John 1:6). Rather than fall on Christ, David leaves the very things that are his present help. In effect, he turns off the

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<sup>1</sup> 20:1, And David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said before Jonathan, What have I done? what is mine iniquity? and what is my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life?

<sup>2</sup> Gal 5:16-17, This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

light and curses the darkness. May God give us leave to access the grace wherein we stand and recognize the bent of our flesh to take matters into our own hands.

The second thing revealed is the inevitable. If we turn from the spiritual, we have nothing left but to apply to the flesh. David left the house of faith and went immediately to Jonathan for help (20:1-2<sup>1</sup>). It is good to have friends, but Scripture declares, “Trust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide: keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom” (Mic. 7:5<sup>2</sup>). He covenanted with Jonathan because he forgot the covenant of God. This is always the case. His covenant with Jonathan was not based on trust in the Lord but in the various machinations of trickery, lies and falsehood to remedy his situation. Simply having left the comfort of Christ, he had only the discomfort of the flesh to turn to, and in the end, that will prove to separate you further from your help.

The third thing revealed is our natural bent to religion. In our text, David goes to Ahimelech in Nob. David had left Samuel and the prophets, and having gained no real help from Jonathan, now goes to Nob (“a high place”) to seek out Ahimelech (“my brother the king”). Ahimelech was high priest. But Ahimelech was not predisposed to help David because he also feared king Saul (v. 1). Religion is not a refuge *from* fear, it is a refuge *of* fear. It operates on fear of loss or censure. Ahimelech was not interested in helping David; he was interested only in saving his own hide. Religion will help you only so long as you do not put them at risk or require of them what they are not capable of doing. If

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<sup>1</sup> 20:1-2, And David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said before Jonathan, What have I done? what is mine iniquity? and what is my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life? And he said unto him, God forbid; thou shalt not die: behold, my father will do nothing either great or small, but that he will shew it me: and why should my father hide this thing from me? it is not so.

<sup>2</sup> Mic. 7:5, Trust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a guide: keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom.

you are somewhat able to help yourself with a little visit to Dr. Law, and pull yourself up by your bootstraps, then religion is your ticket. But if you are impotent, dead, ruined, and beyond repair, religion has no use for you and is no use to you. David was in terror and fear, and religion wanted nothing to do with him.

So, David did what will grab the mind of religion every time. He employs a lie. He tells Ahimelech a mysterious story, about how he is on a secret mission. What was driving David at this time was hunger, not for righteousness, but for the bread that does not satisfy. He wanted religion to give him something to fulfill the need of his flesh. David wanted the showbread that belonged to the priests (v. 3). Ahimelech saw an advantage. He would employ the law to keep David from having the bread (v. 4; Ex. 19:15<sup>1</sup>). "This bread is for holy men, not for just anybody." This abuse of the law has not changed. In fact, our Lord used this incident of David and the showbread to set the Pharisees straight when they tried to indict the disciples for shucking corn and eating on the Sabbath.

Our Lord said that David ate that which was designated for the priests when he was *hungry* and that it was all right. Religion holds rites and rituals to be more important than life. David's hunger overrode the ceremony. David argued that the men with him had met the requirements of the law. His wording is interesting. He does not say that he and the men had voluntarily or as a matter of principle foregone the use of women; his words suggest that the use of women had not been available to them (v. 5). However, with religion, appearance is often enough. David got his bread and satisfied his hunger.

Fifth and finally, we see generally a revelation of the true depravity of the flesh in vv. 8-9. David, having left the safety

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<sup>1</sup> Ex. 19:15, And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day: come not at your wives.

of those things that represented the grace of God, having sought help in the flesh, and having applied to religion, now seeks a weapon. He had slain Goliath with a *sling* and a *stone*, but *fear* makes the enemy bigger than he is. Saul was not pursuing, but David was so caught up in terror that he felt he was “but a step away from death” (20:3).

With another lie he asks for a weapon, and there is nothing there but the sword of Goliath (v. 8-9). Why it was there is not known. Perhaps it was an object of entertainment or a kind of trophy. But *we* know it was there because it is some dross that must be consumed. David's words show the lust of the flesh, “There is none like that.” In the valley of Elah, this one-of-a-kind weapon was no match for the sling and the stone. Now it is given imagined power by David's estimation.

What is revealed here is that when we have applied to the flesh to solve our problems and allay our fears, we will even resort to using the weapon of the defeated enemy. We begin to believe (in unbelief) that if we work more, pray more, attend more, do more, or even eat the fruit from the forbidden tree, we will be better off for our efforts. These are Satan's weapons and the Savior defeated him! He will promise power, but his end is utter ruin.

So, we are well warned of our initial response to trials. It is sad but true that we can point to many if not all these things as our experience as the child of God.

One last thing. As sad as David's responses to his fears were, we know that they were trials of faith. David is a child of God! He is the anointed king. During this part of his trial, his needs were met by God. He ate the showbread. The showbread was a type and picture of Christ. It was bread for the priests, and believers are a royal priesthood. It was bread, and Christ is the bread of life. It was pierced bread, pierced through with an awl. Christ was pierced in his hands, feet, and side. Our food is Christ (John 6). Amid your trials, oh believer—when you falter, apply to the flesh, and make

horrid choices—the God who has saved you will sustain you with the substance of heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ.

# FEAR AND UNDERSTANDING

## 1 Samuel 21:10-22:2

10, And David arose, and fled that day for fear of Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath.

11, And the servants of Achish said unto him, Is not this David the king of the land? did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands?

12, And David laid up these words in his heart, and was sore afraid of Achish the king of Gath.

13, And he changed his behaviour before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scrabbled on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard.

14, Then said Achish unto his servants, Lo, ye see the man is mad: wherefore then have ye brought him to me?

15, Have I need of mad men, that ye have brought this fellow to play the mad man in my presence? shall this fellow come into my house?

1, David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him.

2, And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men.

**A**s I was considering this passage, I read some commentaries and I confess that they left me with more questions than answers. Something happened here that is not discovered in a cursory appraisal of the history of the events themselves. There is no doubt that David is under extreme stress, brought about by several bad decisions. The most prominent of these is that during this trial of faith

he continually looked to himself for help and left those things that were the only true source where he could find help.

When we take our eyes off Christ, there is nothing left but the flesh and the flesh operates entirely on the principle of self-preservation. When this state of mind overtakes us, fear and dread are soon to follow and they become our constant and accusing companions. When we are brought as the prodigal, to see ourselves, we are not exempt from relying on the flesh but beneath all our endeavors begins a longing for the home and hearth of God's presence. It may initially be but a blip on our radar but is there nonetheless and in our mind we begin the journey home. When we finally arrive, we realize that the temptations and trials that we have undergone have proved to make us appreciate of our savior more, and that what has transpired in our lives has been by divine design, for our good, and God's glory.

We have seen how the mind of fear drives us to make rash and foolish decisions. The giant slayer is running for his life. The anointed king is fleeing from the deposed despot. He ends up, as every believer, to begin to think that perhaps the arms of the enemy are more secure than what he knows to be true. The old man is not done with the religion of his nativity, and our frailty is such that we are quicker to revert to the beggarly elements of the world than we are willing to admit. We find David fleeing to Achish and what follows is very telling. Just as Simon Peter was discovered by the young maiden because his speech betrayed him, every believer will be found out by the enemy because he does not belong among them. David's deeds as the destroyer of the Philistines, his reputation as a defender of Israel had preceded him and the enemy immediately discovered him.

The servants of Achish outed him to their master (v.11).

“And the servants of Achish said unto him, Is not this David the king of the land? did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying, Saul hath slain his

thousands, and David his ten thousands?”

Notice how they describe David. They call him “king of the land.” This seems to suggest that they knew of his anointing. Perhaps it was their own estimation of David as they compared him to Saul, based on the praise that David had received. Whatever the reason, they called him king of the land. Knowing how the Philistines despised Israel, it would not be out of reason to think that their description was designed to evoke the wrath of Achish. One interpretation of the phrase “king of the land” is “king of the whole earth.” Either way, they were fighting words, and David knew he was in trouble.

Verses 13 reveals how smart David was in this incident. It would be easy to take what he did as another revelation of him resorting to the wisdom of the flesh to fix his situation. Achish’s reaction to David’s pretended insanity made it possible for David to flee to the cave of Adullam and to relative safety from his enemy. All of this may seem to be a mere historical record of David’s wit in the face of adversity, but the gathering of the people to David in the cave (22:2) was what caused me to ponder. Clearly, within the context it appears that David ceases to be a type of the believer giving into the flesh and becomes a picture of the King who is the Savior of sinners.

The key to understanding this is verse 12.

“And David *laid up* these words in his heart, and was *sore afraid* of Achish the king of Gath.”

Though the words may be viewed as a report of David reacting in the flesh to his discovery and responding in reasonable fear to his disclosure, that does not seem to account for the change in type and the willing journey of these 400 people to be at his side in a cave—on the run. A closer look at the language of verse 12 gives us an

understanding of the difference from David in fear and David as the refuge of these people. The difference is found in the phrases “laid up” and “sore afraid.” Both the words “laid” and “afraid” denote action or an act. It is easy to see that “laid up” is an act but the word translated here as “afraid “ suggests a state of being. The word “afraid” is actually the verb “feared.” The suggestion is that both of these acts were *purposeful*.

If the verse is read in this light then David, after being reminded by his enemies that he was indeed the king and the savior of the people, purposed something in his heart. What he purposed was to *appear* as if he feared. The word “sore” suggest an overabundance, a muchness, and exceedingly unreasonable amount. The result of this purposed fear was a display of utter madness.

Its *design* was to act upon the truth spoken by his enemies. He *was the anointed king* and he would wait on the Lord to raise him up. His flight to Adullam was to begin anew his journey to the throne. This may seem to some, to be a matter of semantics, but under the veneer of the drooling idiot was the mind and heart of the poet. David had a new thing in his heart, a reminder of what God had in store for him. His fear of Saul was diminished as he began again to trust the Lord. Verse 12 reveals a wakeup call by which David began again to mind the things of the spirit. We know this because of the psalms that were given him during this episode of his trial (Ps. 34 [*LORD, a Provider and Deliverer*]; Psa. 56 [*Supplication for Deliverance and Grateful Trust in God*]). In the mind of the *purposefully* pretended facade of the mad man is the inspired words of faith and trust in Christ.

Another important thing to note is that though David fled from Saul, he was *cast out* by Achish (Matt. 8:20; John 7:53-8: 1<sup>1</sup>). Our Lord’s enemies called him a mad man (John

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. 8: 20; And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

John 7:53-8:1, And every man went unto his own house. Jesus went unto the mount of Olives.

10: 20). Our Lord never pretended to be insane, but His words brought about that reaction. Our Lord never fled from His enemies but often merely disappeared from their midst because he was on a purposed mission, and His actions were, in truth, a dismissal of their supposed power. David's actions were much the same. He purposed to trust the Lord, and his plan was a dismissal of Achish's power. David is the anointed king and being the king means that he has a kingdom, and as he resorts to Adullam the kingdom will begin to be realized. There are some things here that will cause our heart to rejoice (22:1-2).

Though David was pursued by Saul, his enemy, the people sought him. The enemies of the gospel hate Christ and His people. But sinners still come to him. They come because they hear where He is. Though David's family could not see his throne, they knew that he was king, and nothing could prevent them from being with him. The family of God, the elect of God, come to where Christ is. They don't come to religion; they don't come to the cross—He's not there. They don't come to the mourner's bench or the church altar—they come to where he is. They don't see the throne but in their hearts they know he is King and Lord. They come to their King and Lord.

The elect are aptly described in verse 2.

Everyone that was in distress—that is “all that labor and are heavy laden” (Matt. 11:28).

Everyone that was in debt. Christ paid our sin debt—“once in the end of the world, [he] put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (Heb. 9:26)—He “[bore] our sins in His own body on the tree” (1 Pet. 2:24).

Everyone discontented (bitter of soul) came. “All they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them (Luke 4:40; 1).

And He became their salvation. I love words. It doesn't

say that he saved them (though he had and would) it says that he became their captain (Ps. 118:14-24; Heb. 2:10). Christ is our salvation—the entirety of it!

# HONOR

## 1 Samuel 22:3-4

3, And David went thence to Mizpeh of Moab: and he said unto the king of Moab, Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth, and be with you, till I know what God will do for me.

4, And he brought them before the king of Moab: and they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the hold.

**I**n the last lesson, we saw David in the cave Adullam where his family and a group of outcasts came to him. He became their captain, and the group of outcasts became the army of David. We know that David pictured the Lord Jesus Christ and those miscreants that came to Him as the captain of their salvation. In this text David takes his family to Moab for their safety because the vengeance of Saul was a threat to every member of David's family, as well as all who followed David.

We also saw the beginnings of David's return to the Lord. His enemies had reminded him of who he was and what God had anointed him to do, and he kept their words in his heart. The two verses of this text get us a little further along in David's return to the Lord.

We know that he wrote several Psalms during this time he spent in the cave (Read Psalm 142). From this we can see the despair of David as well as his hope and confidence. In his heart he is in the presence of his merciful Lord. Though he has employed the flesh to get in this fix, he has been brought to see the utter uselessness of trusting in his own judgment.

Before we look at this passage, I want us to look at an incident recorded for us that took place while David was in

the Cave. It is recorded in the history of David's mighty men in 2 Samuel 23:14-17, and truly gives us a sense of the spiritual place to which David had arrived in the seclusion of the cave.

“And David was then in an hold, and the garrison of the Philistines was then in Bethlehem. And David longed, and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate! And the three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David: nevertheless he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the LORD. And he said, Be it far from me, O LORD, that I should do this: is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives? therefore he would not drink it. These things did these three mighty men” (2 Samuel 23:14-17).

David was thirsty and he vocally expressed his longing for a drink of water from the well in his hometown. When you are away from home, it is the little things that the mind remembers. To David this was probably nothing more than daydreaming out loud. It was not a command; it was just a man thinking of home.

But he was the king, the captain who had taken in the poor, the debtor, and the distressed, and he was beloved of his followers. What David wanted was, to his men, the desire of *their* heart, even if it was but a dream. To these three men in verse 16, the desire of the king was their heart's command. Here was an opportunity to serve their beloved benefactor and champion, and they broke through the line of Philistines surrounding Bethlehem, and at risk of their own lives, they brought water to their king. They honored him because they believed that he was worthy. Here is an example of true love, *it* is ready to immediately serve and honor the loved one. Love is sacrifice—it is always about the loved one and never

about being loved or getting anything in return. These men disregarded themselves. In effect, they gave their lives because they loved their king.

David would not drink it, but instead poured it out on the ground. In this act and the words that follow, we see the heart of David and that his mind has returned to the honor and glory of God. David knew that no mere man, no matter his rank, was worthy of such sacrifice and honor. He, by this act, was honoring the sacrifice of these three men (Phil. 2:17-18<sup>1</sup>). The fragrance of what these had done for him was too high an honor for him to accept. It was, he knew, a picture of that great and acceptable sacrifice of Christ that was a sweet-smelling savor to God, and not meant for the nostrils of men.

David's men had *jeopardized* their lives to give him water. Our Lord *sacrificed* his life to give us the water of life that we might never thirst. David poured out the water as a drink offering to God, to glorify His name in the sacrifice of his Son for unworthy sinners. The glory for the salvation of sinners belongs to Christ alone. No man has part in that salvation, so no man is worthy of such honor and glory. Glory is singular, and if glory can be shared, it is not glory. David honored God in this cave.

That heart of David is revealed in our text. David's interest is in the welfare of his mother and father. He is obedient to the commandment of God, to honor his father and his mother. Many years later our Lord would confront some very religious who had found a way to set aside the law of honoring your mother and father (Mark. 7:5-13<sup>2</sup>). David

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<sup>1</sup> Phil. 2:17-18, Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all. For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me.

<sup>2</sup> Mark. 7:5-13, Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands? He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me,

honored his mother and father, and in doing so, honored God who wrote the law and pictured the one who would inherit his throne, David's son, and David's Lord (John 19:25-27<sup>1</sup>). Notice the words of David as he seeks help for his mom and dad (v. 3), "Til I know what the Lord will do for me." He does not say "to me" but "for me." Here, we see how far he has come in his return to the Lord. He does not leave his mom and dad and set out to fix his problem. He bows to the wisdom and will of God. He trusts the Lord to fight *for* him and accomplish what cannot be accomplished in the flesh. It is also clear that he trusts the Lord to let him know as we see in verse 5<sup>2</sup> that he has found the prophet Gad, so he can know what the Lord says.

In this episode there is a revelation of the blessed estate of the child of God. In this life we all do things of which we are ashamed. We often resort to the flesh, and sometimes we feel as if we have so far removed ourselves from God presence that we despair of returning. What we have done does not merely affect us but those around us as well. We may have indeed left the joy of our salvation, but we have never been even an inch outside the scope of God's providence. In

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teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.

<sup>1</sup>John 19:25-27, Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.

<sup>2</sup>5, And the prophet Gad said unto David, Abide not in the hold; depart, and get thee into the land of Judah. Then David departed, and came into the forest of Hareth.

Christ, we live and move and have our being. When providence brings the child of God to a low place, it is there his eyes will open to find that the Lord has always been with him. Our lives are full of returns because we are so prone to wander. I have often said that my life has been one do-over after another. When we return, we will find such a welcome that it will seem as if we never left at all. David has returned. He has honored God by honoring his mother and father, and he has minded the things of the Spirit having formed several psalms of praise in his heart. Our best days are filled with the joy of having experienced the diverse temptations we fall into, to then find ourselves at the feet of Christ. Draw nigh unto the Lord; He will draw nigh unto you.

Once again in this text we are confronted with the great, mighty, and sovereign hand of God. David took his mother and father to Moab. The Moabites were as the Ammonites, Edomites, and other surrounding nations—enemies of Israel. They had all been at the business end of Saul's javelin, and since David had slain his ten thousands, there was no reason to think that he would be welcome in that place. Did David roll the dice and take a chance that the king of Moab would receive him?

What made him choose this enemy's land above all other around him? Though the reason is not explicit, it is clearly implicit. To find it we must go back just 22 chapters to the book that precedes this one. David's great grandmother had lived there. She was a Moabitish woman by the name of Ruth who was in the lineage of Him who would occupy David's throne. With Boaz, the kinsman redeemer and one who had the right to redeem, Ruth gave birth to Obed, the father of Jesse, the father of David. It is possible that David and Ruth were even contemporaries. She was young when she married Boaz and David is still a young man at the time of our text. Surely the great story of Naomi's return and the marriage of Boaz to the Moabitish woman was common knowledge and a valued part of Israel's history. Also, there is a pretty good

indication that Naomi and Ruth were beloved by some in Moab (Ruth 1:14<sup>1</sup>). Providence guided David's mind to take his mother and father to the place of his great grandmother's nativity. No other enemy nation had familial ties with David save the birthplace of his great grandmother Ruth.

Praise the name of the Lord for His kind providence.

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<sup>1</sup>**Ruth 1:14**, And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her.

# COST

## 1 Samuel 22:22

22, And David said unto Abiathar, I knew it that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul: I have occasioned the death of all the persons of thy father's house.

## Numbers 32:1-42

1, Now the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of cattle: and when they saw the land of Jazer, and the land of Gilead, that, behold, the place was a place for cattle;

2, The children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spake unto Moses, and to Eleazar the priest, and unto the princes of the congregation, saying,

3, Ataroth, and Dibon, and Jazer, and Nimrah, and Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Shebam, and Nebo, and Beon,

4, Even the country which the LORD smote before the congregation of Israel, is a land for cattle, and thy servants have cattle:

5, Wherefore, said they, if we have found grace in thy sight, let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession, and bring us not over Jordan.

6, And Moses said unto the children of Gad and to the children of Reuben, Shall your brethren go to war, and shall ye sit here?

7, And wherefore discourage ye the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the LORD hath given them?

8, Thus did your fathers, when I sent them from Kadeshbarnea to see the land.

9, For when they went up unto the valley of Eshcol, and saw the land, they discouraged the heart of the children of Israel, that they should not go into the land

which the LORD had given them.

10, And the LORD'S anger was kindled the same time, and he sware, saying,

11, Surely none of the men that came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob; because they have not wholly followed me:

12, Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite, and Joshua the son of Nun: for they have wholly followed the LORD.

13, And the LORD'S anger was kindled against Israel, and he made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation, that had done evil in the sight of the LORD, was consumed.

14, And, behold, ye are risen up in your fathers' stead, an increase of sinful men, to augment yet the fierce anger of the LORD toward Israel.

15, For if ye turn away from after him, he will yet again leave them in the wilderness; and ye shall destroy all this people.

16, And they came near unto him, and said, We will build sheepfolds here for our cattle, and cities for our little ones:

17, But we ourselves will go ready armed before the children of Israel, until we have brought them unto their place: and our little ones shall dwell in the fenced cities because of the inhabitants of the land.

18, We will not return unto our houses, until the children of Israel have inherited every man his inheritance.

19, For we will not inherit with them on yonder side Jordan, or forward; because our inheritance is fallen to us on this side Jordan eastward.

20, And Moses said unto them, If ye will do this thing, if ye will go armed before the LORD to war,

21, And will go all of you armed over Jordan before the LORD, until he hath driven out his enemies from before him,

22, And the land be subdued before the LORD: then

afterward ye shall return, and be guiltless before the LORD, and before Israel; and this land shall be your possession before the LORD.

23, But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out.

24, Build you cities for your little ones, and folds for your sheep; and do that which hath proceeded out of your mouth.

25, And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben spake unto Moses, saying, Thy servants will do as my lord commandeth.

26, Our little ones, our wives, our flocks, and all our cattle, shall be there in the cities of Gilead:

27, But thy servants will pass over, every man armed for war, before the LORD to battle, as my lord saith.

28, So concerning them Moses commanded Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the chief fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel:

29, And Moses said unto them, If the children of Gad and the children of Reuben will pass with you over Jordan, every man armed to battle, before the LORD, and the land shall be subdued before you; then ye shall give them the land of Gilead for a possession:

30, But if they will not pass over with you armed, they shall have possessions among you in the land of Canaan.

31, And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben answered, saying, As the LORD hath said unto thy servants, so will we do.

32, We will pass over armed before the LORD into the land of Canaan, that the possession of our inheritance on this side Jordan may be ours.

33, And Moses gave unto them, even to the children of Gad, and to the children of Reuben, and unto half the tribe of Manasseh the son of Joseph, the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, and the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, the land, with the cities thereof in the coasts, even the cities of the country round about.

