

Preparation

By way of Preparation, we will be continuing through the Book of 1 Samuel making our way into 2 Samuel. As we near the end of the First Book of Samuel, we will read of the death of Saul, making way for David to inherit what God had already anointed him to be. Remember that David is, as God records in Acts 13:22, “a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.” The testimony of David goes on to say, in the Book of Acts 13:36, “For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep”. Of all the words that could have been chosen to describe or to remember David by, God chooses to preserve these two statements. Of course, the purpose of this is not to uplift the man David, but rather to dive into the reasoning behind God referring to David in this manner. The scripture tells us, in Acts 10:34, “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons”. That being said, if David was remembered to “serve his generation by the will of God”, based on the word of God, there is a possibility that the same could be said of us.

As we read through the account of David, it's evident that David had a special relationship with God's word. Psalm 119 shows just how important the Bible, the word of God, was in David's life. Here are just a few of the incredible verses that God, through David, recorded in Psalm 119:

- **Psalm 119:7** “I will praise thee with uprightness of heart, when I shall have learned thy righteous judgments.”
- **Psalm 119:11** “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.”
- **Psalm 119:15** “I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways.”
- **Psalm 119:24** “Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors.”
- **Psalm 119:62** “At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments.”
- **Psalm 119:112** “I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes alway, even unto the end.”

We could go on with the verses in Psalm 119, but for now, suffice to say that David's love for God and His word are completely evident. By way of Preparation, as we continue through in the word, maybe we all could focus a little bit more on our love for the word. Maybe all of us could show more appreciation for God's word and the opportunity to hold it in our hands. Perhaps then, as we commit our hearts and lives to the word of God, our obedience to His commands will be more evident in our lives.

Monday – April 3, 2017

TODAY'S READING: I Samuel 18-21

OVERVIEW:

David and Jonathan become friends; David is promoted in the site of Israel and despised in the eyes of Saul; Saul plots and attempts to kill David; David is helped by Jonathan and others to escape Saul.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

Killing the chief enemy of Israel (Goliath) certainly had a big effect on the reputation of David. God had chosen to promote him in the eyes of the Israelites while Saul, who seems to be far more concerned with how things look rather than the state of his heart, becomes protective of his position and jealous of David at the same time. With this, Saul loses his very most prized possession – his son. Jonathan, the supposed heir of the kingdom, is knitted to David and they become fast and permanent friends.

How sad for Saul as he continues to slide out of the picture of God's plan. He wants more than anything for his kingdom to be preserved and for his son to sit on the throne in his place, and he will go to any lengths to see that he accomplishes this. In the process of this pursuit Saul loses the essence of what he was really after – respect. Matthew 16:26 says it all, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Jonathan, however, is motivated by love, friendship, a covenant he made with David, and a calm sense that God is in control. Chapter 20 makes it clear that Jonathan was not naïve about David replacing him, but Jonathan knew that there are more important things than one's own promotion in front of people. Jonathan would gladly play the role of protecting David, and with this, becomes one of the most beautiful portraits of selfless friendship and brotherly love in the whole Bible. *"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."* John 15:13, *"Ye are my friends,"* Jesus continues to say, *"If you do whatsoever I command you."*

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

As the FRIEND THAT STICKETH CLOSER THAN A BROTHER – I Samuel 18:3 (Proverbs 18:24, John 15:13-16)

By JONATHAN, knowing that it was God's will to make David king, stripped himself of his royal robe, promising all that he had to David – I Samuel 18:3-4. (Phil. 2:5-8 – Jesus, knowing, the will of the Father, stripped Himself of His royal robe, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men... and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.)

Tuesday – April 4, 2017

TODAY'S READING: I SAMUEL 22-25

OVERVIEW:

David is a fugitive from Saul and runs to Nob, Gath, Adullam and the wilderness; David spares Saul's life; Samuel dies; Abigail spares Nabal's life.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

David was a great "man of God" in the truest sense of the word. He excelled as a musician, warrior, writer, and inspiring leader. But when God paints a picture of a believer, He paints with all the human frailties and frustrations included, so that we don't misunderstand the struggles that always accompany greatness. For some time, David struggled to keep his head above water. When is the last time you had to dodge a javelin? When is the last time you faked insanity so that you could survive among your enemies? Knowing he was God's choice as king was little consolation while David was on the run from the armies of Saul. No wonder so many of the Psalms connect with us in our greatest time of need! (i.e. Psalm 100)