34, And the children of Gad built Dibon, and Ataroth, and Aroer,

35, And Atroth, Shophan, and Jaazer, and Jogbehah,  
36, And Bethnimrah, and Bethharan, fenced cities:  
and folds for sheep.

37, And the children of Reuben built Heshbon, and  
Elealeh, and Kirjathaim,

38, And Nebo, and Baalmeon, (their names being  
changed,) and Shibmah: and gave other names unto the  
cities which they builded.

39, And the children of Machir the son of Manasseh  
went to Gilead, and took it, and dispossessed the  
Amorite which was in it.

40, And Moses gave Gilead unto Machir the son of  
Manasseh; and he dwelt therein.

41, And Jair the son of Manasseh went and took the  
small towns thereof, and called them Havothjair.

42, And Nobah went and took Kenath, and the  
villages thereof, and called it Nobah, after his own name.

**D**avid's words of 1 Samuel 22:22 are a confession of the cost of his lying to Abimelech, taking Goliath's sword, and seeking comfort among the enemies of God. As I was considering his confession, another bit of Israel's history kept coming to my mind, one that speaks to the issue of the cost of employing the flesh while clinging to spiritual things. It is the story found in Numbers chapter 32 of the two and one-half tribes that chose to stay on the cursed side of the Jordan, rather than possess the Promised Land.

In Numbers 32:23 is found one of the most well-known phrases in all of Christendom. It is a phrase that has been both used and abused for a varied list of reasons too numerous to account. There we find the words, "Be sure your sins will find you out." The basic and primal meaning of this phrase is real to every believer, and it makes us wince to ponder it for only a moment. These words are a kind of detective that we need in our mind but often wish was not there. Even outside the context in which they are written, they carry a somber weight and cannot be spoken without stirring something

deep within us where we live. These words are simply, in and of themselves, true—"Be sure your sins will find you out".

These words are spoken to the tribes of Ruben, Gad and 1/2 the tribe of Manasseh concerning a promise that they had made. This promise was made by these tribes because they had made a wretched choice. These tribes had petitioned Moses and asked that they not be required to cross over Jordan and possess the land of promise. Instead, they desired to stay outside the Promised Land and give up rights to their property in exchange for being allowed to stay in the area of Og and Bashan because it was great land for raising cattle. Seeing that they desired the land that God had cursed because of the children's mixture of Baal-pear with true worship, Moses, as it were, saw the handwriting on the wall (Num. 32:10-15).

Having reminded them of the end of those over twenty years of age when they were delivered from Egypt who were now carcasses in the wilderness, Moses confronted them with the inevitable result of not possessing the land that God had given them. After rebuilding the cities that God had them to destroy, housing their families, and building up their cattle fortunes, they would in effect become the enemies of Israel if Israel was called to fight against the countries in which they lived.

As a remedy, they promised to leave their wives and children behind and cross over Jordan with every man of war to fight on the side of Israel if it was ever necessary, and further promised not to return to their homes until the battle was won. This satisfied Moses, and he allowed them to possess the land they desired and not to enter the Promised Land. I wonder what it did to Moses when he, who longed to enter the Promised Land but was not allowed because he sinned, saw these refuse to enter because they saw, with their eyes, the worldly goodness of the land outside Canaan and refused to see as God saw. In effect, they despised the Land that God had promised. It was in light of this promise that

Moses said to the two and one-half tribes, “Be sure your sins will find you out” *if* you fail to keep your promise. So, Ruben and Gad and the one-half tribe of Manasseh opted for a land other than that which God had given them.

I am reminded of another such verse that carries with it an equally somber tone. Psalms 106:15 says, “And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.” These two and one-half tribes chose not to possess the Promised Land. What was the difference between them and those in Numbers 14 who refused entrance because of fear? The only difference was the manifestation of *unbelief*. One would not go for fear of men and the other would not go for the promise of earthly gain.

Both desired the wilderness. Both refused to enter the Land of Promise. Remembering that these were yet of the tribes of Israel, God's chosen race, and that the New Testament theme of Numbers is the words of 1 Cor. 10:11, “All these things happened to them for examples [types]”, and that the tribes and their lives are a picture of Christ's Church in the world; this passage carries with it a disturbing truth and is under-girded with a stern and sobering warning.

Let us think not that as a child of God we are exempt from such an example of unbelief. Think not, though you are chosen of God, you will refrain from giving up the enjoyment of your divine heritage and privilege for the gain of this world. The Promised Land was not only a place, but it was also the fruit to be gained by being in that place. To taste the land that flowed with milk and honey, the feast of fat things, and the wine on the lees well refined, you had to be there. The land was the heritage of Ruben, Gad and Manasseh—God had given it to them, but they would never enjoy what was theirs because they chose what their eyes saw instead of what God had promised to faith. Their view was broad and horizontal instead of narrow and vertical. Their affections were set on things below rather than on the things above. They were looking at too many *things* instead of the *one thing*

needful (Matthew 6:22-23<sup>1</sup>). Salvation is not only the fact of it—the position that is the believer's—it is the enjoyment of it, the tasting of the grace of it. Sad as it is, the believer may choose to allow other believers to enjoy his portion because he has opted for the charms of this life and this world.

David's words in Psalm 51:12 are a prime example of this fact. "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit." David belonged to God. He was a man after God's own heart. Yet in a moment of unbelief, he fell into horrible sin beginning in adultery and ending in murder. He never ceased to be the child of God, but he, because of a wretched choice, lost the joy of God's salvation.

Imagine for a moment you have mounted on eagle's wings and below you is the Jordan River. On one side is the Promised Land, occupied by the children of God rejoicing in the realized promise. On the other side are some of the children of God living in the riches of this world. On the one side are the songs of Zion, the worship of the Lord, and the high priest. On the other side is the lyric of filthy lucre, no songs of Zion, only the discordant disharmonies of Baal-peor. On the one side is the testimony of God, and on the other, the testimony of man; the testimony that says, "Yes, I am a child of God, but I have planted my roots in a foreign land." Ruben, Gad and Manasseh were just a walk from the Promised Land, but their heart was a million miles away—so close yet so far away.

"Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it" (Heb. 4:1).

The testimony of God is sure, and His warnings are to

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<sup>1</sup> **Matt. 6:22-23**, The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

His people. The Apostle Paul warns in his first letter to the Corinthians:

“But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away” (1 Cor. 7:29-31).

Who is Paul speaking to?

“Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 1:3-4).

Here are the words of John found in his first general epistle to the church:

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love 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 pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 John 2:15-17).

Who is John speaking to?

“I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the

beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.” (1 John 2:12-14)

“Be sure your sins will find you out.”

Ruben, Gad and Manasseh stopped short of the promise and forfeited the right of realizing the joy that attended the promise. These have a name that designates them as a child of God. They defend the name of God and will die for the cause of God, but their testimony is that they love this present world (Rev. 3:1-6<sup>1</sup>).

Consider these tribes. See them for who they are, the place they hold in God's heritage, the choice they made, and pray God to forbid us to shirk it off as if it did not apply to us. This could be our story if God permits us to walk in the flesh and not the Spirit. Their promise, their life and their end are a chronicle of the believer who has planted his roots on the shifting sand of this world in three ways.

1. *Consider their promise:* (vv. 17-19). They promised to defend what they refused to enjoy. They promised to fight for what they refused to be a part of. It is a good thing to fight for what is right. But it is suspect if you fight for what is right so you can possess what is wrong. Our Lord said that if His kingdom were of this world, then His children would

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<sup>1</sup> **Rev. 3:1-6,** And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

fight for it (John 18:36<sup>1</sup>). These tribes did not fight for the Promised Land because they loved it; they fought for it so they could have what they wanted in this world. In this they were mercenaries.

The defense of the gospel is for Immanuel's Land, not for geographical, political, or worldly gain. If you do not enjoy the salvation that God purchased for you, yet fight for it while grasping this world, your warrior zeal is suspect. How many have foregone the fellowship of the church for thousands of reasons, yet staunchly defend the doctrine of God? How many have isolated themselves from the Lamb of God for the kine of Bashan who will yet fight tooth and nail for the Doctrine of Christ? I am thankful for their defense of the gospel but wonder why they refuse the enjoyment of the fruits that attend the gathering of God's people. It is a sad thing to have a brother or sister with whom there can be no fellowship because they are on the other side of Jordan. We would say to such, "Cross over Jordan, die to that other world, come and dine—this is your land also, your inheritance." It is suspect to fight for what you refuse to enjoy. What testimony do you really have if you, by choice, have come short of the promise?

Nicodemus is a New Testament example. Whether he was a believer or not, I do not know. Most commentators, just as I, believe that he *was* because he defended Christ (John 7:50-51<sup>2</sup>). Nicodemus' defense seems a little lame, and there is no indication that when he was pressed to confess Christ (John 7:48<sup>3</sup>) that he did. It simply states that he dispersed as did the rest of the bunch. He was always known in Scripture

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<sup>1</sup> **John 18:36**, Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

<sup>2</sup> **John 7:50-51**, Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,) Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?

<sup>3</sup> **John 7:48**, Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?

as the one who came to Jesus by night (John 19:39<sup>1</sup>) and we know what Christ said about such (John 3:2, 19-20<sup>2</sup>). He did anoint Christ for burial after He died, and that implies that he loved Christ, but he never openly confessed him for fear of the Jews. By all indicators, if He was a disciple of Christ, he made his camp on the wrong side of the Jordan. Proximity to the promise is not the same as realizing the promise. Defending the promise is not the same as enjoying the promise.

2. *Consider their life:* These two and one-half tribes kept their promise to fight but gained their wealth and prosperity outside the land of Canaan. With such choices, there will ultimately come a time when the one who made the wretched choice will have to justify what he did or confess his sin. There is no escaping this. The world is not stupid. nor are the children of God. If the life you live appears as if you have no interest in the things of God, yet you are willing to defend the truth, sooner or later your belief is going to be called into question. You have opted for that which cannot be defended or justified by your life.

What will such a one do? He will boast of his Christianity, and that in a big and visible way.

“And when they came unto the borders of Jordan, that are in the land of Canaan, the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh built there an altar by Jordan, *a great altar to see to*” (Josh. 22:10).

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<sup>1</sup> **John 19:39**, And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight.

<sup>2</sup> **John 3:2**, The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. **19-20**, And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.

These who remained east of the Jordan did not just build an altar; they built a *big* one, one that could be seen by those on the Canaan side of the Jordan. It was as if they were saying, “We know we don't have anything to do with you folks, but we are still believers—see how big our altar is? We don't come to worship with you, but we have cottage prayer meetings and teach the truth. We refuse to enjoy the promise with the children of God, but we preach, teach and defend the gospel of Grace.” I'm sorry; God is worshipped in the Promised Land and nowhere else. The high priest is there, the altar is there, the ark is there, the sacrifice is there, the ceremony is there, and nowhere else. Christ is in the midst of His Church (Rev. 1:10-13<sup>1</sup>). You may even come to hear a visiting preacher occasionally but choose not to hear the pastor or worship with the church.

The big altar does not wash. They have come short of the promise. “Be sure your sins will find you out”.

### 3. *Consider their end:*

“And out of the tribe of Gad, Ramoth in Gilead with her suburbs, to be a city of refuge for the slayer; and Mahanaim with her suburbs” (Josh. 21:38).

Ramoth in Gilead was the possession of the tribe of Gad. When war came to Israel in 1 Kings, those who encamped and made their homes short of the promise were the first to fall (1 Kings 22:1-3<sup>2</sup>). “Be sure your sins will find you out.”

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<sup>1</sup> Rev. 1:10-13, I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Kings 22:1-3, And they continued three years without war between

This chapter in Numbers is a somber warning to the children of God. Our LORD, during his earthly ministry, also admonished us;

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

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Syria and Israel. And it came to pass in the third year, that Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came down to the king of Israel. And the king of Israel said unto his servants, Know ye that Ramoth in Gilead is ours, and we be still, and take it not out of the hand of the king of Syria?

(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof' (Mathew 6:19-34).

# SELF

## 1 Samuel 22:5-23

5, And the prophet Gad said unto David, Abide not in the hold; depart, and get thee into the land of Judah. Then David departed, and came into the forest of Hareth.

6, When Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men that were with him, (now Saul abode in Gibeah under a tree in Ramah, having his spear in his hand, and all his servants were standing about him;)

7, Then Saul said unto his servants that stood about him, Hear now, ye Benjamites; will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, and make you all captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds;

8, That all of you have conspired against me, and there is none that sheweth me that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse, and there is none of you that is sorry for me, or sheweth unto me that my son hath stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?

9, Then answered Doeg the Edomite, which was set over the servants of Saul, and said, I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub.

10, And he enquired of the LORD for him, and gave him victuals, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine.

11, Then the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house, the priests that were in Nob: and they came all of them to the king.

12, And Saul said, Hear now, thou son of Ahitub. And he answered, Here I am, my lord.

13, And Saul said unto him, Why have ye conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse, in that thou hast given him bread, and a sword, and hast enquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?

14, Then Ahimelech answered the king, and said, And who is so faithful among all thy servants as David, which is the king's son in law, and goeth at thy bidding, and is honourable in thine house?

15, Did I then begin to enquire of God for him? be it far from me: let not the king impute any thing unto his servant, nor to all the house of my father: for thy servant knew nothing of all this, less or more.

16, And the king said, Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, thou, and all thy father's house.

17, And the king said unto the footmen that stood about him, Turn, and slay the priests of the LORD; because their hand also is with David, and because they knew when he fled, and did not shew it to me. But the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of the LORD.

18, And the king said to Doeg, Turn thou, and fall upon the priests. And Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the priests, and slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod.

19, And Nob, the city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and sucklings, and oxen, and asses, and sheep, with the edge of the sword.

20, And one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped, and fled after David.

21, And Abiathar shewed David that Saul had slain the LORD'S priests.

22, And David said unto Abiathar, I knew it that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul: I have occasioned the death of all the persons of thy father's house.

23, Abide thou with me, fear not: for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life: but with me thou shalt be in safeguard.

**T**he story before us is familiar in kind and stands as an example of the price we pay when we seek to solve our problems by resorting to the flesh, but the last two

verses of this chapter make it clear that David has come to see the error of his ways. He has obeyed the word of the Lord delivered to him by the prophet, left the country of Moab, and headed for Judah, where he will become the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. His coronation as king is on the horizon. While he makes his sojourn, the sins that he has committed are also running their course and exacting a terrible price.

After lying to Ahimelech, David had been helped by the priest. Doeg, the Edomite and a proselyte to Judaism, had overheard and seen the transaction between David and Ahimelech the priest. When Doeg reveals what he had witnessed to Saul, the king orders the slaughter of Ahimelech and his family. Doeg, after murdering eighty-five priests, sacks Nob, the city of priests, killing everything in sight. Saul had saved Agag and the sheep under the guise of mercy and sacrifice and had paid for it by being rejected as king. Now, he does not even pretend mercy but unleashes the full authority of his wrath. Saul did not hate *Ahimelech*. He despises and fears *David* and by his own words declares that he is alone in his vengeance against David. Our Lord said, “Marvel not the world hate you . . . it hated me before it hated you” (1Jo 3:13; Joh. 15:18).

The enemies of Christ and His gospel hate Him, but being unable to get to *Him*, their venom is vented against those who *follow him*. However, in this story, that which befalls Ahimelech and the city of priests is a direct result of David's sin. David, because he is a child of God, has been forgiven his sin, but sin has a course that always ends in death. Let us consider some lessons this story teaches us.

First, *self* is our problem. David's downward slide began as does every fall since the beginning of man. *Self* made Eve to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 3:6). Every one of our problems begins with self. My dear friend Joe Terrell once wrote, “The opposite of love is not hate. The opposite of love is self.” David made error after error because his interest changed from the glory of God

to the saving of self. Whether it is life, reputation, fear of censure, or any other of the myriad of reasons we use to guard ourselves, they are all rooted in the sin of unbelief. Unbelief is not the absence of belief; it is belief in self rather than God.

Mark well this truth. When we seek to remedy our troubles by employing the flesh, in that moment and proportionate to the proposed outcome, we cease to believe in God our help, and begin to trust in the flesh—to trust in ourselves. Self has no consideration of the soul. Self can and does only consider the situation. This is the meaning of our Lord's words in Mark 8:34-38.

“Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

The Lord declares that refusing to deny self is the same as saving one's life and losing one's soul, and Likewise, it is the same as being ashamed of the words of Christ. None of us would wish to think this of ourselves, but it is nonetheless true. The employment of the flesh is a denial of Christ. Trusting in the flesh is being ashamed of the gospel. Christ took up his cross to lose His life. He denied himself (Matt. 26:38, 42; John 12:27; Rom. 15:3<sup>1</sup>). We are to take up our

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<sup>1</sup> **Matt. 26:38**, Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. **42**, He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. **John 12:27**, Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause

cross, not in the sense of taking part in our salvation, but rather to die to self that we might live unto Christ. The denial of self is not the exercise of temperance; it is being crucified to the world and the world being crucified to you. One man said, “The first place a man goes after the cross is the graveyard.” (Prov. 3:5-6<sup>1</sup>).

The second thing is that “no man is an island unto himself.” No matter what we do in the flesh, no matter the measure of self that we employ, the outcome will not involve only ourselves. Everything we do involves and ultimately affects everyone we touch. Joseph fled Potiphar's house, leaving his coat in the hand of Potiphar's licentious wife because he was given grace to count the cost of having sex with his master's wife. He knew that the action, though pleasure for a season, would adversely affect the lives of many. Our Lord commanded us to avoid fornication because it is a sin of community, affecting not only the one who commits the act but the one with whom the act is committed—both families and both circles of friends. David's sin cost the lives of many. His lies and designs cost Jonathan his place in the court, and his self-interest cost the lives of eighty-five priests.

While he was committing his trust to himself and his own devices, he was not considering the effect that his actions would have on those who had helped him. Believers do not sin in a vacuum. They sin against light in the midst of the church, and like a pebble tossed in a quiet pond, there will be concentric circles of consequential cost. If you sow to the wind, you reap the whirlwind (Hosea 8:7<sup>2</sup>).

Third and finally, the words of David reveal the heart of the penitent sinner. David has returned to the Lord. He is

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came I unto this hour. **Rom. 15:3**, For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

<sup>1</sup> **Prov. 3:5-6**, Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

<sup>2</sup> **Hosea 8:7**, For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind.

obeying the words of the prophet. Though Doeg has exposed him, he has been brought to trust in the Lord (v. 23). In a great part, even if we had not David's blessed Psalm 52, we would know that David was a believer by his reaction to his exposure (v. 22). The mark of the believer when he is confronted with his sin is to point his finger at himself. He does not play the blame game as was played in the garden of Eden. He does not excuse himself by pointing to circumstance. He points to the source of all his troubles—himself (Ps. 51:3-4; 32:5; 1 John 1:8-10; Phil. 3:3<sup>1</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> **Ps. 51:3-4**, For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. **32:5**, I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah. **1 John 1:8-10**, If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. **Phil. 3:3**, For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

# DELIVERANCE

## 1 Samuel 23:1-13

1, Then they told David, saying, Behold, the Philistines fight against Keilah, and they rob the threshingfloors.

2, Therefore David enquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go and smite these Philistines? And the LORD said unto David, Go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah.

3, And David's men said unto him, Behold, we be afraid here in Judah: how much more then if we come to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?

4, Then David enquired of the LORD yet again. And the LORD answered him and said, Arise, go down to Keilah; for I will deliver the Philistines into thine hand.

5, So David and his men went to Keilah, and fought with the Philistines, and brought away their cattle, and smote them with a great slaughter. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah.

6, And it came to pass, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David to Keilah, that he came down with an ephod in his hand.

7, And it was told Saul that David was come to Keilah. And Saul said, God hath delivered him into mine hand; for he is shut in, by entering into a town that hath gates and bars.

8, And Saul called all the people together to war, to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men.

9, And David knew that Saul secretly practised mischief against him; and he said to Abiathar the priest, Bring hither the ephod.

10, Then said David, O LORD God of Israel, thy servant hath certainly heard that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah, to destroy the city for my sake.

11, Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his

hand? will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard? O LORD God of Israel, I beseech thee, tell thy servant. And the LORD said, He will come down.

12, Then said David, Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul? And the LORD said, They will deliver thee up.

13, Then David and his men, which were about six hundred, arose and departed out of Keilah, and went whithersoever they could go. And it was told Saul that David was escaped from Keilah; and he forbore to go forth.

**T**his chapter, to a great degree, is a performance of the promise made to Abiathar in the last verse of the previous chapter.

“Abide thou with me, fear not: for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life: but with me thou shalt be in safeguard”  
(1 Sam. 22:23).

Those words of David are the promise made by a savior. Considering the surrounding circumstances, we are once again confronted with the wonderful providence of Almighty God. Abiathar is the last surviving relative, the son of Ahimelech. David, by forgetting God and seeking to take on Saul in the power of his flesh and the erroneous employment of his own wisdom, had inadvertently caused the death of Abiathar's entire family and the decimation of the priesthood, except for this one man. Abiathar had been promoted to the office of high priest at horrible cost by the actions of the man who now promises his safety. Nothing but the providence of God would cause Abiathar to flee to the side of the man who had caused him such great loss.

What manipulation of events and people brought you to the feet of Him who was despised and rejected of men? What providential machine brought you to seek help from the One who would probably cost you your family and friends? How

was it that Abiathar came to trust in the man who was hated by the king and the one whose existence was death to the king? Trusting in the One who the world hates, by association, will cause the world to paint a target on your back and is either insanity or an act of sovereign grace and providence upon you. Abiathar acted in this strange manner because he was acted upon. David, no longer seeking to remedy his circumstance by the flesh, speaks with great confidence in the Lord—“Stick with me, you will be safe” (22:23). With David, Abiathar was “a garden inclosed” (Song of Sol. 4:12). He was hedged about by sovereign providence, safe in the arms of Christ. David is as much as saying, “If they get to you, they have to go through me first” (John. 10:27-29<sup>1</sup>).

In the first part of chapter 23 we have the record of the Philistines laying siege on Keilah. They are raiding the threshing floors and robbing the inhabitants of the harvest (v. 1). David's immediate response is not to strap on the sword and sound the battle cry. As far as natural ability, David has the wherewithal to defeat the Philistines. They have never proved a problem for him, but he knows the failures and cost of taking matters into his own hands, trusting in the flesh (22:22; 1 Pet.5:6<sup>2</sup>).

We may now see how the hand of the Lord has brought David to where he needs to be (v. 2). His inquiry is important. The city that is being besieged is not *his* city, it is a city that belongs to the realm of Saul, the one who seeks his life. David seeks to return good for evil. He was the king that God had anointed, and his heart was for the protection and defense of God's people, but now, he would not make a move

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<sup>1</sup> **John. 10:27-29**, My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

<sup>2</sup> **1 Pet.5:6**, Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.

until he had the Lord's direction. "In all thy ways acknowledge Him and he will direct thy steps" (Ps. 91:11). Our lord not only revealed His will to David but also promises his success (John 12:27-28<sup>1</sup>).

We need not think, even if we are sure of what God has promised, that our assurance will be conveyed by osmosis to those around us. David's men, now numbering six hundred, knew that they were literally between the proverbial rock and a hard place (v. 3). They were afraid in Judah because Saul was hot on their trail. To attack the Philistines would mean that they were about to engage in battle on 2 fronts, a thing which is not in the best interest of any army. They were not in the same place as David, in the matter of trusting the Lord. They were, as we *all* often do, weighing things in light of circumstances rather than trusting the Lord. Sometimes those around you, even trusted friends and family, will prove a hindrance rather than an encouragement.

David could not really expect those around him to act on *his* faith. However, David knew that the One who had assured his heart would have no problem with the hearts of his followers. There is a good lesson here in that David did not rail against his men. He did not call them cowards or attempt to persuade them. He inquired of the Lord "yet again" (v. 4). He showed himself as an example of trusting Christ. He inquired again, and the promise was again repeated (v. 4b).

There is no indication that the Lord was displeased with David for asking again. Here also is a lesson. Though you have assurance from the Lord, He is always ready to answer His children. In fact, the promise of God is incentive to pray (1 Chron. 17:25<sup>2</sup>). The result is plain. The Lord's touched

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<sup>1</sup> John 12:27-28, Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Chron. 17:25, For thou, O my God, hast told thy servant that thou

the hearts of David's men to join in battle against the Philistines (vv. 4b-5). The Philistines were thoroughly routed, and not only did the Lord defeat the enemy, but since, "to the victor belongs the spoils," David recovered the grain for Keilah, provisions for his army, and the cattle that had belonged to the Philistines. The Philistines had no idea that they were raising cattle to feed those whom they despised. Such is the magnificence of providence (Deut. 6:10-11; Eph. 3:20<sup>1</sup>).

In verses 6-7, Abiathar comes to David with an ephod in his hand and a message concerning Saul. Saul, in verse 8, prepares his armies for the destruction of David. When David was made aware of Saul's intent, He called for Abiathar and told him to bring the ephod. David now has a priest with him, and the presence of the ephod suggests that he also has use of the Urim and Thummim. The ephod was not for David to wear but for Abiathar, and as high priest, the answers for David would be immediate.

David's inquiry was two-fold. Would Saul come? The answer was yes. Would those whom David had just delivered turn him over to Saul? Again, the answer was yes. Base ingratitude is an arrow to the heart. There was no honor in Keilah and no thanksgiving in the hearts of its inhabitants. Of the nine lepers that our Lord cured, only one came back to thank Him (Luke 17:12-19<sup>2</sup>).

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wilt build him an house: therefore thy servant hath found in his heart to pray before thee.

<sup>1</sup> **Deut. 6:10-11**, And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not, And houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full. **Eph. 3:20**, Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.

<sup>2</sup> **Luke 17:12-19**, And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto

David's dispersal of his men served two purposes. First, Saul did not pursue him in Keilah. Secondly, Keilah was spared again, and the men of that city were kept from the intents of their heart (v. 13).

Trust in the Lord and inquire at His throne.

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them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.

# MANY AFFLICTIONS

## 1 Samuel 23:14- 27

14, And David abode in the wilderness in strong holds, and remained in a mountain in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but God delivered him not into his hand.

15, And David saw that Saul was come out to seek his life: and David was in the wilderness of Ziph in a wood.

16, And Jonathan Saul's son arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God.

17, And he said unto him, Fear not: for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and that also Saul my father knoweth.

18, And they two made a covenant before the LORD: and David abode in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house.

19, Then came up the Ziphites to Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself with us in strong holds in the wood, in the hill of Hachilah, which is on the south of Jeshimon?

20, Now therefore, O king, come down according to all the desire of thy soul to come down; and our part shall be to deliver him into the king's hand.

21, And Saul said, Blessed be ye of the LORD; for ye have compassion on me.

22, Go, I pray you, prepare yet, and know and see his place where his haunt is, and who hath seen him there: for it is told me that he dealeth very subtilly.

23, See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking places where he hideth himself, and come ye again to me with the certainty, and I will go with you: and it shall come to pass, if he be in the land, that I will search him out throughout all the thousands of Judah.

24, And they arose, and went to Ziph before Saul: but

David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon, in the plain on the south of Jeshimon.

25, Saul also and his men went to seek him. And they told David: wherefore he came down into a rock, and abode in the wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard that, he pursued after David in the wilderness of Maon.

26, And Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain: and David made haste to get away for fear of Saul; for Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them.

27, But there came a messenger unto Saul, saying, Haste thee, and come; for the Philistines have invaded the land.

28, Wherefore Saul returned from pursuing after David, and went against the Philistines: therefore they called that place Selahammahlekoth.

29, And David went up from thence, and dwelt in strong holds at Engedi.

Saul is still in hot pursuit of David. Every effort he has tried has met with utter failure. His Son has sided with David, and his javelins have missed their intended mark. Time and again he had thought to have David boxed in, and each time the Lord delivered David. One definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and again expecting a different result. Saul's insanity is of the vengeful, blood-lust sort. He has but one passion and that is to kill his enemy, a man who has done nothing but serve him faithfully. "Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all" (Ps. 34:19).

David was walled about by sovereign grace, but afflictions and trials must come. How shall the Lord keep his promise to visit his people in affliction unless afflictions are as sure as the promise. It is not only given unto you to "believe on [Christ] but also to suffer for his sake" (Phil. 129).

David is now eluding Saul in the wilderness of Ziph, a

“wilderness or unimproved or unplowed land.” Ziph means “refinery or place of refining” (1 Pet.1:3-7<sup>1</sup>).

What were David’s afflictions?

1. *The affliction of Saul’s insatiable pursuit.* David knew that as long as Saul lived, he would never relent in his pursuit of him. He had the promise and anointing of God, but until the day he was crowned, Saul would ever be hot on his trail. This is the historical fact, but there is a greater spiritual lesson here. Just such a struggle exists in the bosom of every believer. The believer’s spiritual Saul, the old man, our flesh, is continually at war with spiritual David, the new man, the Spirit (Rom. 7:21-23; 2 Cor. 10:3-6; Gal. 5:17<sup>2</sup>). When Abraham died and was buried, on one side of his grave was Ishmael, son of the flesh, and on the other was Isaac, the son of the Spirit. “But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now” (Gal.4:29).

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. 1:3-7, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

<sup>2</sup> Rom. 7:21-23, I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 2 Cor. 10:3-6, For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled. Gal. 5:17, For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

2. *The affliction of Jonathan's visit* (vv. 16-18). There is no doubt that Jonathan was David's friend, and it is good to have friends in this world. So, why is this an affliction? First, because though Jonathan's affection was true, he never cast his lot with David. He never left his father's house. Secondly, because the promise that he made was the promise of a man, and though well intended, truly felt, and believed, it never came to fruition (v. 17). This is the last time David will see Jonathan alive, and though his presence and allegiance strengthened David's hand for a time, it was a temporary thing—it was the promise of a dead man. “Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of” (Isa. 2:22)? The Apostle Peter fell short of such a promise to our Lord.

This affliction is real and worthy of our attention because, though we love our friends and are thankful for them, their words and promises are not backed by power to perform. This knowledge drives us to our true and never changing friend. Christ is always a friend “and a brother born for adversity” (Prov. 17:17). *He* is our friend who is the same yesterday, today and forever. “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). Our Lord is a “friend that sticketh closer than a brother” (Prov. 18:24). He is the friend of sinners. What *He* has promised, *He* will perform

3. *The affliction of having his own house betray him.* The people of Ziph were of David's own tribe, but they were more concerned with the favor of the king than the defense of the anointed. Many who love the gospel of grace and the One who that gospel declares have experienced betrayal by those who are closest to them. Our Lord said,

“Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her

mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household” (Matt. 10: 34-36<sup>1</sup>).

Our Lord does not speak there of intent but rather consequence. When he comes into or enters a marriage with a member of a household, he becomes an interloper in the mind of unbelievers—an alienator of affection. The men of Ziph betrayed David because they wanted the recognition of Saul. They loved themselves more than David or his God. David came to his own and his own received him not. His own betrayed him. Was it not so with our Lord (John 1:11<sup>2</sup>)? They hated him without a cause (Matt. 5:22<sup>3</sup>). Sinners flock to Him, but those who claimed *love* for God cried, “His blood be on us, and on our children.” (Matt 27:25<sup>4</sup>).

4. *The affliction of being backed into a corner with nowhere to go* (v. 24-26). The word “wilderness” in verse 24 is misleading. One usually thinks of a desert when this word is used. Here the meaning is “uncultivated land, a primal forest.” The word “mountain” is likewise misleading. David and his men are backed up against the edge a steep cliff. On one side of David and his men was Saul and sure death. On the other side was a drop into the abyss and sure death. But man's extremities are God's opportunities (vv. 27-28). “Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all” (Ps. 34:18). The Philistines were moved to attack Saul's land, Saul was moved to leave off his vengeance, and David's Lord was glorified in protecting him (Isa. 43:1-7<sup>5</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> **Matt. 10: 34-36**, Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.

<sup>2</sup> **John 1:11**, He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

<sup>3</sup> **Matt. 5:22**, But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.

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<sup>5</sup> **Isa. 43:1-7**, But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob,

Again, the sovereign providence of God delivers his anointed. Saul *knew* he finally had David. Now his hatred would be vented, and the blood of Jesse's son would drip from his javelin. But it is *not* to be. Our Lord moves Saul away from David, and David retires to Engedi along the Dead Sea. The villain's plans are foiled. The child of God is safe, kept for the master's use (2 Pet. 2:9<sup>1</sup>). "As thy days, so shall thy strength be" (Deut. 33:25).

"It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes" (Ps. 119:71).

During this time David was inspired to write Psalms 54 and 63.

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and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Pet. 2:9, The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:

# AN HONORABLE MAN

## 1 Samuel 24:1-22

1, And it came to pass, when Saul was returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, Behold, David is in the wilderness of Engedi.

2, Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats.

3, And he came to the sheepcotes by the way, where was a cave; and Saul went in to cover his feet: and David and his men remained in the sides of the cave.

4, And the men of David said unto him, Behold the day of which the LORD said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee. Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily.

5, And it came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt.

6, And he said unto his men, The LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the LORD'S anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the LORD.

7, So David stayed his servants with these words, and suffered them not to rise against Saul. But Saul rose up out of the cave, and went on his way.

8, David also arose afterward, and went out of the cave, and cried after Saul, saying, My lord the king. And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed himself.

9, And David said to Saul, Wherefore hearest thou men's words, saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt?

10, Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that the LORD had delivered thee to day into mine hand in the cave: and some bade me kill thee: but mine eye spared thee; and I said, I will not put forth mine hand against

my lord; for he is the LORD'S anointed.

11, Moreover, my father, see, yea, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand: for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou and see that there is neither evil nor transgression in mine hand, and I have not sinned against thee; yet thou huntest my soul to take it.

12, The LORD judge between me and thee, and the LORD avenge me of thee: but mine hand shall not be upon thee.

13, As saith the proverb of the ancients, Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked: but mine hand shall not be upon thee.

14, After whom is the king of Israel come out? after whom dost thou pursue? after a dead dog, after a flea.

15, The LORD therefore be judge, and judge between me and thee, and see, and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thine hand.

16, And it came to pass, when David had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul, that Saul said, Is this thy voice, my son David? And Saul lifted up his voice, and wept.

17, And he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.

18, And thou hast shewed this day how that thou hast dealt well with me: forasmuch as when the LORD had delivered me into thine hand, thou killedst me not.

19, For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away? wherefore the LORD reward thee good for that thou hast done unto me this day.

20, And now, behold, I know well that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand.

21, Swear now therefore unto me by the LORD, that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, and that thou wilt not destroy my name out of my father's house.

22, And David sware unto Saul. And Saul went home; but David and his men gat them up unto the hold.

This chapter is full of instruction for the believer. It stands as a classic example of graciousness in the face of an enemy. To fully appreciate the things taught here they must be considered in view of a couple things.

The first thing that needs to be understood is that providence must be interpreted in light of Scripture. Believers walk by faith and not by sight. We must always be careful not to make decisions based on visible circumstances. Behind every circumstance, there is the cause. If we act based only on what we see, we discount the invisible God who controls all things. Providence may seem to provide a solution, but providence is mobile by a design and intent to which we are not privy, save that God will be ultimately glorified by it and for it. David has been brought to a place in time where it seems that everything concerning his enthronement is at hand. But David is a man who in this moment is trusting God to bring about that enthronement.

The opportunity has arisen for David to accomplish in the flesh what God has promised in His purpose. It seems a reasonable time to act and end his pain, stop his running, and take his seat on the throne of his enemy. With one quick and fatal slice, God's purpose shall be done. However, David has learned by experience and revelation that God needs, wants, nor accepts help in accomplishing His purpose. To kill Saul would only prove another way of taking matters in his own hands. David knew that he would occupy the throne, but the Spirit of the Lord showed him that now was not the appointed time.

That David understood this is seen in the words he penned about this incident in Psalm 57. It is entitled a "Michtam." That means a "golden psalm" or a poem whose words are as fine gold, a psalm of great value. The employment of the word "gold" intimates that this psalm was born of trial and tribulation wherein the dross has been consumed and the gold refined.

*(To the chief Musician, Altaschith, Michtam of David,  
when he fled from Saul in the cave.)*

“Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast. I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me. He shall send from heaven, and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up. Selah. God shall send forth his mercy and his truth. My soul is among lions: and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword. Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; let thy glory be above all the earth. They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down: they have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen themselves. Selah. My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise. Awake up, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early. I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people: I will sing unto thee among the nations. For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds. Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: let thy glory be above all the earth” (Ps. 57).

Those words are the proper response to the providence of God when that blessed providence comes in the form of trial. David's opportunity to kill Saul and yet sparing him was a trial of David's faith. A friend once told me that the definition of grace is that, “When opportunity to sin presents itself, desire is absent, and when desire to sin is present, opportunity is absent.” Opportunity had clearly presented itself, but the desire to kill Saul was not present. This is grace sufficient for the time of need, as is indicated in the last phrase of verse 1 of Psalm 57.

The second thing that needs understanding in considering the things taught in this text is that it is God who

makes one to differ from another. We can clearly see that God had made David to differ from Saul. However, and we praise God for this, God often makes us differ from ourselves. David here displays the best of Christian attributes, but not far hence, the same man who graciously spared Saul will maliciously order the assassination of Uriah, to cover his own adultery. The difference between David and David is grace bestowed and grace withheld (restrained). Be careful not to think that in those moments when you seem to triumph in Christ that the cause is anything other than God graciously preventing you from being yourself.

It is in this light that we are to look at this chapter. The message is plain and there are several lessons to learn here.

1. David exhibits and sets an example of what it is to be gracious and merciful. He exhibits every good notion of how faith works by love and is obedient to God. The Word says, "honor the King," and he did. The Word says, "love your enemy," and he did. The Bible says, "return evil with good," and he did. The Word says, "thou shalt not kill," and he didn't. The Word says, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," and he did. David humbled himself (v. 14). To some degree these words were meant to show Saul that for a man of his high estate to pursue someone who is not a threat is ludicrous, but these words are probably more of an assessment of self. The man who has been graced is constantly reminded of what he is in himself. He that "exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 18:14).

2. In verse 13, David quotes a common source. This tells us that not all uninspired sayings are valueless. This proverb spoken by some ancient served to enlighten Saul of David's kindness. A *proverb* is a time proven principle. We say things like "all that glitters is not gold" or "look before you leap" and they are proverbial truths.

3. No matter the kind words of an infidel, they are always about self preservation or preservation of name or reputation.

Saul repents in v. 16, but we have been shown that Saul's repentings are temporal and short-lived. His tears were like those of Esau (Heb. 12:16-17<sup>1</sup>). Though Saul spoke the truth in verse 17, his words are tempered by an erroneous view of himself. He says of David, "Thou art more righteous than I." He did not say, "You are righteous, and I am not." He retained some righteousness for himself when no act he had done toward David could be construed as righteous on any level. But in his mind, the heinous things he had done equated to righteousness on some level. The last thing anyone lets go of is *their* righteousness, but it is the first thing that needs to be repented of. Your sins will not keep you from God; your righteousness will. Saul's repentance was proven false because he lamely asserted his own righteousness (Isa. 64:6<sup>2</sup>).

4. One of the marks of grace in the heart is leaving judgment to Him who is alone capable of righteous judgment (vv. 12, 15; Gen. 18:25; John 5:26-27; Acts 17:31<sup>3</sup>). In the matter of the trial, let patience have her perfect work. By grace, David fared well in this trial (James 1:2-4<sup>4</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> **Heb. 12:16-17**, Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

<sup>2</sup> **Isa. 64:6**, But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

<sup>3</sup> **Gen. 18:25**, That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? **John 5:26-27**, For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. **Acts 17:31**, Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

<sup>4</sup> **James 1:2-4**, My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

# TWO DEAD MEN

## 1 Samuel 25:1-3, 38

1, And Samuel died; and all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah. And David arose, and went down to the wilderness of Paran.

2, And there was a man in Maon, whose possessions were in Carmel; and the man was very great, and he had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats: and he was shearing his sheep in Carmel.

3, Now the name of the man was Nabal; and the name of his wife Abigail: and she was a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance: but the man was churlish and evil in his doings; and he was of the house of Caleb.

38, And it came to pass about ten days after, that the LORD smote Nabal, that he died.

Read entire chapter.

**A**s I read and re-read this chapter one question kept coming to my mind. Where do I start? This chapter 25 is replete with gospel truth, and I expect there to be several lessons from it. Let us begin where the chapter begins, with the death of Samuel keeping in mind there is another man who dies in this passage. His name is Nabal. I want to consider both these men.

Samuel's epitaph is precise and unattended by great words of praise. Though the people gathered and lamented his passing for the customary 30 days, the account of his death is in the simplest terms, "Samuel died" (v. 1). This is how it should be. The glory for this man's life and death belongs to God his Savior. In *Julius Caesar*, Shakespeare wrote, "The evil that men do live after them, the good is oft interred with their bones." In the natural realm this is true

and in one sense is true of Samuel. Though no evil is attributed to him, the good that he did went to the grave with him. As with every saint that dies, his works follow him. He does not carry them with him because for the most part he is unaware of them. The reality of his works is revealed at a later time and then revealed to have been wrought by God. Samuel died, but we are privy to his life and the good that he has done as recorded in the Word of God. Concerning his death, some things are richly revealed.

We know that he died on time, at the appointed time. No man cheats death or draws one breath that is not before ordained (Job 14:5<sup>1</sup>). The simplicity of the words “Samuel died,” reminds us that this is not something Samuel did but something that was done *to* him.

None but Christ died as an *accomplishment* (Luke 9:30<sup>2</sup>). Nobody stands over a casket and says, “He finally did something right.” “Samuel died.” Though like all men who die, Samuel came into this world naked and went out the same. But Samuel did not die alone (Ps. 116:15<sup>3</sup>). Christ the blessed Redeemer was Samuels's cupbearer. He took upon himself to taste what Samuel was to taste, to make sure that it was not harmful. Christ tasted death for Samuel, and because He rose from the dead, He assured Samuel that death would not harm him. Samuel died, but he did not die empty (Heb. 11:13, 32<sup>4</sup>). He died in faith, and that faith was

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<sup>1</sup> **Job 14:5**, Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass.

<sup>2</sup> **Luke 9:30-31**, And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.

<sup>3</sup> **Ps. 116:15**, Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.

<sup>4</sup> **Heb. 11:13**, These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. **32**, And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets.

looking to the consolation of Israel (Luke 2:25, 29-30, 38<sup>1</sup>), Samuel died and was ushered into the arms of his blessed Savior.

Samuel in his life and sojourn here was also a type of Christ. Samuel was a prophet, a priest, a ruler, a judge, and a deliverer of Israel. He was born as the great desire of his mother. Christ was born as the desire of all nations (Hag. 2:7<sup>2</sup>). He was born of God's promise. Christ is the seed of promise (Gal. 3:16-18, 29<sup>3</sup>). Samuel was born at a time of great idolatry and spiritual poverty in Israel. Our Lord came into this world a time of great spiritual poverty in Israel, the condition described four hundred years before his coming in the book of Malachi. Samuel was given to the Lord's service from before his birth. Our Lord came into this world serving God before He was born, indeed offering eternal service to God (Rev. 13:8<sup>4</sup>). Samuel died, but he died *privileged* to be counted among those who pictured the coming Messiah.

In this passage there was another who died. He did not die as a precious thing to God but as a cursed thing. The Word declares that the Lord smote him (v. 38). The man was

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<sup>1</sup> **Luke 2:25**, And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. **29-30**, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation. **38**, And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup> **Hag. 2:7**, And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.

<sup>3</sup> **Gal. 3:16-18**, Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise. **29**, And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

<sup>4</sup> **Rev. 13:8**, And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Nabal. His name means, “fool” and according to his wife he lived up to his name. She said of Nabal in verse 25:

“Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal: for as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him: but I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send.”

His character is described in verse 3. He was churlish (stiff-necked, cruel, severe, and obstinate) (Deut. 10:16; Ezek. 44:9; Acts 7:51<sup>1</sup>). He was evil in his doings. He was a cheat, a fraud in business, and lived only for his own gain.

He was a son of Caleb. Caleb (“faithful dog”) and Joshua (“savior”) were the only two that left Egypt to enter the Promised Land. This is a reminder that God has no grandchildren (John 1:12-13<sup>2</sup>). Nabal’s heart was hard, and when he found out how close he came to death, his heart turned to stone. He had no repentance. God had not taken away his heart of stone and given him a heart of flesh. David even grouped Nabal, in colorful language, with “any that pisseth against the wall.” This is merely a colloquialism that denotes a base or uncouth person who is more like a dog than a man, one who takes only *himself* and *his own relief* into account as to his actions. In short, the activity described is most readily attributed to a dog. David was calling him a common cur, a filthy mongrel coward. God smote him, first with catatonia then 10 days later, death.

The best description of his character is his name. His

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<sup>1</sup> Deut. 10:16, Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked. Ezek. 44:9, Thus saith the LORD God; No stranger, uncircumcised in heart, nor uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter into my sanctuary, of any stranger that is among the children of Israel. Acts 7:51, Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.