So, who would have blamed David for taking advantage of the most fantastic of coincidences when Saul, flanked by 3000 soldiers, "happens" upon the very cave in which David is hiding? Here David could have "read" God to say just what his own good men whispered in his ear; that this had to be the day when the Lord promised to deliver Saul into his hands. Oh, he was tempted. But David resisted to hear anything other than the clear message God would later send through the events only He could orchestrate to bring David into the kingdom. David even worried that he had flunked the spirit of the test by embarrassing the king. His sensitive heart pleased God. How sensitive are we to God's working in, around, and through our lives? James 1:17-20

In Chapter 25, all of us who have ever worked for a genuine fool take great hope. Abigail saves her fool of a husband, and for this God blesses her richly. Simultaneously, we learn that "Vengeance is mine, I will repay," saith the Lord" (Romans 12:19). David's reaction to King Saul was correct, and he was saved from his weakness to seek vengeance against a fool by Abigail's wise handling of the situation. Many would have thought themselves powerless to stop a small army, but Abigail was "a woman of good understanding," who new when to "make haste."

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

By DAVID'S REFUSAL TO TAKE THE KINGDOM BY FORCE, OR BEFORE GOD'S APPOINTED TIME – I Sam. 24:10-13 (John 6:15- Christ refused to become king of Israel until God's appointed time.)

By ABIGAIL'S EFFORT TO MAKE PEACE BETWEEN DAVID AND NABAL – I Samuel 25:21-28 (II Corinthians 5:19 – God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself).

God gives Samuel to Hannah; Hannah gives Samuel to God; Samuel gives himself to God; God gives Samuel to Israel; Eli misappropriates the tabernacle by permitting his sons to disobey; Eli misses God's message; Eli misuses the Ark of the Covenant; Samuel lives; Eli dies.

TODAY'S READING: I SAMUEL 26-31

OVERVIEW:

David spares Saul's life again, David lives in the land of the Philistines and defeats many enemies, Saul consults with a witch regarding going to war, David recovers his family and the families of his soldiers who are kidnapped, Saul's sons are killed in battle and Saul takes his own life.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

What a sad slide Saul has taken throughout the Book of I Samuel. He has gone from prophesying, showing how God's hand was upon his life, to consulting with a witch just to prove how desperate the life without God can become. He has all the power of the entire universe on his side when he starts out as king, and finishes his life exerting the only power he has left; the power to take his own life. He loses his fight with God, and with it, he loses the respect of those who love him. He is dying to preserve his legacy and ends up doing just that. His legacy is of a man who lives and dies as an example of how to blow it!

David on the other hand, emerges from obscurity because of the condition of his heart. God tells Saul through Samuel that he "hath sought him a man after his own heart" (I Samuel 13:14) "and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people." From the time David is chosen, until the day that Saul ends his life, God proves over and over that David will wait on the Lord, will not exalt himself, will deal with the adversity and the complicated mix of adversaries, and will not take anything except what God gives him.

So, the Book of Samuel is divided into two columns; one is titled "What NOT To Do," and the other is titled "What TO Do." Eli and Saul occupy column one, while Samuel and David are in column two. You and I choose the column in which our lives will be placed. It was reasonable for Saul to do many of the things he did, but he was operating based upon his own vision, and this is precisely what got him in trouble and ultimately led to his demise. David continually had apparent success at his fingertips, but he resisted the urge to rush in, but rather waited upon the Lord for his leading. Because of his faith, God's blessing was upon his life.

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

Through the URIM, which was used to determine God's will – I Sam. 28:6 (Heb. 11:1-2 – Today Christ speaks to us to reveal His will through His Spirit as we read His Word. *“God... hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son.”*)

TODAY'S READING: II SAMUEL 1-4

OVERVIEW:

The death of Saul; David mourns the death of Saul and Jonathath; David's song of sorrow; David is crowned king of Judah; Ishbosheth is made king of Israel; Abner deserts Ishbosheth to align with David; Joab murders Abner; Ishbosheth's murder; David's execution of Ishbosheth's murderers.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

As we saw in yesterday's reading, I Samuel ends with the death of Saul. II Samuel is, as the name of the Book implies, is a continuation of the narrative of I Samuel, so it likewise begins as I Samuel ends, with the death of Saul.

Saul's death gives us an incredible glimpse into the heart of the only one Scripture ever specifically identifies as a "man after God's own heart" (I Sam. 13:14; Acts 13:22). With all that Saul had done to David and had attempted to do, one would think that David would be elated at the news of his death. That's precisely what Saul's killer thought! Uh, not so much! Amazingly, David genuinely grieved and lamented Saul's death (1:11-12, 17), even composing a song as a beautiful and continuous memorial to Israel's first king (1:19-27). David slayed Saul's slayer for the audacity of thinking it was within his right to put to death the one whom God had anointed. Be careful who you slay, realizing more people are slain with the four ounce slab of mucous membrane that rests behind our teeth, than all of the world's swords and knives combined!