<sup>2</sup> John 1:12-13, But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

name means “fool.” This term is used in Scripture to denote those who know not God, and further, have no care to know Him (Ps. 14:1; Prov. 10:18; 12:15; 18:2; 26:11; Luke 12:16-21<sup>1</sup>). We clearly see the end of the fool.

“Samuel died.” “The Lord smote Nabal that he died.”

Read Luke 16:19-31.

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<sup>1</sup> **Ps. 14:1**, The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good. **Prov. 10:18**, He that hideth hatred with lying lips, and he that uttereth a slander, is a fool. **12:15**, The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise. **18:2**, A fool hath no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover itself. **26:11**, As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly. **Luke 12:16-21**, And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.



# COMING TO THE SAVIOR

## 1 Samuel 25:23-31

23, And when Abigail saw David, she hasted, and lighted off the ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground,

24, And fell at his feet, and said, Upon me, my lord, upon me let this iniquity be: and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience, and hear the words of thine handmaid.

25, Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal: for as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him: but I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send.

26, Now therefore, my lord, as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, seeing the LORD hath withholden thee from coming to shed blood, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand, now let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal.

27, And now this blessing which thine handmaid hath brought unto my lord, let it even be given unto the young men that follow my lord.

28, I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thine handmaid: for the LORD will certainly make my lord a sure house; because my lord fighteth the battles of the LORD, and evil hath not been found in thee all thy days.

29, Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul: but the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the LORD thy God; and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, as out of the middle of a sling.

30, And it shall come to pass, when the LORD shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel;

31, That this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence

of heart unto my lord, either that thou hast shed blood  
causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself: but when  
the LORD shall have dealt well with my lord, then  
remember thine handmaid.

**T**hough there is much more to say about Abigail in  
chapter 25, I want us, in this lesson, to very simply see  
Abigail in the light of one of the elect *coming to the  
savior*.

David is a type of the Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ. He  
single-handedly saved Israel from the enemy when he put an  
end to Goliath. Our Lord, by himself, defeated Satan, the  
enemy and accuser of the brethren, bruising his head as was  
prophesied in Gen 3:15<sup>1</sup>.

Though the salvation of the elect is sure, certain things  
are true of that salvation. Salvation was accomplished by  
Christ alone in His substitutionary work. The elect are made  
aware of it through the preaching of the gospel (substitution  
for the elect, satisfaction of the Law, imputation of His  
righteousness) and the giving of faith (1 Cor. 1:21-24; Rom.  
10:13- 17<sup>2</sup>). And everyone who truly hears the gospel  
willingly comes to Christ (Ps. 110:3<sup>3</sup>). The hearing ear and

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<sup>1</sup> **Gen 3:15**, And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and  
between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise  
his heel.

<sup>2</sup> **1 Cor. 1:21-24**, But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a  
stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are  
called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of  
God. **Rom. 10:13- 17**, For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall  
be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and  
how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they  
hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it  
is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace,  
and bring glad tidings of good things! 16, But they have not all obeyed the  
gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith  
cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

<sup>3</sup> **Ps. 110:3**, Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the  
beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy  
youth.

the seeing eye are from God, and the sinner comes to Christ because he is caused to (Ps. 65:4<sup>1</sup>), but he also comes because he is taught the gospel by God, the Father (John 6:45<sup>2</sup>). This is how the Father draws them (John 6:44<sup>3</sup>). The words of Abigail concerning David assures us that she not only heard of David but that she believed what she had heard and was drawn to the one of whom she had heard (Eph. 1:13<sup>4</sup>). She approaches David because the only other alternative is sure death (v. 17).

Abigail paints a wonderful picture of the elect being brought to the Saviors feet. Let us observe ten of these pictures and their parallel.

Picture 1. Abigail was married to a husband that was against her—the law.

Parallel: “Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye

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<sup>1</sup> Ps. 65:4, Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.

<sup>2</sup> John 6:45, It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

<sup>3</sup> John 6:44, No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

<sup>4</sup> Eph. 1:13, In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.

should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God (Rom. 7:1-4).

“[He blotted] out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross” (Col. 2:14)

Picture 2. The union of Abigail and her husband produced no children. Nothing but death comes from a person's union with the Law of Moses, the old covenant. That covenant was conditional, it's blessing and cursing contingent upon obedience or want thereof. Man is born in disobedience, cannot change and produces only dead works.

Parallel. “Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God” (Rom. 7:4).

Picture 3. Though she approached David to spare the life of her husband and avoid death, her interest was in the glory of David (v. 17).

Parallel. When the sheep are taught of Christ their interest is in His glory. They say with Job “Though He slay me, yet will I trust him” (Job 13:15).

“And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force” (Matt. 11:12)

Picture 4. She took up headquarters in the dust, her rightful place at David's feet, in true worship (v. 23).

Parallel. I know that today's religion sports a strange familiarity with God, and His name is spoken in beggarly ways, but such is not the case of those who came to Christ in the scriptures. They came as beggars seeking help. They came to One who was their last and only hope. They

fell at his feet as dead men. The worshipped Him as a hound dog worships his master. You will search in vain to find one helpless sinner coming to Christ with a sense of entitlement. Abigail knew that David had the power and the wherewithal to destroy her and her husband and everyone who opposed him, but she also knew that he had the power to save her. She came believing that she would be delivered because of the goodness she had heard concerning David.

“But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city” (Heb. 11:6).

“But they and our fathers dealt proudly, and hardened their necks, and hearkened not to thy commandments, And refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage: but thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not” (Neh. 9:16-17).

“For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee” (Ps. 86:5).

Picture 5. She sought forgiveness (v. 28).

Parallel. The question becomes—Why? Because every sinner feels his unworthiness to approach unto Christ. Like the demon-possessed man of Gadara, the sinner cries “What have I to do with thee Jesus, the son of the Most High.” Abigail didn't trot down some aisle, poppin' her bubble gum and saying, “I accept you.” She knew in her heart that she did not deserve to be in the same vicinity with the Savior of Israel, the anointed King. Likewise she attributed sovereignty to his mercy—“Lord, If thou wilt”—“Jesus thou Son of David, have mercy on me.”

Picture 6. She spoke of David's honor, glory and goodness (v. 28).

Parallel. So does everyone who seeks mercy at its only source. "The voice of the LORD maketh the hinds to calve, and discovereth the forests: and in his temple doth every one speak of his glory" (Ps. 29:9).

Picture 7. She acknowledged his kingdom, his rule, his sovereignty (v. 30).

Parallel. So does every sinner who comes to Christ. "And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me" (Mark 10:47).

Picture 8. She acknowledged that her hope was his remembrance of her (v. 31).

Parallel. I hope to die remembering my Lord, but what awaits my mind, and me I cannot say. But, thank God, my remembrance of Him is not my salvation; it is His remembrance of me.

The thief on the cross "said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:42-43).

"Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the LORD hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted. But Zion said, The LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me" (Isa. 49:13-16).

Picture 9. He honored her faith, accepted her, and gave her peace (see v. 35).

Parallel. "Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour" (Matt. 15:21-28).

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved" (Eph. 1:3-6).

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

Picture 10. He took her for his wife (see v. 39).

Parallel. "Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race" (Ps. 19:5).

Come humble sinner, in whose breast  
A thousand thoughts revolve;  
Come with your guilt and fear oppressed,  
And make *this* last resolve.

I'll go to Jesus, though my sins,  
Have like a mountain rose;  
I know his courts, I'll enter in,  
Whatever may oppose.

Prostrate I'll lie before his throne,  
And there my guilt confess;  
I'll tell him I'm a wretch undone  
Without his sovereign grace.

I'll to the gracious king approach,  
Whose scepter pardon gives;  
Perhaps He may command my touch'  
And then the suppliant lives!

Perhaps He will admit my plea,  
I am resolved to try;  
For if I stay away, I know  
I must forever die

But if I die with mercy sought  
When I the king have tried,  
This were to die (delightful thought)-  
As sinner never died!

(Edmund Jones)

# FOR HIS HONOR

## 1 Samuel 25:18-19

18, Then Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on asses.

19, And she said unto her servants, Go on before me; behold, I come after you. But she told not her husband Nabal.

**P**art of the excellence of this blessed book is that it does not handle the aspect of man's depravity with kid gloves. This book is the true biography of humanity and the autobiography of God, as He is revealed in Christ. Unlike the flattery of one human being writing about another, which usually comes across of as nothing short of hero worship, this book never refuses to show man in his true light.

Every effort of human religion seeks in some manner to hide or alter this report of our depravity. Freewillism is the lie most often employed because it moves man from the estate of utter ruin to the more acceptable realm of possibility, where he may exercise a correct "decision" and save his soul. The Bible knows of no such thing, and though this puts most of religion in jeopardy of soul, the alternate, being the *truth*, is too harsh for them to bear. The truth of the total depravity of man leaves men shut up to God, shut up to His grace. Grace is a valueless vapor if there remains something in fallen or redeemed man that can recommend him to God.

In no uncertain terms, the *Book of James* shows that all believers, spiritual men and women, remain entirely depraved in their humanity, and they can do no good where evil is not

present with them. The very best of them are altogether vanity. Descartes has said, "Hell is *people*." "There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not" (Eccles. 7:20). David was a man after God's own heart. He was the apple of God's eye. He was chosen and anointed of God to be King of Israel. In that capacity he prefigured Him who would come as King of kings. But like all types, shadows and figures they are not substance.

David was a *man*. He was a man of like passion with all other men. In these studies, we have seen this time and again in his life. One moment he trusts God and relies on Him alone. The next moment we see him resorting to the presumed power of the flesh to solve his problems. Though he is a type of Christ in his royal anointing, he is the quintessential pattern of the believer who is both flesh and spirit and can never do what he would. With his mind, he serves the law of God, but with his flesh, he serves the law of sin and death.

I want to end this study with the *intent* of the gift of Abigail, but before we can arrive there, we must first look at David to see *why* Abigail brought her gifts.

David's instruction to his young soldiers concerning acquiring goods and help from Nabal is very telling. David had both protected Nabal's sheep and fended off the Philistines when they had threatened Nabal's heritage. Yet we do not find his words to be that of a man who had, in effect, saved Nabal. We find David approaching Nabal as a supplicant, seeking favor or grace from that man of churlish reputation. David describes Nabal as "him that liveth in prosperity" (v. 6). The words "in prosperity" are italicized which means they were added by the translators to help our understanding. In this case, they both help and do not help.

First, they do not help because they actually detract from David's words. David is ascribing "life" to Nabal. In effect, he is saying that Nabal has found favor with God because in God's favor is life. It may be that David is complimenting

Nabal by saying that Nabal is a child of God and suggesting that Nabal is of the same mind concerning Saul. We can see this is the mind of David because of his pronouncement of peace on Nabal and all he had. "Peace be both to thee, and peace be to thine house, and peace be unto all that thou hast." (v. 6). This pronouncement of peace was no small thing. It carries with it the notion of a right standing with God or a state of blessing with God. That is why the false prophets in Jeremiah are condemned. They speak peace when there is no peace (Jer.8:11<sup>1</sup>). Sadly, the believer is not above courting the world's favor and doing so by calling the false religionist a brother, but James 4:4<sup>2</sup> tells us that friendship with the world is enmity with God.

Secondly the italicized words "in prosperity" are somewhat of a help. Clearly, David's supplication had to do with Nabal's wherewithal. Nabal had plenty and could help David without injuring his wealth. However, connecting the concept of living or life with prosperity reveals a common and fatal error of natural religion of the flesh. Religion thrives on the notion that temporal possessions are spiritual blessings. These so-called faith-based ministries that promise health, wealth and a Lexus believe that to have temporal possessions and happy conditions are blessings of God. However, the fact is that a blessing is spiritual only if you can take it with you when you leave this world. Everything else is kindling. Possessions or want of them have nothing to do with spirituality. All spiritual blessings are in Christ (Eph. 1:3<sup>3</sup>). They are given in Christ without condition, and every believer has all of them. Nabal's so-called blessings proved a curse to him, and he paid for them with his life.

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<sup>1</sup> **Jer.8:11**, For they have healed the hurt of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace.

<sup>2</sup> **James 4:4**, Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

<sup>3</sup> **Eph. 1:3**, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

David's response to Nabal's dismissing him and his request is likewise very telling.

“And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? there be many servants now a days that break away every man from his master. Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men, whom I know not whence they be?” (vv. 10-11).

David as much as calls Nabal a dog (v. 34).

“For in very deed, as the LORD God of Israel liveth, which hath kept me back from hurting thee, except thou hadst hasted and come to meet me, surely there had not been left unto Nabal by the morning light any that pisseth against the wall” (34).

There is also more than a hint of indignation born of pride in David's use of these vivid words. The wall that Nabal was said to be “pissing against” is the power of David's army. One of the young men who witnessed Nabal's railing and the protection of David's army;

“...told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master; and he railed on them. But the men were very good unto us, and we were not hurt, neither missed we any thing, as long as we were conversant with them, when we were in the fields: They were a wall unto us both by night and day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep.” (vv. 14-16).

The words of anger from David flow from a place that every one of us can relate to. Nabal has shown base ingratitude toward David in the light of David's kindness in protecting him. Nothing bugs us more than ingratitude. But

we must remember that our angry reaction to ingratitude comes from a sense of entitlement and reveals that none of us has escaped the notion that we are entitled to reward for what we have done. Our flesh still holds to, and practices works religion.

David's immediate response is to garner his forces and, in the power of the flesh, to show Nabal what for. There is no doubt that Nabal deserves the worst he can get, but in the flesh so does David. He is not anointed king because his person or life recommends him to God. He is king by grace and grace alone. Grace is for helpless sinners.

Abigail's offering and gifts to David show her to be a *means* of grace. She pictures God's restraining grace toward his people. Remember, all that God must do for you to delve the depths of your depravity is to leave you to yourself. Do not equate His restraint of your flesh with personal righteousness. If you do well, it is because God has not suffered you to have your way. Abigail was the means to keep David from dishonoring God and shaming himself. She knew that David was a man of God's own choosing, and that he was "bound in the bundle of life with the Lord his God" (v. 29). She knew that David's defense and delivery were promised by God and sought to keep David from dishonoring God by resorting to the power of the flesh to destroy his enemies. She said to him,

"Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal: for as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him: but I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send. Now therefore, my lord, as the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, seeing the LORD hath withholden thee from coming to shed blood, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand, now let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal."

"Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul:

but the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the LORD thy God; and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, as out of the middle of a sling” (vv.25-26, 29).

She was an instrument of grace for David. Her interest was in David's honor expressed in keeping him back from dishonor.

“When the LORD shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel; . . . this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord, either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself” (vv. 30-31).

And David, like every believer whose sins are disclosed by grace, points the finger of guilt toward himself. Nabal was churlish, Nabal was vile, Nabal was a fool, and a son of Belial, but Nabal was not to blame for David's resorting to the flesh for vengeance. The sin lay at David's door, and he acknowledged it. He had come face to face with the enemy and it was not Nabal, it was himself. Not only did he acknowledge that he was at fault, he also acknowledged that he had nothing to do with preventing the venting of his vengeance. He did not come to his senses and consequently deliver himself. He was delivered and then came to his senses.

“And David said to Abigail, Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me: And blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand. For in very deed, as the LORD God of Israel liveth, which hath kept me back from hurting thee, except thou hadst hastened and come to meet me, surely there had not been left unto Nabal by the morning light any that pisseth against the wall. So David received of her hand that which she had

brought him, and said unto her, Go up in peace to thine house; see, I have hearkened to thy voice, and have accepted thy person” (vv. 32-35).

To God be the glory when he suffers us not to be ourselves.

“And when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, Blessed be the LORD, that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and hath kept his servant from evil: for the LORD hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head. And David sent and communed with Abigail, to take her to him to wife” (v. 39).

David, the sweet psalmist would later write “It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes” (Ps. 119:71)



# JUDGEMENT

## 1 Samuel 25:36-39

36, And Abigail came to Nabal; and, behold, he held a feast in his house, like the feast of a king; and Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunken: wherefore she told him nothing, less or more, until the morning light.

37, But it came to pass in the morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal, and his wife had told him these things, that his heart died within him, and he became as a stone.

38, And it came to pass about ten days after, that the LORD smote Nabal, that he died.

39, And when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, Blessed be the LORD, that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and hath kept his servant from evil: for the LORD hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head. And David sent and communed with Abigail, to take her to him to wife.

**B**ecause the religious world has for many years espoused the doctrine of universal love and atonement, a very real concept has been put from the mind of religionists. The Bible has come to be used as a self-help pamphlet because men have been convinced that they have nothing to worry about from God. They have been inundated with the message that God loves them, indeed loves *everyone*, and that salvation is ultimately a matter of their decision. They have been told that, because God loves them, He is waiting with bated breath for them to cast a vote in his favor as He bends over the banister of heaven hoping against hope that some creature will allow Him to save them.

Reverence for God, and fear of Him, have become foolish because in the minds of men, He is powerless to

perform without their assistance. Because of this lie, men have made judgment to be a day far in the future, and the biblical teaching of temporal or present-day providential judgment is rarely considered or taught. We know that God does not judge His elect because all the judgment due them is fulfilled by Christ on Calvary. The trials that come to the believer have no judgment in them. They are trials of faith and necessary to keep us rooted in truth at the feet of our Savior.

However, the Lord does judge the wicked of this earth in this time. The Lord is in the whirlwind (Nah. 1:3<sup>1</sup>). He wraps His hand with lightning and makes it hit the mark. He has set the bounds of the sea, and when it overflows, it is by His decree (Job 26:10<sup>2</sup>). He makes the earth to quake and calls Euroclydon to bear down upon the seas. He kills and make alive (Deut. 32:39<sup>3</sup>). He raises up and bring down to the grave. He sends the rain to one place and drought to another (Amos 4:7-8<sup>4</sup>). The children of God may be harmed or even killed in His judgments against evil, but the judgments against evil will prove the blessing of His presence because “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints” (Ps. 116:15). In all such calamities, the worst of infidels bring up the name of God because even if they will not submit, they must admit that God has revealed Himself

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<sup>1</sup> Nah. 1:3, The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the LORD hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet.

<sup>2</sup> Job 26:10, He hath compassed the waters with bounds, until the day and night come to an end.

<sup>3</sup> Deut. 32:39, See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand.

<sup>4</sup> Amos 4:7-8, And also I have withholden the rain from you, when there were yet three months to the harvest: and I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city: one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not withered. So two or three cities wandered unto one city, to drink water; but they were not satisfied: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.

in power outside their control.

In our text, we are privileged to see the judgment of God against His enemies, the exaltation of his anointed, and those who honored Him. We know that vengeance belongs to God. We know that we are to take no pleasure in the ruin of our enemies and we are not to pursue their ruin. However, we must and do praise Him for His providential “world governing” protection and vindication of His people, wherein He also judges those who oppress them and oppose Him. This does not mean that every evil act is judged, or every righteous act rewarded. God does as he pleases, when He pleases and with whom he pleases. Some sins are set for the final judgment, and others are judged in time (Prov. 11:31; Ps. 58:11<sup>1</sup>). Some would say that such judgments are exercised only in the Old Testament. God has not changed (Acts 12:21-23<sup>2</sup> e.g., the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70).

In these verses we see the demise of Nabal and the exaltation of David, as well as the lifting up of Abigail. Nabal was a churlish man who disrespected the anointed of the Lord. He not only refused to minister to David and his men, but he also spoke of David as if he were a common slave. He despised one of the Lord's own (25:10-11; Matt. 18:10-11<sup>3</sup>). After he had slandered David and thought himself the victor,

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<sup>1</sup> **Prov. 11:31**, Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner. **Ps. 58:11**, So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.

<sup>2</sup> **Acts 12:21-23**, And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.

<sup>3</sup> **25:10-11**, And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? there be many servants now a days that break away every man from his master. Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men, whom I know not whence they be? **Matt. 18:10-11**, Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.

not knowing that his life had been spared by the act of his wife and the restraining grace of God, he threw a big party and quickly ended up inebriated (vv. 36-37). He felt safe and secure in his rebellion and at peace with himself (Eccles. 8:11<sup>1</sup>).

Abigail did not tell him what she had done until he awoke from his stupor. When she told him, his heart turned to stone (v. 37). This is metaphorical language depicting a state of immobilizing fear. For ten days the Lord had vengeance upon him by allowing him to suffer in his state of terror. Then when it was time, the Lord slew him.

It is important to note that it was not David's sword that turned Nabal's heart to stone. It was the words of Abigail. Here she pictures the church of God preaching the gospel to the world. Her words were sweet to David but bitter to Nabal. God has chosen through the foolishness of *preaching* to save them that believe—*words*. God's *words* are the two-edged sword that divides the joints and the marrow and discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart (Heb 4:2<sup>2</sup>). Nabal's heart was disclosed by the words of Abigail. This is the power of the truth of the gospel! Those who know God trust the power of His word and seek no invention to get men to *do* something. The Word will have its way (Isa. 55:11; 2 Cor. 2:14-17<sup>3</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> **Eccles. 8:11**, Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.

<sup>2</sup> **Heb 4:2**, For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

<sup>3</sup> **Isa. 55:11**, So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. **2 Cor. 2:14-17**, Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? For we are not as many, which

In this we see the glory of God overriding the desires of the flesh. In David, God graciously restrained him from shedding blood. In Nabal, God suffered him to be at ease in sin for a season until the appointed time for the word of His power. When David heard the word of Nabal's death, He rejoiced in the Lord. David was rejoicing in the providential government of God (Psalm 58:10-11<sup>1</sup>).

David glorified God with his words (v. 39). He glorified God for three things.

First, he praised God because God had pleaded his cause (v. 39). This is, or should be, the heart's desire of every believer because our Lord's intercession is always successful, always for our good and always for His glory (Mic. 7:8-10<sup>2</sup>). Mark well, these words of praise were not David's first reaction to Nabal's churlish behavior. In truth, this is generally the course of the sad estate of *redeemed* humanity. First, we come up with a plan, then God keeps us from following through. This is proven by the second praise of David.

Second, he thanked God for not suffering him to be himself. God has "kept his servant from evil" (v. 39).

Third, he praises God for the destruction of his enemy. In all this, he did *not* rejoice in the fall of his enemy (Prov. 24:17<sup>3</sup>), but he bowed and worshipped God because God is

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corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.

<sup>1</sup> **Psalm 58:10-11**, The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.

<sup>2</sup> **Mic. 7:8-10**, Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the LORD shall be a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the LORD, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness. Then she that is mine enemy shall see it, and shame shall cover her which said unto me, Where is the LORD thy God? mine eyes shall behold her: now shall she be trodden down as the mire of the streets.

<sup>3</sup> **Prov. 24:17**, Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine

just, merciful, knows what we are, keeps us from being ourselves, and deals as *He* will with those who oppose him and oppress his elect.

# DAVID'S WIFE

## 1 Samuel 25:39

39, And when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, Blessed be the LORD, that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and hath kept his servant from evil: for the LORD hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head. And David sent and communed with Abigail, to take her to him to wife.

**T**his, for Abigail, is the beginning of her life. She, in many ways, pictures the believer's "sweetheart" love for Jesus Christ. She pictures one of the elect held under the hard restraints of the law, who by the wonders of prevenient Grace begin to long for release.

I do not remember when I first began to desire to be free from my legal religious existence. I have often pondered to find an event, a moment when a light began to disclose my imprisonment. I *do* remember after teaching Sunday School or preaching, I would sometimes feel as if I was smothering under the weight of trying to be something I was not. I knew there was a force that constantly held over me a threatening sword of justice. I remember thinking and asking myself many times, "What would it be like to really know Christ?" Those longings were not from nature, but something (someone) outside myself that continually made me hungry for more than my religious activity—activity that left me empty.

I see in Abigail that same thing. She was married, an arranged marriage, one from which she could not escape, but her heart belonged to another. She did not leave her husband, she could not. But her interest was in another. She held no idea there would be anything other than a servant to king relationship between her and David, but that was enough

(Luke 15:17-19<sup>1</sup>). There came a day that the honor and glory of David superseded even the risk of her own life (Matt. 11:12<sup>2</sup>).

I would be audacious to presume that I can name any of the things which God put in my path to turn my heart as the rivers of waters, whithersoever He would, but I thank and praise Him that He did not suffer me to stay in that legal mess that I called salvation. For Abigail, her interest was not in herself but in the glory and honor of David. Unbeknownst to her, her interest in the king would eventuate in royal nuptials. Before she could be approached by David, and before David could send to commune with her to take her for his wife, there were things that must be settled. She was a married woman when she came to David at first, and at that time, David had no right to marry her. To do so would make both her and David adulterers, a crime worthy of death. There is but one legal way that she can become David's wife. There was but one way the law could be satisfied and Abigail be free to marry another. Her present husband must die, and die he did by the hand of God according to the word spoken by Abigail (39a).

The believer is betrothed to Christ, but in temporal terms, that was not always the case. Our Lord inspired Paul to use marriage as a metaphor to explain the elect's standing in nature before God, prior to their realized relationship with Christ. He used marriage in its legal capacity to show that in our nature we are bound to the law as long as we are alive, or the law is alive. In the event of the death of either party, the marriage is nullified, and the living party is free to marry

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<sup>1</sup> **Luke 15:17-19**, And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

<sup>2</sup> **Matt. 11:12**, And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

again (Rom. 7:3<sup>1</sup>).

Paul does not discuss marriage itself but rather the results of the respective unions. Under the law, the elect and her husband bear fruit, but it is fruit unto death. All the children born of that relationship are still-born. All the converts of legal religion are born in the likeness of their parents; they are born dead in trespasses and sin. The children born of the relationship of Christ and his bride are born from above and have eternal life. The substitutionary death of Christ has never known a miscarriage or a still-birth (Isa. 53:11<sup>2</sup>).

But before that marriage of Christ and his bride can take place, the claims of the law must be satisfied. As far as our experience goes, the law (our husband from our natural birth) has absolute claim and dominion on us. We are bound to him (the law)—our guilt being the marriage license. It is a real bondage, and it is the bondage of death. We owe this husband death because he is exacting, holy, and without grace or mercy. Every accusation against his wife is true. He is not a kind and loving husband but a painfully righteous one. Her state of bondage and ties to him are both legal and right because she is guilty. (Rom. 3:19-21<sup>3</sup>). Was Abigail guilty before Nabal? Yes. When Nabal refused to help David, she was still his wife.

*Legally*, Abigail was *bound* to follow his lead, and her covert operation was nothing less than overt disobedience to

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<sup>1</sup> **Rom. 7:3**, So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

<sup>2</sup> **Isa. 53:11**, He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

<sup>3</sup> **Rom. 3:19-21**, Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.

Nabal—no matter how well intended, or seemingly right in our eyes. She chose to honor another rather than her husband. You may say, “He was a bad husband, churlish, mean, and his attitude towards her was strident and unloving.” You have just well described the precise and exacting nature to the law in its relationship to the elect in nature. This marriage puts us under a constant, unchangeable sentence of guilt. This is all that the law *can* do. It does nothing *for* us. It does everything it does *to* us. We are born under this sentence, and in ourselves and by the law, nothing can or will ever change. I must die in order to honor my husband. I must die in order to be obedient to my husband. My husband must die in order for me to be free. Everything I do in my carnal estate and all that I am in my person is worthy of rightful death. I cannot appeal the charge; the sentence is written in tables of stone. Religion says keep the law, but even if I try, every effort I make is worthy of death.

I have often wondered why the Spirit inspired Paul to speak of the relationship of the elect in nature to the law as a marriage. I know that the primary aspect is to show legality of dominion, but I think this concept also has another connotation. If the law, being holy, righteous, good, and having rightful claims on us is said to be married to us, even if only to punish us, does not this relationship somehow bring a cloud upon the law. Certainly, he would not want to be seen in public with the likes of us. This is pictured in the book of Ruth, and we will look at it more in depth in our next study.

For now, we will look at the legal aspect of this marriage. At issue is right of dominion. This is the primary use of the metaphor of marriage. The law has the right of dominion over us from birth. Its right to dominion is based on our disobedience in Adam and in practice. If we are to come under the dominion of another, the law's dominion must be removed. This cannot be done unless it is legally done. Two things are legally necessary.

One way to remove us from the dominion of the law is

for *us* to die. But if we die, we would not be alive to be married to another. Under that scenario the law would be satisfied, but we would receive no benefit.

The other way to remove us from the dominion of the law is for the *law* to die—then we would be free from its dominion. But the law cannot die because it is holy, just and good, and death cannot touch it.

So, we cannot be free from the law's dominion. Since this "marriage" has to do with dominion, the thing necessary is that the right to dominion be removed—and to the *dominated* the law would ostensibly die.

Enter the *substitute*, the Lord Jesus Christ. By His death, in the room and stead of the elect, by dying the death due the elect, He accomplished *both* things! He satisfied the law's rightful demand by delivering up a death to be accounted as the elect's. Being dead before the law, the elect are removed from its right to dominate. By dying the death that the elect was due, the elect die yet live. They are dead and their life is hid with Christ in God. In one fell swoop, by the magnificent act of mercy, grace and justice, the elect die and the law is satisfied, the law dies, and the elect are free to marry another.

So, David upon hearing of the death of Nabal, communes with Abigail to be his wife. There is no legal prohibition to *this* marriage. Nabal's dominion is removed, and Abigail is free to be married to David. The story of Abigail and David is your story (Rom. 6:14; Gal. 2:19-20<sup>1</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> **Rom. 6:14**, For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. **Gal. 2:19-20**, For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.



# MARRIAGE AS LAW

## 1 Samuel 25:39

39, And when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, Blessed be the LORD, that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and hath kept his servant from evil: for the LORD hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head. And David sent and communed with Abigail, to take her to him to wife.

## Ruth 4:1-7

1, Then went Boaz up to the gate, and sat him down there: and, behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by; unto whom he said, Ho, such a one! turn aside, sit down here. And he turned aside, and sat down.

2, And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, Sit ye down here. And they sat down.

3, And he said unto the kinsman, Naomi, that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land, which was our brother Elimelech's:

4, And I thought to advertise thee, saying, Buy it before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it: but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know: for there is none to redeem it beside thee; and I am after thee. And he said, I will redeem it.

5, Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.

6, And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance: redeem thou my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem it.

7, Now this was the manner in former time in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning changing, for to confirm all things; a man plucked off his shoe, and gave

it to his neighbour: and this was a testimony in Israel.

## Deuteronomy 25:4-12

4, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn.

5, If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her.

6, And it shall be, that the firstborn which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel.

7, And if the man like not to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate unto the elders, and say, My husband's brother refuseth to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel, he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother.

8, Then the elders of his city shall call him, and speak unto him: and if he stand to it, and say, I like not to take her;

9, Then shall his brother's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's house.

10, And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed.

11, When men strive together one with another, and the wife of the one draweth near for to deliver her husband out of the hand of him that smiteth him, and putteth forth her hand, and taketh him by the secrets:

12, Then thou shalt cut off her hand, thine eye shall not pity her.

**A**s we saw in the last study, David's marriage to Abigail could only take place if her husband Nabal died. This pictured the elect's natural relationship to the law, as

to *dominion*, being removed with the death (right to dominion) by the person and work of Christ. That was the thrust of Paul's words in Romans 7. The death of Christ supplied the law with the death it was owed for the elect, and the ground of its dominion was removed.

But we also looked at the fact that the use of marriage speaks to more than dominion. It also suggests *relationship* and the production of offspring. As for relationship, marriage suggests love and companionship. With the law as our husband and we as ruined vile sinners, a relationship with us would diminish the law. The law would not want to be seen with us in public. Perhaps the reason that Paul used marriage in this metaphorical way is also an allusion to the book of Ruth where both relationship and *seed* are revealed in this matter of the law not being able to redeem.

The seed in Scripture is of paramount importance (Ruth 4:5). It speaks to the person of Christ the Messiah throughout the Old and New Testaments. The preservation of the natural lineage of Christ addresses the spiritual lineage of Christ and all who are born of His travail. The Bible is replete with references to the importance of the seed. From the protoevangelium in Genesis 3:15<sup>1</sup> where Christ is the “seed of woman” who will bruise the serpents head, to Abraham believing God concerning the seed and it being counted to him for righteousness in Genesis 15:6<sup>2</sup>; to Tamar playing the harlot to Judah and being counted more righteous than him because she had respect for the seed (Gen. 38:26<sup>3</sup>); to the suffering substitute seeing His seed in Isaiah 53:11<sup>4</sup>; to

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<sup>1</sup> **Genesis 3:15**, And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

<sup>2</sup> **Genesis 15:6**, And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

<sup>3</sup> **Gen. 38:26**, And Judah acknowledged them, and said, She hath been more righteous than I; because that I gave her not to Shelah my son. And he knew her again no more.

<sup>4</sup> **Isaiah 53:11**, He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied:

the seed of woman being born into the world in Bethlehem, born of a woman, born under the law to redeem them that are under the law; to the gospel and the preaching of it in 1 Peter and James 1, the Scripture is one long and beautiful treatise on the seed. "For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us" (2 Cor. 1:20).

In the text cited from Deuteronomy the fact is declared that the seed must be preserved and continued. When a woman is married to a man and he dies before the birth of the firstborn (picturing Christ), then the brother (next kinsman) of the woman's dead husband is to take the woman as his wife, and the first born of that union will bear the name of the former husband. Though it is not clearly set forth in this passage, it was commonly understood that this scenario was followed until a firstborn son could bear the first husband's name. So, if the second, third and so-on husband died, the process continued until the seed was honored and the lineage of the firstborn was established.

At the time our Lord walked the earth, the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection, tried to use this law to trip up Christ concerning the resurrection (read Matt. 22:23-33). Their interest was not in the seed but in proving that what they believed discounted the resurrection. With God, this matter of preserving the seed is of absolute importance, and the refusal to honor the principle declared here can result in dire consequences (Gen. 38:7-10<sup>1</sup>). Needless to say, this preservation and continuation is finally and fully realized in

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by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

<sup>1</sup> **Gen. 38:7-10**, And Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD slew him. And Judah said unto Onan, Go in unto thy brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother. And Onan knew that the seed should not be his; and it came to pass, when he went in unto his brother's wife, that he spilled it on the ground, lest that he should give seed to his brother. And the thing which he did displeased the LORD: wherefore he slew him also.

the person and work of Christ as is revealed in the preaching of the gospel (Rom. 8:29; James 1:18<sup>1</sup>).

Again, in the text cited from Deuteronomy, there is not only the doctrine of the preservation of the seed but also the punishment and shame that is involved for the next kinsman who refuses to do as the Lord commands (Deut. 25:7-10). If the nearest kinsman refused to marry the widow, then he was brought before the elders of his city and made to confess the fact that he refused to do his duty (Deut. 25:8). After his confession of refusal occurred, the widow of his brother publicly removed the shoe of the unwilling kinsman, spit in his face to publicly humiliate him, and caused his and his family's name to be a name of scorn and embarrassment the remainder of his days (Deut. 25:10).

The understanding of this principle comes to light in the book of Ruth as Boaz, the near kinsman, confronts the nearer kinsman concerning the redemption of the name of Mahlon the son of Elimelech. Mahlon had died and left Ruth a widow, and for his name and seed to remain, the near kinsman must marry her. Boaz was a near kinsman but not the *next* in line, and the situation must be remedied before Boaz can marry Ruth (Ruth 3:12-13; 4:4-8<sup>2</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> **Rom. 8:29**, For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. **James 1:18**, Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

<sup>2</sup> **Ruth 3:12-13**, And now it is true that I am thy near kinsman: howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I. Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning, that if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well; let him do the kinsman's part: but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee, as the LORD liveth: lie down until the morning. **4:4-8**, And I thought to advertise thee, saying, Buy it before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it: but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know: for there is none to redeem it beside thee; and I am after thee. And he said, I will redeem it. Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance. And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance: redeem thou my right to thyself;

We know that Boaz is a type and picture of Christ, our kinsman redeemer. As we compare the passage from Ruth with what we have read in Deuteronomy, several things differ that reveal the distinction between law and grace. In the text in Deuteronomy, the kinsman *refuses* to marry the widow and continue the name of his brother. The *result* is shame and disgrace. In the story of Ruth, the nearer kinsman does not refuse to marry Ruth but rather declares his *inability* to redeem because it would mar his inheritance. However, in the reason given, the marring of the inheritance, there is the element of refusal. In Deuteronomy, the widow *takes* the shoe from the refusing kinsman. In Ruth, the kinsman removes the shoe *voluntarily*. In Deuteronomy, the kinsman's shoe is removed before the widow. In Ruth, the shoe is removed before the redeemer. In Deuteronomy, the widow must personally deal with the kinsman. In Ruth, the transaction is between the nearer kinsman and the kinsman redeemer.

What does this teach us concerning our redemption? First the nearer kinsman is the *law* which cannot redeem us, but also asserts that it is not willing to. The law, by design, was never given to redeem or buy back anyone. It does not pay a price. It has no price to pay, and instead requires a price. Its function is to reveal guilt, and because it is holy and just, it cannot take a sinner to itself. The law must ever stand on the outside, having no possibility of intimacy. It can only accuse and assign blame with incontrovertible evidence, that no one is worthy to stand in its presence.

If the law, being holy, would embrace the sinner then the law would be marred, and its justice diminished. The law can *only* exact punishment. In Deuteronomy, the widow deals

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for I cannot redeem it. Now this was the manner in former time in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning changing, for to confirm all things; a man plucked off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbour: and this was a testimony in Israel. Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy it for thee. So he drew off his shoe.

with the law *personally*. For everyone who is under the law this applies absolutely. If you will deal with the law personally, you are on your own, and the results will never be good (Rom. 3:19, 10:8; Gal. 5:1-4<sup>1</sup>). For the redeemed, the kinsman redeemer deals with the law and the results are always good (Rom. 8:1-4<sup>2</sup>). When the redeemer deals with the law in substitution, the law voluntarily takes off the shoe and receives no spittle in the face. The law is not humiliated but honored and fulfilled by the kinsman redeemer, and the redeemer himself takes the shame for himself in His substitution.

The significance of the shoe is very interesting. The reason for the shoe being removed, as opposed to something else is not clearly defined. Why the shoe? We know that its significance is somehow related to the seed and its preservation. To take off the shoe or have it removed has to do with the refusal or inability to carry on the seed. The carrying on of the seed in the New Testament refers to the preaching of the gospel. It is by and through the preaching of the gospel that the seed of Christ is born or carried into His kingdom. The preaching of the gospel is the declaration of Christ as the kinsman redeemer who satisfied the law and,

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<sup>1</sup> **Rom. 3:19**, Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. **10:8**, But what saith [the law]? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach. **Gal. 5:1-4**, Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

<sup>2</sup> **Rom. 8:1-4**, There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

by His blood and death, bought back the elect to God. The result of that preaching is that the elect are born from above into the kingdom and family of Christ.

It is interesting to note that Paul in defending the matter of supporting the preacher of the gospel uses Deuteronomy 25:4<sup>1</sup> to do so (1 Cor. 9:9-14<sup>2</sup>). So, before the words concerning the preservation of the seed are declared, what it involves is declared. This is about the preaching of the gospel in carrying on the name of Christ by the birth of His seed. This is why we preach the gospel and only the gospel (1 Pet.1:23-25; James 1:18<sup>3</sup>). To refuse to do so would be taking off the shoe, revealing an unwillingness to preach the truth or an inability to do so (Eph. 6:14-15<sup>4</sup>). The believer is neither unwilling nor unable to preach the gospel. The believer is set for the defense of the gospel, and it is *all* that he is interested in preaching (1 Cor 9:16<sup>5</sup>). The believer will

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<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 25:4, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. 9:9-14, For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Pet.1:23-25, Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you. James 1:18, Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

<sup>4</sup> Eph. 6:14-15, Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Cor 9:16, For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of:

never take off the shoe.

Finally, there is a word here concerning the priority of this matter. The interpretation of Deuteronomy 25:11-12 is plain. Even our closest relations are never to be defended at the expense of preserving the seed. May the Lord give us this blessed priority in our entire life; to defend the seed, the Christ of God, and the gospel by which the elect are born into the family of God.



# THE SCEPTER AND THE CRUISE

## 1 Samuel 26:1-25

1, And the Ziphites came unto Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself in the hill of Hachilah, which is before Jeshimon?

2, Then Saul arose, and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, having three thousand chosen men of Israel with him, to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph.

3, And Saul pitched in the hill of Hachilah, which is before Jeshimon, by the way. But David abode in the wilderness, and he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness.

4, David therefore sent out spies, and understood that Saul was come in very deed.

5, And David arose, and came to the place where Saul had pitched: and David beheld the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the captain of his host: and Saul lay in the trench, and the people pitched round about him.

6, Then answered David and said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of Zeruah, brother to Joab, saying, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? And Abishai said, I will go down with thee.

7, So David and Abishai came to the people by night: and, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the trench, and his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster: but Abner and the people lay round about him.

8, Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not smite him the second time.

9, And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the LORD'S anointed, and be guiltless?

10, David said furthermore, As the LORD liveth, the

LORD shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish.

11, The LORD forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the LORD'S anointed: but, I pray thee, take thou now the spear that is at his bolster, and the cruse of water, and let us go.

12, So David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's bolster; and they gat them away, and no man saw it, nor knew it, neither awaked: for they were all asleep; because a deep sleep from the LORD was fallen upon them.

13, Then David went over to the other side, and stood on the top of an hill afar off; a great space being between them:

14, And David cried to the people, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, Answerest thou not, Abner? Then Abner answered and said, Who art thou that criest to the king?

15, And David said to Abner, Art not thou a valiant man? and who is like to thee in Israel? wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king? for there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord.

16, This thing is not good that thou hast done. As the LORD liveth, ye are worthy to die, because ye have not kept your master, the LORD'S anointed. And now see where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his bolster.

17, And Saul knew David's voice, and said, Is this thy voice, my son David? And David said, It is my voice, my lord, O king.

18, And he said, Wherefore doth my lord thus pursue after his servant? for what have I done? or what evil is in mine hand?

19, Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If the LORD have stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering: but if they be the children of men, cursed be they before the LORD; for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the LORD, saying, Go, serve other gods.

20, Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth before the face of the LORD: for the king of Israel is come out to seek a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains.

21, Then said Saul, I have sinned: return, my son David: for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly.

22, And David answered and said, Behold the king's spear! and let one of the young men come over and fetch it.

23, The LORD render to every man his righteousness and his faithfulness: for the LORD delivered thee into my hand to day, but I would not stretch forth mine hand against the LORD'S anointed.

24, And, behold, as thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes, so let my life be much set by in the eyes of the LORD, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation.

25, Then Saul said to David, Blessed be thou, my son David: thou shalt both do great things, and also shalt still prevail. So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place.

This text accounts the second time that David has had the life of Saul in his hand, and rather than take the opportunity afforded him to apply to the flesh and end the constant intimidation of his enemy, he does the right thing and spares Saul's life. The story once again reveals the character of David as a man of honor and a servant of the most high God. However, as soon as this story is told, we find David once again representing the truth of those who are recipients of God's grace. The ever-present power and persuasion of the flesh is always just below the surface and needs but little incentive to raise its ugly head. It is shameful how easily we slip into the flesh, but the knowledge of that fact drives us to Christ.

There are several elements of this story that speaks to the truth of the life of the believer and the continuous assault of

every imaginable accuser and enemy. We must remember that 1 Samuel is primarily the story of two kings; one king is the choice of the people, the other is the chosen and anointed of God. One king pictures God suffering the people to have what they want. The other king pictures God giving the people that which they need. One represents the rebellious lusts of the flesh; the other represents the gift of grace—the gift of God. One pictures the false pastor who shears, abuses, and gets all he can from the sheep; the other is a shepherd of the sheep and points to the good shepherd. One represents the Jesus that men imagine while the other represents the Sovereign who employs His reign for the good of His sheep and the glory of God (Jer. 23:1- 6<sup>1</sup>).

This chapter begins with the Ziphites once again betraying David by reporting his location to Saul (see 23:19-20). As far as politics are concerned, the Ziphites had already cast their lot with Saul. Prudence and preservation of life demanded that they betray David again, but there is more to this than the Ziphites saving their own skin. Their self-interest is extremely broadened and implicitly revealed as *hatred for David* and therefore hatred for God's anointed. In their hatred, they picture every enemy of Christ and His gospel. Herein is a dilemma. The enemies of Christ are not irreligious, nor do they operate without a king. They also call the name of their king “Jesus,” and they operate in a society

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<sup>1</sup> Jer. 23:1- 6, Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD. Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD. And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the LORD. Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

that the *world* calls Christendom. That king, who is “another Jesus” (2 Cor. 11:4<sup>1</sup>), and that gospel, which is “another gospel” (Gal. 1:8-9<sup>2</sup>) is a king and a gospel that only has power by their own appointment, being a product of their own imagination and will.

The religious world’s king and their gospel are what they are by the people’s choice, acting in abject rebellion to the true gospel and the true Anointed. They will betray the true Christ on every hand because they know that if Christ is the king, over whom they have no sway, they are lost and without hope. They opt for the invention of their own mind because the alternative, to them, is wholesale destruction of all their hope. Their king must honor *them* because they have *made* him king and he is *obligated* to them. Though they speak of his power, it is derived from their affirmative vote. That is why their religion is salted with phrases about their king such as “His hands are tied,” “He can’t do anything unless you let him,” “He is such a gentleman that he will not override your will,” “You must add feet to your prayers,” and other such things designed to diminish their king and *exalt their own power*.

The Ziphites are typical of all false religion. The true believer rejoices that their King is King of kings and Lord of lords. His royalty is not derived but intrinsic to his person. Their King is God’s anointed, yea God himself!

Saul pictures not only the *people’s choice* but his character also represents the *mutability* of the false believer’s god. What we see of Saul, again and again, is that he changes with every wind that blows. He repents with emotion and ease, and as soon as the tears dry up, his promise is as empty as his tears.

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. 11:4, For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.

<sup>2</sup> Gal. 1:8-9, But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. He declares, "I am the Lord, I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" (Mal. 3:6). This other king, this other Jesus, this other god changes repeatedly. The two most prominent evidences of his mutability are that his people claim that he loves everyone while they live but hates them when they die, and puts many of his loved ones in hell. Secondly, they claim that he paid their sin debt but at the judgment requires them to pay it themselves in an eternal debtor's prison of perdition.

Saul's actions also reveal the difference between true repentance and a false, temporary reformation. This episode is but another example of sorrow for being caught, rather than godly sorrow that worketh repentance. Saul is a master of "rededication," but he is a lie. This is the mark of Saul and of false religion—temporary change of behavior (usually when caught) and equating it with repentance. Saul's temporary fits of sorrow were followed by gleeful hatred for David (1 Sam. 23:20-21<sup>1</sup>).

David's actions toward Saul reveal that he is interested in the honor of God rather than wreaking vengeance on Saul. Though God anointed Saul as king, He did so to give the people their desire and send leanness to their soul. However, to David, Saul was the Lord's anointed, and he could not injure him or let his servant do so (1 Pet. 2:17-18<sup>2</sup>), even though Abishai said it would take only one blow to do the job (v .8). David pictured our Lord whose life was spent doing that which pleased the father.

One other thing in this story is striking in its symbolism. David took Saul's spear (javelin) and his cruise of water. In eastern countries, the king's spear was also used as his scepter,

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Sam. 23:20-21, Now therefore, O king, come down according to all the desire of thy soul to come down; and our part shall be to deliver him into the king's hand. And Saul said, Blessed be ye of the LORD; for ye have compassion on me.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Pet. 2:17-18, Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king. Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.

the symbol of his power. We know that Saul was never without it. David symbolically took away Saul's power. The cruise of water by Saul's bolster (pillow) symbolized his life or what kept him alive. So, David took from the king his power and his life. The message is simple; if you can take the power and the life of your king, he is not the true king. Christ said, "All power is given to me in heaven and earth" (Matt. 28:18). "No man taketh my life from me. I have power to give it and take it up again, this commandment I have received from my Father" (John 10:18).



# AUTHOR AND FINISHER

## 1 Samuel 27:1-12

1, And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul: there is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coast of Israel: so shall I escape out of his hand.

2, And David arose, and he passed over with the six hundred men that were with him unto Achish, the son of Maoch, king of Gath.

3, And David dwelt with Achish at Gath, he and his men, every man with his household, even David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal's wife.

4, And it was told Saul that David was fled to Gath: and he sought no more again for him.

5, And David said unto Achish, If I have now found grace in thine eyes, let them give me a place in some town in the country, that I may dwell there: for why should thy servant dwell in the royal city with thee?

6, Then Achish gave him Ziklag that day: wherefore Ziklag pertaineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day.

7, And the time that David dwelt in the country of the Philistines was a full year and four months.

8, And David and his men went up, and invaded the Geshurites, and the Gezrites, and the Amalekites: for those nations were of old the inhabitants of the land, as thou goest to Shur, even unto the land of Egypt.

9, And David smote the land, and left neither man nor woman alive, and took away the sheep, and the oxen, and the asses, and the camels, and the apparel, and returned, and came to Achish.

10, And Achish said, Whither have ye made a road to day? And David said, Against the south of Judah, and

against the south of the Jerahmeelites, and against the south of the Kenites.

11, And David saved neither man nor woman alive, to bring tidings to Gath, saying, Lest they should tell on us, saying, So did David, and so will be his manner all the while he dwelleth in the country of the Philistines.

12, And Achish believed David, saying, He hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him; therefore he shall be my servant for ever.

**T**here is a basic misunderstanding concerning faith that permeates the mind of every believer. The Bible makes it clear that faith is a gift of God and cannot, in any way, be attributed to the flesh (Eph. 2:8-9<sup>1</sup>). The Bible also declares that we overcome the world by our faith (1 John 5:4<sup>2</sup>). Notice that in this passage that “our faith” is a product of the new birth, which is the gift of spiritual life and understanding. The misunderstanding is that this gift that God gives can operate outside, or apart from the giver. Now that is not something that a believer would openly voice or even account as true, but when we resort to the flesh to solve our problems, by our actions, we are operating as if faith is self-sustaining. This usually, sadly, takes place after we have trusted God and been delivered by Him. Being what we are, we take that victory and immediately forget who delivered us, who gave us the victory, and attribute the victory to *our* faith. The fact is that we are in the most danger when we think that a previous victory ensures that the next trial will not be as much of a problem. Faith is not *power*. Faith trusts Him who sits in the seat of power. To trust in our faith is the harbinger of sure defeat.

In this chapter, David reveals this truth by his actions. He has been repeatedly delivered by the Lord from the hatred

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<sup>1</sup> Eph. 2:8-9, for by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

<sup>2</sup> 1 John 5:4, For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

and vengeance of Saul. He has seen that when he falls on the Lord for his help that he is delivered out of his troubles. But this anointed king, this apple of God's eye, this man after God's own heart is but a man who is both flesh and spirit—a frail human vessel.

David has just been given a great victory over Saul, attributes that deliverance to the Lord of glory, and declares that he believes the Lord will deliver him from future troubles. (26:24b<sup>1</sup>). There is no doubt that David believes this. However, the next words that flow from David's heart do not jive with trusting the Lord for deliverance (v. 1). With one breath, he says “the Lord will deliver me”, and with the next breath, he takes actions to deliver himself. Welcome to the real life of the child of God (Rom. 7:25<sup>2</sup>).

Religion would have men believe that a victory in this life increases our faith for the next thing down the road until one day the believer is able to rise above it all and reside in a higher plane where troubles are mere blips on the radar of his life. Grace is a present principle. It has nothing to do with the future or the past. Yesterday's mercies are wonderful and often a fond remembrance, but they will not do for today. The Lord said, “my grace *is* sufficient for thee” (2 Cor. 12:9). This establishes the vital connection of faith. It is operative only when the eyes of faith are fixed on the object of faith. When we look away from Christ, we have but one realm in which to operate—the flesh.

In Hebrews 12:2 we see our problem and the solution.

“Looking unto Jesus the *author and finisher* of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

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<sup>1</sup> 26:24b, . . . so let my life be much set by in the eyes of the LORD, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. 7:25, I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

We, as believers, know that Christ is the author or beginner of faith. We know how faith came to us. It is the gift of God, brought to us by the faith of Christ through the preaching of the gospel with the Holy Spirit come down from heaven. David's faith rested in Christ as the *beginner*, but this chapter proves that he did not look to Christ as the *finisher*. He believed God would deliver him but then turned to the logic of his own mind and heart to finish. Once again, we are reminded that the only way to walk in the Spirit is to look to Christ by faith, the author and finisher, the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last, and everything in between.

David's action in this chapter reveals a kind of pattern of events that attend the believer when he takes his eyes off Christ and applies to the power of his flesh.

1. David's plan is in direct disobedience to God's word (22:5<sup>1</sup>). David was to reside in Judah—not Gath. In fear, human logic often overrides what we know to be true. There could be nothing but sadness awaiting him in Gath.

2. David went to Gath and sought help from Achish the son of Maoch. Names mean something in the Word of God. “Achish” has two meanings. The first meaning is “I will blacken or terrify.” David, by seeking Achish, is stepping out of the light into the terror of darkness. Secondly, “Achish” means “only a man.” David, by his actions, has left the help of the creator for the impotency of the creature. “Maoch” means “oppression,” David, by his actions is putting himself in a state of oppression. “Gath” means “a winepress” and that word, throughout Scripture, is synonymous with trial and tribulation. In this place David's faith will be tried.

3. David's appeal to Achish seems very obsequious (vv. 5-7). But when we are trying to achieve something in the

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<sup>1</sup> 22:5, And the prophet Gad said unto David, Abide not in the hold; depart, and get thee into the land of Judah.

flesh, we will seek help from those we believe have the power to help us. Nothing is beneath us in our endeavors to be our own savior, even to the point of kowtowing to our sworn enemy. But thank God that overriding providence uses our ill perceived schemes to accomplish God's purpose in spite of ourselves. Ziklag, the province that Achish gave to David, now under the control of the Philistines, actually belonged to Judah (Joshua 15:20, 31<sup>1</sup>). Unbeknownst to Achish, he was returning to Judah what was properly hers and sending the anointed king of Judah to his home. Unbeknownst to David, the Lord was overriding his disobedience and beginning the process to bring David to obedience.

4. Verses 8-11 reveal many things but primarily show the reality of the flesh and the spirit. In verse 8, we see David honoring God by destroying the enemies that God had told his people to destroy but had not yet been destroyed. The Geshurites were the descendants of the Amorites. Their land had been given to half the tribe of Manasseh with instructions to destroy the inhabitants, but the tribe did not drive them out. David finished the job. The Gezrites, descendants of Gezer, whose land was given to Ephraim with instructions to destroy its inhabitants but left undone, David now destroys. The Amalekites were sworn enemies of Israel and these David destroys. In this he acted as the servant of the Most High.

But when he came to Achish and was asked what he had done, he lied or at the least equivocated to ensure Achish's allegiance. He told Achish that he had destroyed the Jerahmeelites who were of the tribe of Judah, and the Kenites the descendants of Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, and friends of Israel. He lied to make Achish think that he had warred against his own people—the people of God. His lie will be brought to bear in the future, but for now, David solidifies

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<sup>1</sup> Joshua 15:20, This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Judah according to their families. 31, And Ziklag, and Madmannah, and Sansannah.

his estate with Achish (v. 12). In this we see that when in the flesh, we cannot employ the truth but must lie to gain the favor and help of the enemy—and lie we will, as long as we remain in the flesh not trusting the Lord.

In this passage we see ourselves as sinners saved by grace. The struggle will not end in this life. It would be a valuable lesson if we can but remember that when we are delivered by grace, to continue in that grace, not looking to our faith but to the object of our faith—Jesus Christ.

He is the author *and* finisher of faith.

# A STRANGE INTERLUDE

## 1 Samuel 28:1-25

1, And it came to pass in those days, that the Philistines gathered their armies together for warfare, to fight with Israel. And Achish said unto David, Know thou assuredly, that thou shalt go out with me to battle, thou and thy men.

2, And David said to Achish, Surely thou shalt know what thy servant can do. And Achish said to David, Therefore will I make thee keeper of mine head for ever.

3, Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land.

4, And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem: and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa.

5, And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled.

6, And when Saul enquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.

7, Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor.

8, And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me him up, whom I shall name unto thee.

9, And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land: wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause

me to die?

10, And Saul sware to her by the LORD, saying, As the LORD liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing.

11, Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel.

12, And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul.

13, And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth.

14, And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself.

15, And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do.

16, Then said Samuel, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the LORD is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy?

17, And the LORD hath done to him, as he spake by me: for the LORD hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, even to David:

18, Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the LORD, nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the LORD done this thing unto thee this day.

19, Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and to morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: the LORD also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.

20, Then Saul fell straightway all along on the earth, and was sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel: and there was no strength in him; for he had eaten no bread

all the day, nor all the night.

21, And the woman came unto Saul, and saw that he was sore troubled, and said unto him, Behold, thine handmaid hath obeyed thy voice, and I have put my life in my hand, and have hearkened unto thy words which thou spakest unto me.

22, Now therefore, I pray thee, hearken thou also unto the voice of thine handmaid, and let me set a morsel of bread before thee; and eat, that thou mayest have strength, when thou goest on thy way.

23, But he refused, and said, I will not eat. But his servants, together with the woman, compelled him; and he hearkened unto their voice. So he arose from the earth, and sat upon the bed.

24, And the woman had a fat calf in the house; and she hasted, and killed it, and took flour, and kneaded it, and did bake unleavened bread thereof:

25, And she brought it before Saul, and before his servants; and they did eat. Then they rose up, and went away that night.

The first two verses of this chapter pick up where the last chapter ended. They are a reminder of the consequence of applying to the enemy of the gospel for help. David has lied to Achish convincing him that he had slain Israelites and the friends of Israel when in truth he had killed the *enemies* of Israel. His lie caused Achish to count him as an ally, and now David's chickens have come home to roost. "Sin, when it is finished, brings forth death" (James 1:15). The Philistines have gathered against Israel, and Achish now calls for David to honor his promise to join with him in slaying the people of God. Compromise of the truth must ultimately bring you to fight against the truth. It may seem like a small thing, some seemingly innocuous method or means, but by the employment of compromise in any form, the truth is denied.

I am not afraid of much. This is not due to bravery but can be attributed to lack of interest in crisis pathology. But

there is one fear that consumes me. I fear compromising the *truth*. Temptations abound to join in temporal battles that would garner me friends, and give me status, but I know that somewhere the truth will be compromised, and from that moment on I will cease to preach the gospel. My prayer from early on has been, “Lord, don't let me lie on you.” David is realizing the cost of his compromise. Then, the subject drastically changes. The first 2 verses of this chapter really are an introduction to chapter 29.

The rest of this chapter records a strange interlude. It seems to be a record of someone talking with the dead—a very popular subject in today's world. Several primetime television shows use “talking to the dead” or “necromancy” as the themes of their shows. Several well-known men and women have seminars in which folks talk to those who have passed on. It brings them big money. Metaphorically, dead men speaking is a linguistic tool to convict or convince. “Abel's blood cries from the ground” as an indictment of Cain's fratricide. Abel, “being dead yet speaketh,” convinces us that he was accepted by God on the basis and way he approached God—the blood of the Lamb.

Can disembodied spirits materialize? Yes, they can! Moses and Elijah, long dead, appeared at the transfiguration of Christ and conversed with Him of the death he should accomplish at Jerusalem. As far as I know that instance and the one presently considered are the only two such occurrences in the Word of God. So, I think it is safe to say that it is not a common experience. However, since our Lord warns and prohibits His people from pursuing such things, we can be sure that if or when they occur they fall into the category of the secret things of God (Deut. 29:29; Lev. 19:31; Isa. 8:19; 24:4<sup>1</sup>). The Lord has seen fit to give us this record

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<sup>1</sup> Deut. 29:29, The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law. Lev. 19:31, Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the

and thus we can be assured that it is here for our instruction. It is part of the gospel. It is an aspect of that which concerns Christ, his elect, and the glory of God in their salvation. The characters and what they do tells us the story. Since it involves someone doing that which is forbidden by the Lord, we must consider that this is a warning to those who would seek out and listen to that which is false.

“When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee. Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God. For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the LORD thy God hath not suffered thee so to do. The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the LORD said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require

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LORD your God. **Isa. 8:19**, And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?

it of him” (Deut. 18:9-19).

For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days (Acts 3:22-24).

This episode begins with the reminder that Samuel is dead (v. 3). Why bring this previously recorded fact up at this time (25:1)? It sets the stage and establishes the premise of all that follows. Though Abiathar, a priest in Israel, was alive and with David, there was no prophet and therefore no word from God for Saul (Prov. 29:18<sup>1</sup>). Saul has been rejected by God. He is now a reprobate from which there is no recovery (v. 6). But being a reprobate does not diminish religious zeal. It entices it! But zeal is now accompanied by a refusal to acknowledge God as He is.

When God is done with a man, the pursuit of his warped notion of God drives him to religious activity, and it is particularly exacerbated when the man is faced with the real probability of his own death. Saul is in dire straits. He has lost David; he has no word from God, and the enemies of Israel are at the door (v. 5). The word says he inquired of the LORD (v. 6). He asked Jehovah to save him. However, Saul is so far gone that his prayer is not even considered a prayer to God (1 Chron. 10:13-14<sup>2</sup>). The fact that he would seek

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<sup>1</sup> Prov. 29:18, Where there is no vision, the people perish.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Chron. 10:13-14, So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, even against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it; And enquired not of the LORD: therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse.

out a witch reveals that he does not trust in God.

When the woman was found, Saul disguises himself and comes to her by night (v. 8). We need not spend a great deal of time here because the Word of God is so adamantly clear on what Saul did (John 3:18-21<sup>1</sup>).

The rest of this story is stranger than fiction. Some believe Samuel was actually raised from the dead to prophecy the end of Saul. Some believe that it was an apparition conjured up by the woman who is clearly a minion of Satan. Clearly there are more things in heaven and earth than our eyes have seen. The fact that the apparition spoke the truth concerning Saul convinces some that this must have indeed been Samuel, risen from the dead. But God has used others to prophecy truth whom he has condemned (e.g. Balaam, Balaam's ass, the sorceress in Acts 16:16-18). Others believe this was a trick of the Devil, since Samuel had long been in the presence of the Lord, and he is depicted as coming out of the earth.

Such things make fodder for sophomoric debate, but they miss what is being taught here. The fact is that a man is seeking to hear from the dead, to enter into the spirit world to find answers. He will get answers, and maybe they will be true answers, but the means employed to seek them will leave the man in spiritual darkness. There is an order of things, a proper order. God will not be spoken to except through a mediator. For Saul there was neither prophet nor priest. David himself will learn this (1 Chron. 15:12-14<sup>2</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> **John 3:18-21**, He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

<sup>2</sup> **1 Chron. 15:12-14**, And said unto them, Ye are the chief of the fathers of the Levites: sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel unto the place that I have prepared for

In the Scripture, false prophets are called spirits (1 John 4:1<sup>1</sup>). False prophets are minions of the Devil. The man whom God has rejected will seek a word from these false prophets and will get what he seeks. These false prophets do not wear a badge that proclaims their falsity. They do not come as what they are. They come as what the seeker desires. They are wolves; ravening wolves in sheep's clothing. They come speaking of Christ, saying "Lo, here is Christ" and there is Christ (Mark 13:21). They speak of dreams and visions and extra-biblical revelations (Jer. 23:28<sup>2</sup>). We are told to try the spirits whether they are of God.

These false prophets, the pawns of Lucifer, do not come painting pentagrams on walls, sacrificing goats in the wilderness, practicing witchcraft, or worshipping Satan. Such are the Devil's failures. False prophets come preaching a message that is such a good counterfeit that "if it were possible" it would "deceive the very elect" (Matt. 24:24). They look like, talk like, and act like ministers of the gospel. They teach men how to be holy, separate from sinners, and how to live exemplary lives. They make men believe that hell and death will not touch them. They make men believe that what they do, the good things they do, make them acceptable to God. The Devil is not a red, horned, long tailed dragon carrying a pitchfork. He is not in the bars and the bordellos. He is in the pulpit, wresting the Scripture to the destruction of men's souls. His singular goal is to have his converts go directly to hell from their church pew with a Bible in their hand, accompanied with the seraphic, dulcet tones of a choir singing, "Just as I Am."

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it. For because ye did it not at the first, the LORD our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order. So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel.

<sup>1</sup> **1 John 4:1**, Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

<sup>2</sup> **Jer. 23:28**, The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD.

The lesson to be learned from this strange interlude in the context of these studies is that false prophets are spirits, dead spirits, spirits of error, but they don't appear so. And even if they tell some truth, it will never be *the* truth of salvation, but truth that will never benefit the soul. They *will* make you a better man. Your sins will be finer sins or what the old Puritans called, “splendida pecatta” or “shining sins.” They will dress Adam in news clothes and put new words in his mouth, but it is nothing less than putting lipstick and fancy duds on a pig.

Paul teaches us the meaning of our text in 2 Cor 11:3-4, 13-15.

“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him. . . For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.”

Their end is set. (Gal. 1:8-9).

“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed” (Gal.1:8-9)

“Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. But grow

in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour  
Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever.  
Amen.” (2 Pet. 3:17-18).

# THE GRACE OF PROVIDENCE

## 1 Samuel 29:1-11

(Read also 27:1-2; 28:1-2)

### 1 Samuel 29:1-11

1, Now the Philistines gathered together all their armies to Aphek: and the Israelites pitched by a fountain which is in Jezreel.

2, And the lords of the Philistines passed on by hundreds, and by thousands: but David and his men passed on in the rereward with Achish.

3, Then said the princes of the Philistines, What do these Hebrews here? And Achish said unto the princes of the Philistines, Is not this David, the servant of Saul the king of Israel, which hath been with me these days, or these years, and I have found no fault in him since he fell unto me unto this day?

4, And the princes of the Philistines were wroth with him; and the princes of the Philistines said unto him, Make this fellow return, that he may go again to his place which thou hast appointed him, and let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he be an adversary to us: for wherewith should he reconcile himself unto his master? should it not be with the heads of these men?

5, Is not this David, of whom they sang one to another in dances, saying, Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten thousands?

6, Then Achish called David, and said unto him, Surely, as the LORD liveth, thou hast been upright, and thy going out and thy coming in with me in the host is good in my sight: for I have not found evil in thee since the day of thy coming unto me unto this day: nevertheless the lords favour thee not.

7, Wherefore now return, and go in peace, that thou displease not the lords of the Philistines.

8, And David said unto Achish, But what have I done? and what hast thou found in thy servant so long as I have been with thee unto this day, that I may not go fight against the enemies of my lord the king?

9, And Achish answered and said to David, I know that thou art good in my sight, as an angel of God: notwithstanding the princes of the Philistines have said, He shall not go up with us to the battle.

10, Wherefore now rise up early in the morning with thy master's servants that are come with thee: and as soon as ye be up early in the morning, and have light, depart.

11, So David and his men rose up early to depart in the morning, to return into the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

### **1 Samuel 27:1-2**

1, And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul: there is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coast of Israel: so shall I escape out of his hand.

2, And David arose, and he passed over with the six hundred men that were with him unto Achish, the son of Maach, king of Gath.

### **1 Samuel 28:1-2**

1, And it came to pass in those days, that the Philistines gathered their armies together for warfare, to fight with Israel. And Achish said unto David, Know thou assuredly, that thou shalt go out with me to battle, thou and thy men.

2, And David said to Achish, Surely thou shalt know what thy servant can do. And Achish said to David, Therefore will I make thee keeper of mine head for ever.

This chapter brings things to a head concerning David's endeavors of the flesh and the glorious *truth* that Christ is not only the author of faith but is likewise the finisher of it. As far as the flesh goes, David has painted himself in a corner. He has put himself in the good graces of the enemy by lying about his allegiance. He has told Achish that he has slain Israelites and the friends of Israel when, in truth, he has killed the enemies of Israel and the allies of Achish. He has sworn to fight with Achish against Israel if he is called upon to do so. In this chapter his debt is called and we find him in the rearward guard of a vast Philistine army, arrayed for battle and bent on the destruction of the people of God.

We have seen in previous studies of the destructive nature of compromising the truth, and the willingness of the believer to resort to fleshly means to accomplish the purpose. David believed that God would always deliver him. But David also was a man of faith who had the handicap of sight. When the enemy seemed at the door, faith took a backseat to human logic (unbelief), and the thought of overwhelming circumstance made the flesh pursue immediate action. Simon Peter was called out of a boat and walked *on* water (Matt. 14:29<sup>1</sup>). With his eyes on Christ, believing Christ, the water was like concrete beneath his feet. But surrounding circumstance, the raging torrents, began to catch his eye. As he looked at these things, he realistically saw that they could kill him, and he was no match for the waves. Considering the waves, he began to sink, and he, who just moments before tread the torrent, now is being swallowed by it. In desperation he turned his eyes back to Christ and cried, "Lord, save me." All Peter did was look away for a moment, but in that look was the heart compromise—unbelief. He began his walk looking to Christ with the surrounding elements at his feet,

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. 14:29, And [Christ] said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

but amid his overcoming, he considered *what* he was overcoming rather than the one who had given him faith to overcome.

David had been delivered time and again by looking to Christ. He had been delivered and made victorious over the very one in whom he now seeks solace. He is rearguard in the army of unbelief. We do not hear *him* cry, "Lord save me." His compromise has brought him peace of mind, but it is now proving an uneasy peace, a peace that will soon be interrupted with the truth.

What happens to a believer when he is in unbelief, painted into a comer and there is no indication of repentance? Religion would have men believe that under such condition the soul is in peril, but the salvation and the deliverance of the elect is not conditioned on *their* faith, but the faithfulness of their God. God had begun a good work in David, and He will perform it till the day of Christ. Christ began David's faith, and he will finish it. Our unbelief does not disannul His promise (Phil. 1:6; 2 Tim. 2:13<sup>1</sup>). The Lord of providence will override the faulty plans of David. He will fix it so David will not shed the blood of an Israelite, and he will use David's enemies to do it.

Though Achish defends David's behavior, he is no match for the truth. Here, our Lord puts the truth in the mouth of the enemies of Israel to free David of his ill-proposed obligation. The Lord even fixes it so David does *nothing!* On one side, David's enemy rejects him. On the other side, David's enemy sets him free. Unbeknownst to Achish and the lords of the Philistines, they both are in collusion to serve the purpose of Almighty God. The enemies of believers are enemies of Christ, and they are but His footstool (1 Cor. 15:25<sup>2</sup>). The words of Achish concerning

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<sup>1</sup> Phil. 1:6, Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. 2 Tim. 2:13, If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. 15:25, For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his

David serve as a warning. Beware when the world speaks well of you, especially as it lauds your righteous behavior. You are standing in the snare of the fowler. Better, far better, when your enemies despise you for the truth's sake. At least there you know where you stand

This entire episode rests on the truth about David. The truth I speak of is found in the words of the lords of the Philistines (v. 5). This is the third time these words have been used in 1 Samuel. They reflect the fact of David's anointing, the King who *God* has anointed. This is the singular universal truth that puts every man in his place and obligates all men to bow. God has anointed Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords, and he has sovereign claims of your absolute obedience. At this moment you are bowing or rebelling before your Sovereign. The enemies of David stand on either side of him, and like the enemies of Christ, they speak either in admiration of his good deeds and not of his sovereignty, or they speak of his sovereignty from a place of disdain.

I want to consider, in the remaining comments, the three times this truth has been declared and the effect the truth had.

The first time we see this truth declared is from the mouth of those who adore David (18:7<sup>1</sup>). Here, the *truth* is the beginning of David's troubles. The one who would be king but has been rejected as such becomes the enemy of David because of the truth (18:8-9<sup>2</sup>). There cannot be two kings. Though man may think himself royal, his brief stint as royalty was rejected when he ate of the fruit of the tree. He may yet claim dominion, but there is a true King, and when confronted with that King, the worm-king is filled with

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feet.

<sup>1</sup> 18:7, And the women answered one another as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.

<sup>2</sup> 18:8-9, And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands: and what can he have more but the kingdom? And Saul eyed David from that day and forward.

hatred. When men proclaim the absolute sovereignty of King Jesus in creation, providence and salvation, the ersatz king eyes him with hatred from that day forward (John 10:31-33<sup>1</sup>). Your troubles do not start until you *hear* the truth.

The second time we find these words is found in 1 Samuel 21:11<sup>2</sup>. The truth was spoken here on the first occasion David fled to Gath for fear of Saul to find safe harbor with Achish. The servants of Achish proclaim the truth, and it seems to, because of David's fear, drive him to pretend madness (21:12-13<sup>3</sup>). Though these words may be viewed as a report of David reacting in the flesh to being discovered and responding in reasonable fear to his disclosure, that does not seem to account for the willing journey of these 400 people to be at his side in a cave—on the run. A closer look at the language of verse 12 gives us an understanding of the difference from David in fear and David as the refuge of these people.

The difference is found in the phrases “laid up” and “sore afraid.” Both the words “laid” and “afraid” each denote action or an act. It is easy to see that “laid up” is an act but the word translated here as “afraid” suggests a state of being. The word “afraid” is actually the verb “feared.” The suggestion is that both acts were *purposeful*.

If the verse is read in this light, then David, after being reminded by his enemies that he was indeed the king and savior of the people, purposed something in his heart. What

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<sup>1</sup> **John 10:31-33**, Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.

<sup>2</sup> **21:11**, And the servants of Achish said unto him, Is not this David the king of the land? did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands?

<sup>3</sup> **21:12-13**, And David laid up these words in his heart, and was sore afraid of Achish the king of Gath. And he changed his behaviour before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scrabbled on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard.

he purposed was to appear *as if he feared*. The word “sore” suggests an “overabundance,” an exceedingly unreasonable amount. The result of this *purposed* fear was a display of utter madness. Its design was to act upon the *truth* spoken by his *enemies*. He *is* the anointed king, and now he would wait on the Lord to raise him up. His flight to Adullam was to begin anew his journey to the throne. To some, this may seem to be a matter of semantics, but under the veneer of the drooling idiot was the mind and heart of the poet.

David had a new thing in his heart—a reminder of what God had in store for him. His fear of Saul was diminished as he began again to trust the Lord. The truth stated on this occasion reveals a wake-up call by which David began again to mind the things of the spirit. In the mind of this purposefully pretended facade of a mad man is the inspired words of faith and trust in Christ.

It is important also to note that though David *fled* from Saul, he was *cast out* by Achish (Matt. 8:20; John 7:53-8:1<sup>1</sup>). Our Lord's enemies called him a mad man (John 10:20<sup>2</sup>). Our Lord never pretended to be insane, but His words brought about that reaction. Our Lord never fled from His enemies, but He often merely disappeared from their midst because he was on a purposed mission. His actions were, in truth, a dismissal of their supposed power. David's actions were much the same. He purposed to trust the Lord, and his plan was a dismissal of Achish's power. David is the anointed king, and being the king means that he has a kingdom, and as he resorts to Adullam, the kingdom will begin to be realized.

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<sup>1</sup> **Matt. 8:20**, And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. **John 7:53-8:1**, And every man went unto his own house. Jesus went unto the mount of Olives.

<sup>2</sup> **John 10:20**, And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him?

“David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him. And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men” (1 Sam. 22:1-2).

The third time we find this truth declared is in the current text (v. 5). The *truth* sets David *free*. The *truth* delivers David. What more can be said? The Lord delivers His people with the *truth*. Even if it is spoken by the enemy, and even if it is disregarded by the enemy—the truth shall set you free. The truth drove David from the lords of the Philistines. The truth made Achish relent in holding David to his ill-planned efforts in the flesh. Buy the truth and sell it not. Your good behavior may put you at ease with the enemy and even garner his praise, but the truth will make him release you.

The truth will set you free.

# THE END OF SELF

## 1 Samuel 30:1-6

1, And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire;

2, And had taken the women captives, that were therein: they slew not any, either great or small, but carried them away, and went on their way.

3, So David and his men came to the city, and, behold, it was burned with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives.

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

5, And David's two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite.

6, And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God.

**W**e all know this episode in the life of David well. We have seen how the LORD has delivered him out of trouble many times, and we have seen him apply to the flesh immediately after the Lord had rescued him. David, his actions, and his faith have shown us the life of the child of God. As Donnie Bell has often said, describing the life of the believer, "It's the miserabilist, happiest life in the world." David is the quintessential example of the truth of that statement.

The last phrase of the passage we are considering in this study is, "David encouraged himself in the Lord, his God" (v.

6e) He has been brought to this place and this heart by divine providence. In the truest sense, because of the things that have occurred, David is alone, at the end of himself, and has nowhere to turn but to God. His ill-conceived, compromising alliance with Achish, has given him momentary, fleeting, false peace. Now, in the face of the loss of all he has, his wives, the allegiance of his army (v. 6a-b), and his now crumbled safe-haven, he has come to end of his rope. His sad strategies now rise from the ruins with the smoke of his smoldering sanctuary. Now, he encourages himself in the Lord, his God.

Often the omission of a thing tells a great story. Before we have the report of verse 6, the last report that was the impetus for the actions that brought David to this place is found in 27:1<sup>1</sup>. Between David's fear and this occasion of encouragement in the Lord, a year and a half has passed, and though all events of that span of time are not revealed to us, there is a glaring omission. The Holy Spirit chose to record two things that happened a year and a half apart. During that time, the Lord suffered David to scheme and plot, but there is no record in that span of David once calling upon the name of the Lord. We see him kowtowing to Achish, attributing salvation to the enemy of God, and begging for mercy at door of the enemy, but there is no reference to the prayer of faith. To call on God while employing the flesh cannot be done (Gal. 5:16-17<sup>2</sup>).

My brother, Billie, wrote a little booklet entitled, *From Struggle to Submission*. It was a small treatise on the foolishness of struggling to fix our problems when the only

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<sup>1</sup> 27:1, And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul: there is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coast of Israel: so shall I escape out of his hand.

<sup>2</sup> Gal. 5:16-17, This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

solution is submission to God. The fact is that everything short of submission is struggle, and that struggle is merely works of the flesh in different clothing. David's efforts have been struggles that have ended in despair, and they always will. Now, in despair, after a year and a half of self will, he encourages himself in the Lord, his God.

This trial of David's faith has had her perfect work. The course of the trial is a kind of catalogue of how trials for the believer often materialize. David's trial began with *deliverance*. God had delivered him from Saul (26:24<sup>1</sup>). Somewhere between that incident and David's fear and flight to Gath, David most likely began to look at God's deliverance as his *own* accomplishment. Confidence in the flesh always results in fear. To the natural mind, self-confidence eventuates in raising up enemies and attributing power to them, even though they might not exist. Be careful of self-confidence. Its fuel is the invention of enemies to boost the notion that you must fight your own battles. The result will be a sense of isolation accompanied by self-righteousness indignation ending in circling the wagons and further applying to the flesh for help and support. Mark it well, if your eyes are on the circumstance, you are struggling and not submitting.

This does not mean that there will not be, in your endeavors in the flesh, moments that seem to suggest that you are doing the right thing. David received Ziklag. He had opportunity to rout the Amalekites and other enemies of the people. He was even relieved of the promise he had made to fight against Israel. As he rose that morning to go home to Ziklag, he did so in great confidence that things were going according to his plan. Why turn to God when things are rolling so smoothly? I am sure his trek to Ziklag was an easy one. He had avoided the snare of the fowler once again. His

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<sup>1</sup> 26:24, And, behold, as thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes, so let my life be much set by in the eyes of the LORD, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation.

wit, charm, and willingness to humiliate and degrade himself before his enemy had gained him safe harbor. In truth and unbeknownst to him, he had snatched defeat from the jaws of victory. There is a way that seemeth right unto men, but the ends thereof are the ways of death. While he was pulling rearward watch for the army of Philistines, the Amalekites had taken Ziklag, taken all the spoil including his wives, the wives and children of his soldiers, and had burned the city to the ground.

The sorrow and woe of his followers is palpable. Their cries have been so prolonged that their tear ducts have dried up (v. 4). His ersatz hope is no more. The confidence is gone, and his very life appears to be in jeopardy. He is distressed, depressed, and has been rendered incapable of rubbing two cogent thoughts together. David the great planner, the genius manipulator, and master of serendipity looks on all his grand machinations, and they are but ashes and dust. If there is anything hopeful in the devastation and rubble, it is what David does not see. He does not see the bodies of the wives and children of he and his men.

David had spared nothing in his destruction of the enemy (27:8-9<sup>1</sup>). What could mean this absence of bodies? The Amalekites were not known for their mercy. They were ruthless, marauding murderers who left nothing in their trail but blood and sorrow. Why would they spare the people? There can be but one explanation. God, in his overriding providence, overcame the will of the Amalekites, by manipulating their thoughts, reasoning, and nature, to bring about this end. In his heart, David knew this, and it is proven by what follows.

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<sup>1</sup> 27:8-9, And David and his men went up, and invaded the Geshurites, and the Gezrites, and the Amalekites: for those nations were of old the inhabitants of the land, as thou goest to Shur, even unto the land of Egypt. And David smote the land, and left neither man nor woman alive, and took away the sheep, and the oxen, and the asses, and the camels, and the apparel, and returned, and came to Achish.

“But David encouraged himself in the LORD his God” (v. 6). Notice this statement begins with that little, albeit mighty conjunction “but.” Despite all that David had done, all his errors of judgment, and all the lies and humiliation, David encouraged himself in the Lord—his God. The wording here is very important. Though David had sinned, the Lord was still “his God.” This is a declaration of the covenant God and the unchangeable relationship he has with His elect (Jer. 32:36-42<sup>1</sup>). They may stray, yea will stray. Their relationship with Him may change, but His relationship will never change with them. What blessed, excellent knowledge! David has no reason to encourage himself in his own action, or even the fact that he is now returning to right thinking. God does not change, and our faintings and falterings do not alter His covenant. *We* change with every wind of circumstance, but the word from heaven resounds in our ears, “I am the Lord, I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed” (Mal. 3:6). Neither our faith nor our repentances give us comfort, only our unchanging God will encourage us.

“I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him: With whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him. The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of

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<sup>1</sup> Jer. 32:36-42, And now therefore thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning this city, whereof ye say, It shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence; Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely: And they shall be my people, and I will be their God: And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul. For thus saith the LORD; Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them.

wickedness afflict him. And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him. But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted. I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation. Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven. If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah” (Ps. 89:20-37).

This grace taught my heart to fear and grace my fear relieved (Ps. 56:3,4,11<sup>1</sup>). David encouraged himself in the LORD his God (Ps. 37:23-25<sup>2</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> Ps. 56:3, What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. 4, In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me. 11, In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. 37:23-25, The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand. I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.

# FOUND

## 1 Samuel 30:11-15

11, And they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David, and gave him bread, and he did eat; and they made him drink water;

12, And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs, and two clusters of raisins: and when he had eaten, his spirit came again to him: for he had eaten no bread, nor drunk any water, three days and three nights.

13, And David said unto him, To whom belondest thou? and whence art thou? And he said, I am a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite; and my master left me, because three days ago I fell sick.

14, We made an invasion upon the south of the Cherethites, and upon the coast which belongeth to Judah, and upon the south of Caleb; and we burned Ziklag with fire.

15, And David said to him, Canst thou bring me down to this company? And he said, Swear unto me by God, that thou wilt neither kill me, nor deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will bring thee down to this company.

**I**n the verses immediately preceding the text of this study, David has enquired of the Lord as to whether he should pursue the Amalekites and recover his wives and the wives and children of his followers. The Lord has granted him leave to do so and promised him sure victory. We will consider the results of that engagement in our next study, but first, I want to look at this providential interruption that aided David in gaining intelligence concerning the enemy he was pursuing. This episode where David's men bring a sick man to him is a picture of a sinner found by the Savior, a lost sheep found and saved by the gracious king of glory. This is

our story, the story of every believer's recovery and deliverance.

The first thing we see is this Egyptian was "*found*" (v. 11). He was an outcast, the servant (slave) of a master that had no more use of him and had left him to die (v. 13). He was *lost* in the truest sense of the word, a stranger in a strange land, sick and wounded, and if he had not been found, he would have surely perished. Providence has placed this man in the path of the King as he was about the business of recovering his bride. He was in the way of salvation, but he knew it not. He was "found."

The second thing we see is this man's *pedigree*. He was an "Egyptian" (v. 11) In the Word of God, *Egypt* is a picture of the world and the darkness of this world's religion. Symbolically, it is the *home* of the worldly where they find the dainties which are so satisfying to the flesh (Num. 11:5<sup>1</sup>). The religion of the world, great Babylon, is called Egypt in Revelation 11:8<sup>2</sup>. Being an Egyptian, this man was an enemy of Israel and her God.

Thirdly, he was found in a "*field*" (v. 11). There are two basic meanings of this word "field," and both definitions apply to the context. First it is a "place of wild beasts." Could there be a more fitting picture of the world of sin. This man was found where wild beasts reside. But there is another meaning of this word "field" and it is primary in the dictionary. It means a "cultivated field, one prepared for planting." It is not fallow ground, hard impenetrable soil, rocky ground, or ground covered with thorns and thistles. It is plowed ground—good soil. This pictures the sower sowing the seed on good ground. This man's heart is prepared ground, broken up, stripped and ready for the gospel!

Fourthly, this man was *not whole*. He was "sick" (v. 13).

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<sup>1</sup> Num. 11:5, . . . the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. 11:8, And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

Such is the case of every elect son of Adam. They all are plagued with the sickness of sin. The Word declares that the heart is deceitful and desperately sick (Jer. 17:9<sup>1</sup>).

We also see here the grace of God in its view of the found sinner. Sickness does not engender wrath; it engenders pity. Such is the case with our Lord in his view of his elect. Though they are sinners and deserve wrath, because Christ has taken the wrath due them, they are viewed in pity and mercy. Every example of Christ saving a sinner is presented as the physician healing the sick. The whole need not a physician but them that are sick (Matt. 9:12; Ps. 103:2-3, 8-14<sup>2</sup>).

Fifthly, this man is *destitute* (v. 13), “My master left me because . . . I fell sick.” How perfect a picture this is of Satan and his religion. The adherent's value only resided in his usefulness. If he cannot contribute, then he is cast out to the loathing of his person. This is the course of anti-grace. Thank God that He did not look to our usefulness on any level as incentive to show us mercy. Satan and his religion require usefulness to keep it going. It needs its adherents. God does not save sinners because he needs them. He is perfect and whole without them. He saves them for their good and for the exaltation of His glory. Remember this truth as we look next at David's treatment of those who were too weary and unable to fight with him.

Sixthly, we see this man's *deliverance*. He was “brought”

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<sup>1</sup> Jer. 17:9, The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 9:12, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. Ps. 103:2-3, Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; 8-14 The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.

to David. He could not bring himself being too sick and weak. He couldn't take the first step. He could not assist those who brought him (v.11). This pictures the work of God the Father and God the Spirit. "No man can come to me, except the Father which has sent me draw him" (John 6:44). Every one of God's elect are brought to Christ by His Spirit (Isa. 62:12; Deut. 6:21-23; Rom. 5:6-8<sup>1</sup>).

Seventh, we see this man's *deliverer*. He was brought to *David*, the anointed king and the man after God's own heart. Though this poor, bankrupt, ruined sinner is a repulsive sight, David has compassion on him. Thus is the case of every sinner. He has nothing to offer; he has nothing to bring but utter ruination, and every sinner brought thusly to Christ finds sovereign compassion (Mk. 5:19).

Eighth, we see this poor man's need *fully met* (v. 11-12). He was thirsty and hungry—dying of starvation. He had no money to buy anything, but when he arrived at the door of mercy, he found all the things that he needed were freely supplied. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matt. 5:6). He received bread and water, the staples of life. Christ is the bread of heaven and the water of life (John 6:35; John 4:14<sup>2</sup>). Then he received cake and a cluster of raisins. Christ not only

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<sup>1</sup> **Isa. 62:12**, And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken. **Deut. 6:21-23**, Then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt; and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand: And the LORD shewed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes: And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he sware unto our fathers. **Rom. 5:6-8**, For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

<sup>2</sup> **John 6:35**, And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. **John 4:14**, But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

gives life but gives abundant life (Isa. 25:6; 55:1-4<sup>1</sup>).

The ninth thing we see is this man's *confession* (v. 13). When David asked him to whom he belonged, he gave an honest report; "I am a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite." He is saying, "I am your enemy and a servant of your enemy." One of the definitions of the word "Egyptian" or "egypte" is "double straits." This man's confession declares him to be in double straits. But the gospel is suitable for such a doubly sad estate (Isa. 40:1-2<sup>2</sup>). Notice he did not say, "I was." He said, "I am" (1 Tim. 1:13, 15<sup>3</sup>). Those who are brought to Christ take the place of the sinner. They take up headquarters in the dust. When Christ called the Syrophenician woman a dog, she replied, "Truth Lord but I am *your* dog" (Matt. 15:27).

The tenth thing we see is that when a sinner is brought to the savior, he is no longer his own; he is bought with a price (v. 15). The king has absolute claim on his subjects as does the Lord. Every word of the king is law. Every word of the Lord is a command. David said, "Canst thou bring me down to this company" (the camp of the Amalekites)? Notice

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<sup>1</sup> **Isa. 25:6;** And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. **55:1-4,** Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people.

<sup>2</sup> **Isa. 40:1-2,** Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins.

<sup>3</sup> **1 Tim. 1:13,** Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. **15,** This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

the manner of the words of David. Though the saved sinner is obligated to obey, the word from the King comes as a request much like the words of Romans 12:1<sup>1</sup>. Though the believer is drafted into the army of God, he is also a willing volunteer (Ps. 110:3; 1 John 5:3<sup>2</sup>).

The eleventh thing we see of this man is that the saved sinner desires *assurance* (v. 15). He seeks two things.

First, he seeks assurance that he will *not be killed*. This is a confession of what he knows he deserves, and further confession that he stands before him who has the power of life and death.

Secondly, he seeks a guarantee that he will not be *returned* to his former master. This too is a confession. He is a servant. He is not in control of anything. Whatever his new master does, he will remain a servant. What the sinner has is a plea, and no sinner will ever be disappointed at the feet of Christ. He has delivered us from death and from the dominion of sin—our former master. It is not sinful to want assurance, but it is very important where you look for it (Ex. 33:12-13<sup>3</sup>).

The eleventh and final thing is that there is no record of David promising this man what he had requested (v. 16a), but it is evident that he did because he brought David down to the place of the Amalekites. For the believer, the point is moot. If the Lord has saved you, met your every need; He

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<sup>1</sup> **Rom. 12:1**, I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

<sup>2</sup> **Ps. 110:3**; Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth. **1 John 5:3**, For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

<sup>3</sup> **Ex. 33:12-13**, And Moses said unto the LORD, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight. Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people.

“will never leave you nor forsake you” (Heb 13:5). “*All* the promises of God, in Christ are yea and amen” (2 Cor. 1:20). With the salvation come *all* the attendant mercies.

This man had received grace and grace will see him through.



# PARITY

## 1 Samuel 30; 21-31

21, And David came to the two hundred men, which were so faint that they could not follow David, whom they had made also to abide at the brook Besor: and they went forth to meet David, and to meet the people that were with him: and when David came near to the people, he saluted them.

22, Then answered all the wicked men and men of Belial, of those that went with David, and said, Because they went not with us, we will not give them ought of the spoil that we have recovered, save to every man his wife and his children, that they may lead them away, and depart.

23, Then said David, Ye shall not do so, my brethren, with that which the LORD hath given us, who hath preserved us, and delivered the company that came against us into our hand.

24, For who will hearken unto you in this matter? but as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike.

25, And it was so from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day.

26, And when David came to Ziklag, he sent of the spoil unto the elders of Judah, even to his friends, saying, Behold a present for you of the spoil of the enemies of the LORD;

27, To them which were in Bethel, and to them which were in south Ramoth, and to them which were in Jattir,

28, And to them which were in Aroer, and to them which were in Siphmoth, and to them which were in Eshtemoa,

29, And to them which were in Rachal, and to them which were in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, and to them which were in the cities of the Kenites,

30, And to them which were in Hormah, and to them which were in Chorashan, and to them which were in Athach,

31, And to them which were in Hebron, and to all the places where David himself and his men were wont to haunt.

**T**his is the record of the treatment of those 200 soldiers in David's army who were too faint to join the battle and were allowed to remain by the brook Besor. When David returned from the battle with the 400 who went with him, there was dissent in the troops concerning what the 200 that fainted would receive. Some of the 400 who fought with David were unwilling to share the spoil with the 200 who stayed behind (v. 22). David responded to their rancor and self-righteousness with a royal edict that sets forth the blessed gospel of grace (vv. 23-25).

Let us consider those who stayed behind. First, they are described as too faint and weary to follow David into battle. Considering what they had been through, I am amazed that *any* of David's troops could muster the strength to follow him. These had probably run the gamut of physical and emotional distress. They had probably been perplexed with the notion that David had joined forces with the Philistines, even if what he had done had given them temporary safety for a year and a half. Secondly the forced march to catch the Amalekites would test the best of men. Thirdly, the emotions and depression that followed the loss of kith, kin and property must have been overwhelming. But behind all this record is the grand scheme of providence to teach us lessons about Christ and his people.

If we are honest and look at the tenor of our life since we were brought to Christ, we would probably find that in the face of battle we have often faltered, perhaps even more than we have fought. This is the nature of the body of Christ—"the church" (Col. 1:18). The comely, more visible parts are

more obvious but not necessarily more important. It is the unseen, less obvious parts that keep the body functioning. An army travels on its stomach, and somebody must remain behind the lines to mind the stuff. When David, the victor, returned from the place of the bloody battle, he saluted these who were too weary to go to the front (v. 21). He did not rail on them or call them cowards; he had compassion on them. Be not deceived, when you think you stand you will fall (1 Cor. 10:12; Eccles. 9:11<sup>1</sup>). The truth of the matter is that when we are at our weakest in the flesh, we are strongest in the spirit. Whatever the reason, these 200 were hindered.

Those who were against them sharing in the spoil also teach us some things. They were *among* the 400 that went with David. There did not represent all the 400; they were some men “of” the 400 (v. 22). They were the most vocal and quickest to assert what they feel that they deserved. They were part of the army of David but are described as Sons of Belial. They were like the two and one-half tribes that stayed on the wilderness side of the Jordan. They fought with Israel but never truly enjoyed the benefits of the Promised Land. They were like the tares among the wheat who support the church, and even do battle with it, but are not discovered and separated until the harvest. Most of all, they picture those who believe that the amount of works they do should determine the rewards they receive. They are works religionists, and they do what they do to be righteous and to gain reward. Job proved that the believer serves the Lord and worships Him for nothing because in the Lord, he has all things.

However, the fact is that the spoils of the war belong to

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. 10:12, Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. Eccles. 9:11, I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.

the King (vv. 18-19<sup>1</sup>). Everyone else involved is a servant, bought and paid for by the King (Luke 17:10<sup>2</sup>). Whether you fight in the battle or mind the stuff, the King salutes you. By design, the seed bears fruit—some thirty fold, some sixty fold and some a hundred fold, but because it is by design, thirty fold is one hundred percent, as is a hundred fold. Some seem to have little to offer but Scripture declares that they are accepted according to what they have (2 Cor. 8:12<sup>3</sup>). The widow had but two mites but she is recorded in the eternal word as giving her *life!* The only person ever recorded as doing something that the Lord called a good work was the harlot who anointed the Lord for His burial. In describing her act, the Lord said, “She did what she could.” These who minded the stuff will live to fight another day. They will have their battles, but not this day. This day, they did what they could; they minded the stuff.

When they faced the onslaught of tirades from those who accused them of unworthiness, we have no record of their response. They had no argument; they had no defense in themselves, but they had an Advocate—even the King to whom belonged the victory. Their champion was the one who had recovered all. The spoils belong to David; the soldiers belong to David, and the dispensing of them belonged to David. So it is with our Lord.

“For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed

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<sup>1</sup> vv. 18-19, And David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away: and David rescued his two wives. And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither spoil, nor any thing that they had taken to them: David recovered all.

<sup>2</sup> Luke 17:10, So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Cor. 8:12, For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.

with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive. So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house, Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?" (Matt. 20:1-15).

Thank God, Our King is the benevolent Despot. The words of David resound with grace upon grace. Hear, as it were, the words of the King of Glory. A divine edict is established. He is the victor, the spoils belong to Him, and his declaration is that everything He has won is dispensed to His people. Whether they are mighty warriors or supply clerks, whether they fill the pulpit or sit quietly in a corner, whether they are recognized or invisible, they are equal in

Christ (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:10-11<sup>1</sup>). Whatever Christ won in His singular battle on the cross belongs to everyone for whom he died (Rom. 8:17; 1 Cor. 3:20-23; John 17:21-24<sup>2</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> **Gal. 3:28**, There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. **Col. 3:10-11**, And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

<sup>2</sup> **Rom. 8:17**, And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. **1 Cor. 3:20-23**, And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain. Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's. **John 17:21-24**, That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

# DAVID RECOVERED ALL

## 1 Samuel 30:18-20

18, And David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away: and David rescued his two wives.

19, And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither spoil, nor any thing that they had taken to them: David recovered all.

20, And David took all the flocks and the herds, which they drave before those other cattle, and said, This is David's spoil.

When I began to study 1 Samuel 30, these two verses of Scripture grabbed my attention because three words, twice repeated, said it all for me. The beginning words of verse 18 and the final words of verse 19 declare the accomplishment of David and set forth the glory of Christ in his finished work on Calvary's tree.

As I read these words, I was reminded of another victory that was reported in the same way. In Genesis 14:16<sup>1</sup> we read of Abraham after he has defeated five armies with just 318 men and recovered Lot, his kidnapped nephew. The word says of Abraham, he “brought back all.” After Abraham’s victory we are introduced to a character like no other. He was a king *and* a priest, not allowed in the economy of God under the Old Covenant. When Uzziah, the king, decided to assume the office of priest, he was smitten with leprosy and died with the disease. But in Gen. 14, long before the Old Covenant was established on Sinai, Abram is met after his victory with bread and wine given by the hand of Melchizedek, the King of Salem *and* a priest unto God.

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<sup>1</sup> Genesis 14:16, And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people.

Melchizedek is a type of, and many believe a pre-incarnate manifestation of Christ, or a Christophany, often pictured and typified in the Old Testament (Exod. 28:36-38; 29:6; Zech. 6:12-13<sup>1</sup>). Our Lord spoke of Melchizedek in Matthew 22 and his words silence the Pharisees and scribes (Matt. 22:42-46<sup>2</sup>). He was quoting from Psalm 110:1, 5<sup>3</sup>. The writer of the book of Hebrews used Melchizedek 9 times to reveal the royal priesthood of Christ.

All of this made me wonder if Psalm 110 could be tied to this glorious victory of David. Clearly, believers hold that Psalm 110 is about Christ the Messiah and attribute the words of that Psalm to David, as did our Lord. I found it interesting that Jewish scholars, because of the view of Christians that David was declaring the glory of the Messiah, attributed his Psalm to Eliezer, a servant of Abraham, and refused to account the psalm as having to do with the Messiah, but rather the victory of Abraham over the five

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<sup>1</sup> **Exod. 28:36-38**, And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. And thou shalt put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the mitre; upon the forefront of the mitre it shall be. And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD. **29:6**, And thou shalt put the mitre upon his head, and put the holy crown upon the mitre. **Zech. 6:12-13**, And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.

<sup>2</sup> **Matt. 22:42-46**, Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose Son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his Son? And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.

<sup>3</sup> **Psalm 110:1**, A Psalm of David. The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. **4**, The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

kings. The victory of David and that of Abraham had much in common, loss of all, kidnappings of wives, taking of property, and the recovery of all. We know that David was the author of the Psalm and that the victories of both David and Abraham picture those victories.

“The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth. The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries. He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head” (Ps. 110).

Since both victories are accompanied by the presence of Melchizedek, these are pictorials of what Christ did on Calvary. We can freely substitute the name of Christ in both victories. In Genesis, Christ “brought back all.” In 1 Samuel, Christ “recovered all.”

The words “David recovered all” brings us to consider what happened in the Garden of Eden and what happened on Calvary. These are two of the most misunderstood and wrongly reported things in all of theology. The words “Christ recovered all” addresses and answers both these questions. In the Garden all was lost. On Calvary all was recovered.

When Adam sinned and plunged the entire human race into sin, everything was lost. The right to dominion over the creation of God was lost. Man no longer ruled his environment; he became a slave to it. He lost the love of his wife and his love for her. He lost the possibility of

communion and fellowship with his Maker. He was driven out of paradise and would never be allowed to return by his own ability. He lost standing with God. He lost the ability to do good without sin being ever present with him. He lost everything.

On Calvary our Lord recovered all. Everything the first Adam lost, the last Adam recovered and much more (read Rom. 5). If what Adam had before the fall could be construed as righteousness, it was, at best, human righteousness, which, at best, is doomed to fail. Christ, as a human being, recovered that righteousness, living perfectly and without sin as a man. He kept the law the only way a man can, by dying under its righteous and just condemnation. But much more, He made His elect to be the very righteousness of God by his substitutionary work. He recovered all that Adam lost. Adam lost life; Christ recovered life and that more abundantly. Adam lost fellowship; Christ recovered fellowship and much more. Adam's fellowship with God was creature to creator; the believer's fellowship with God is son to father. Adam lost the world; Christ recovered the world and much more (1 Cor. 3:21-23<sup>1</sup>). The list goes on and on, and the truth remains that Christ recovered all.

Let us consider these two verses in 1 Samuel and see what Christ recovered as pictured in the victory of David. The first thing to note is that this is an unqualified victory—a *total success*! David did *not* fight the battle to make victory *possible*, or to make victory *available* to all who chose to receive it. He won the day. Our Lord did not make salvation possible or make it available to all; He saved his people! He utterly defeated the enemy and recovered all (20c). This is clearly seen in that He distributed the spoil equally to all his people; even those who stayed behind and minded the stuff.

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. 3:21-23, Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; And ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

David recovered his wives (v. 18). Christ recovered his wife—his bride. She had been betrothed to Him out of Adam's fallen race from eternity. She was given to Him by the Father. Though sinful, fallen and unworthy of anything but death, he recovered her. She is His bride, His church, His sheep, His beloved, and His chosen, and He has recovered her (John 6:37-39<sup>1</sup>).

Concerning those whom David rescued we have a most blessed description; "There was nothing lacking to them" (v. 19a) Such is the case with all whom Christ recovered (Rom. 8:28-34; Eph. 1:3-4<sup>2</sup>). Religion thrives on what men lack and the heights to which they must attain. The believer is complete and lacks nothing (1 Cor. 1:30<sup>3</sup>). And all the glory belongs to Christ. He recovered all!

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<sup>1</sup> **John 6:37-39**, All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

<sup>2</sup> **Rom. 8:28-34**, And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. **Eph. 1:3-4**, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

<sup>3</sup> **1 Cor. 1:30**, . . . of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:



# THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE IS DONE

## 1 Samuel 31:1-13

1, Now the Philistines fought against Israel: and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa.

2, And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Malchishua, Saul's sons.

3, And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him; and he was sore wounded of the archers.

4, Then said Saul unto his armourbearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me. But his armourbearer would not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it.

5, And when his armourbearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him.

6, So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armourbearer, and all his men, that same day together.

7, And when the men of Israel that were on the other side of the valley, and they that were on the other side Jordan, saw that the men of Israel fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities, and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them.

8, And it came to pass on the morrow, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen in mount Gilboa.

9, And they cut off his head, and stripped off his armour, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to publish it in the house of their idols, and among the people.

10, And they put his armour in the house of Ashtaroth: and they fastened his body to the wall of Bethshan.

11, And when the inhabitants of Jabeshgilead heard of

that which the Philistines had done to Saul;

12, All the valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Bethshan, and came to Jabesh, and burnt them there.

13, And they took their bones, and buried them under a tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days.

**I**n the book of Hosea our Lord said, “I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath” (Hosea 13:11). In short form, this verse from Hosea gives a synopsis of the events recorded in 1 Samuel 31. Saul was the people's choice to be their king, and this chapter records the end of him. The earth has soaked up his blood, and it does not cry to heaven to be avenged because this death comes from the throne of glory. The means employed is the sword of his armor bearer; the crime report will read “suicide,” and the plot will read “the providence of God according to His promise.”

Saul, as king, pictures and represents *self*. By nature, my choice of king is *me*. I am the abomination of desolating who sets myself up as god and presumes to rule in my domain by the exercise of my will. I make for myself little deities, first in my image and digress to creatures and things that writhe and wriggle upon the earth, things I can destroy by *my* power. I seek not the counsel of the Lord, nor his forgiveness, unless I am caught in some heinous thing from which I cannot extricate myself. I will repent if I think it gets me a reprieve, but I will not alter my love for my choice of deity—myself. I know that my end will not be a good one, but I cannot be but what I am, and I must follow this course till at the end. I choose eternal punishment rather than social embarrassment. I am a coward.

Conscience makes cowards of us all, and in my cowardice, I would rather face God in judgment than call on Him for mercy. In the end I would rather kill myself than let

someone else touch my treasured frame. This is not merely the end of the king; It is the end of all flesh. In the end, I find that my enemies are not those who fight against me or even those who take my head from me and display my carcass for their vengeful pleasure. My enemy is the one I kill—my enemy is *me*! I have spent my life kicking against the pricks, trampling under foot every opportunity to own my wickedness, and now, my finish is in spectacularly gutless poltroonery.

Saul is my *free will* and *I*. Saul is *me* and *me* against the world. Before Saul ends his life, his sons, unlike him, died valiantly in battle. God's providence rules that even Jonathan, the beloved friend of David, must taste death. Some would have Jonathan to survive but God's ways are not ours. Was he a child of God? If he was, his death was precious in the Lord's sight, and he lives in eternal bliss and happiness. Saul had been his sire, but God was his Father, and the word of the Lord is true (Prov. 14:32; Isa. 57:1-2<sup>1</sup>). For the people of Israel, Jonathan may have proved a hindrance to the enthronement of David. Though Jonathan would gladly give up his royal rights of ascendancy, being beloved of the people and acting according to their own history they might have rallied to Jonathan and sought again to enthrone the wrong king. Now that issue is forever settled. The false royal family is no more and there is nothing that prohibits David from taking his rightful place as the anointed King.

Saul was doomed from the start, but providence set the wheels of justice in motion so that there could be no doubt that he deserved his appointed end. Such is the case with our own salvation. Our Adamic nature, our carnal self, our king

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<sup>1</sup> **Prov. 14:32**, He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that honoureth him hath mercy on the poor. **Isa. 57:1-2**, The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart: and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come. He shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness.

of choice has been doomed from the beginning. He cannot make it out of this life in good standing. If the anointed, the Christ, is to take the throne, the old king, the old man must die along with all that he has sired. In the end, there can be no vestiges of his existence, no pretender to the throne remaining. By revelation we know that the old king, the old man was crucified, but by experience we know that his demise is a long time coming. Between the sentence and the execution, he spends his existence fighting, opposing, and being contrary to the spirit of Christ in us. But his end will come, and in that hour, just one King, the rightful King will remain.

Saul's end was suicide. *He* fell on his sword. Every effort of our carnal nature is a form of suicide. In our carnality, we turn off the light and stumble in darkness. We hear the gospel, and it is the savor of death. We assert *our way* rather than submit to *the Way*. Our ways are but ways of death. The words of the Lord resound in our ears, "He that hateth me loveth death," but our old nature will never submit (Matt. 7:21<sup>1</sup>). Our nature, in efforts of self-deification and ruthless desire to be king, falls on its own sword by degrees. When life is evidently set before us and yet we choose death, what word other than "suicide" fits our case (Ezek. 18:31; 33:11;<sup>2</sup> compare Deut. 30:11-20 to Rom. 10:1-17)? Rolf Barnard said that "unbelief is insanity." Our Lord declared it to be demon possession and devil worship (John 8:23, 44; Eph. 2:1-4<sup>3</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. 7:21, Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

<sup>2</sup> Ezek. 18:31; Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? 33:11, Say unto them, As I live, saith the LORD God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

<sup>3</sup> John 8:23, And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from

What killed Saul? We can say it was the sword, but in truth, it was *fear* of what *men* might do. Verse 3 tells us that Saul was wounded by the archers, but in the original language the word “hit” is actually the word “found,” and the word “wounded” is actually “feared.” When the archers found Saul, he *feared* the archers. It was that fear which caused him to ask his armor bearer to kill him. The New Testament speaks often of men who would not follow Christ because they feared men. I have seen that fear in men's eyes, who when confronted with the truth, realize their error but turn from the truth because it will cost them friends and family. It is sad that such fear is a form of suicide, but it is. The only remedy for such fear is the courage that attends God-given faith (Isa. 12:2-3; Heb. 13:5-6 Matt. 10:28<sup>1</sup>).

What of this sword? Though it is not clearly stated in the Word of God, Jewish tradition holds that Doeg was Saul's armor-bearer. You will remember that Doeg was the man who betrayed David and killed 85 priests and their families with his sword, the same sword that Saul employs in his suicide. Doeg did this deed at the command of Saul. In Scripture the *sword* of someone is often a metaphor for his *words*. The armor bearer holds the sword of the false king. The false king has *words*, and they are *held* by his servant. In this I see the false preacher and his converts. The converts follow the preacher's word; they carry his sword. They call it the sword of the Lord, but it is really the sword of death and

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above. 44, Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. Eph. 2:1-4,

<sup>1</sup> Isa. 12:2-3, Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. Heb. 13:5-6, Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. Matt. 10:28, And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

lies. They use the Bible to control and command men, but their command is death to the hearers. In the final analysis, their own words condemn them, they both fall on their own swords. By the false preacher's words, many are slain, and by their words, they kill themselves.

Saul's plans are a miserable failure. His greatest natural fear is realized. The Philistines cut off his head and dedicate his body to the false idols that they worship (v. 9). In the end, the gods he embraced by the act of refusing the true God became the display stand of his false hope. He had thought by killing himself that he would save his flesh. He had thought that his death would keep his name alive, but all it did was join him with the other God haters and the gods they worshipped. Saul believed that he was a child of God, but he ended up being an accessory of their idols and the mockery of other false worshippers.

There are but two religions, the false and the true. The false has many names but one method and message. If you do well, you will be accepted. The religion of works, no matter if it be Buddhism, Hinduism, or fundamentalism, is false, a lie, and just another way to perish. But there is no loyalty among these thieves. Their creeds are such that they are deceived into thinking that others who worship exactly as they do are not the same as they are. Those spoken of in the context of Matthew 7:21-22<sup>1</sup> are enemies of Christ. They do their good works in the name of Christ but will eat their own children in the end if they differ from their creed. Together they all hate the truth that is in Christ, but they have no love for each other either. They love the king of their choice—*themselves*. The only true religion is the gospel of Christ, and that religion allows no place for the works of men as grounds for acceptance with God.

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 7:21-22, Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Finally, there are some men who retrieved the bodies of Saul and his sons. They are valiant men who risked their lives for the dead false king and his children. These in particular were saved from death in 1 Samuel 11. To them, the false king was their savior, and they would not have him dishonored. Do not think those who have changed their allegiance to a false God are not ready to risk their life, even for his dismembered body. These men took their false king, who had saved them, and burned his body and buried his bones out of respect. Do not discount the valor these men displayed. It was real courage in the face of these Philistines.

They loved their savior, but the way they were delivered is important. If you look back to 1 Samuel 11, their deliverance (salvation) was due to *their* act. They besought Saul and made a bargain with him to save them. He only acted because of their willingness and because it would benefit him. He saved them because they *made* him their savior. He only saved them because they had something to offer. Saul was not even their first choice. They first tried to covenant with the one who meant to kill them, but his price was too high. In the end, they laid the bones of their dead savior to rest, fasted seven days because he was gone and then went on with their lives.

The false king is dead—Long live the true king!