But with Israel's king now dead, the question was, who would be his successor? Back in I Samuel 16:13, David had been anointed by God by the prophet Samuel as Israel's next king. But that was a long time ago, and Abner, Saul's cousin and the powerful commander of Saul's army was determined to keep the kingship within the family, and perhaps better stated, within his own authority. He moves to persuade the elders of Israel to put Saul's son, Ishbosheth, on the throne.

Once again, it is incredible to watch the "man after God's own heart" operate. With the anointing David had received of Samuel, he most certainly could have justified himself in facing Abner in battle for his "right" as God's chosen successor. Rather, David inquired of the Lord (2:1,4), placing his life and the entire situation completely in God's hands. It is a great lesson for those of us to whom the Scripture identifies as "lovers of their own selves" (II Tim. 3:1-2), and

those who are interested in their “rights” (Rev. 3:14 – “Laodicean” = “the rights of the people”), who are so prone toward self-promotion and personal advancement, rather than waiting upon God, seeking God, and trusting God.

What situation are you presently facing, that from a human perspective, you would have the “right” to vaunt yourself, and “make happen” what you know God has determined as His will? David teaches us how unnecessary it is to fight for our “rights,” and how God proves His faithfulness when “self” is off of the throne, and we patiently and confidently submit ourselves to Christ’s Lordship, allowing Him to carry out His will in our lives, in His way, and in His time. David realized that if Jehovah had indeed anointed him as king, then Jehovah would deal with his enemies, and bring him into the possession of the kingdom.

God led David to Hebron where He was anointed king of Judah, yet Judah was only a small representation of Israel’s tribes. The other tribes of Israel refused to recognize David’s kingship. But in due time, Abner and Ishbosheth had a major falling out, causing Abner to pledge his loyalty to David. When Joab, the captain of David’s army returned from battle and heard that David had met with Abner, it sent Joab over the top! He immediately planned to kill Abner, and did so by stabbing him under the fifth rib (the perfect location to assure death). In response, David publicly condemned Abner’s murder in two ways: first, by cursing Joab and his house; and second, by proclaiming a time of mourning for Abner, while openly mourning for Abner himself.

With Abner out of the way, Ishbosheth’s position became weaker and weaker, while David’s grew stronger, and stronger. Baanah and Rechab realized that David’s rule over Israel was inevitable, and decided to impress David by killing Ishbosheth. David, however, was not impressed! David realized that God would never lead men to violate His Word in order to enthrone His king (i.e. It’s never right to do wrong, in order to do something right!) David knew that God was more than able to fulfill His promises to him without the assistance of murderers! David called for Baanah’s and Rechab’s execution, exposing their bodies to the humiliation of public display, while the head of Ishobosheth was respectfully and honorably buried in the tomb of Abner.

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

In DAVID’S SONG OF SORROW – II Sam. 1:19-27 (Even though Saul had made David his enemy, David continuously loved Saul. Christ loved us, even though we had made ourselves His enemies – Rom. 5:8, 10a; Eph. 2:1, 4-5a)

In DAVID'S PARTIAL REIGN – II Sam. 2:4 (Though David had been anointed as Israel's king, he actually reigned over a very small percentage of those to whom he was entitled to rule. He patiently waited for God's timing. In similar fashion, the Lord Jesus Christ has been anointed King over all the earth, yet awaits the Father's timing to actually possess His kingdom. There are only a small percentage of the world's population who recognize Christ as their Lord and King, but one day soon, every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father – Phil. 2:10-11)

TODAY'S READING: II SAMUEL 5-8

OVERVIEW:

David is anointed as the king over all of Israel; the stronghold of the Jebusites (Jerusalem) is captured by David; David brings the Ark of God into Jerusalem; the Davidic Covenant: David's prayer of thanksgiving; David's victories over the Philistines, the Moabites, the Syrians, and the Edomites.

HIGHLIGHTS & INSIGHTS:

David had reigned over the tribe of Judah for 7 1/2 years in Hebron. In chapter 5, he is anointed king over the entire nation of Israel, and did so for 33 years, making his entire reign forty years.

With the extension of his kingdom, He now needed a more centralized location from which to rule, and chose Jerusalem to be the capital city. The only problem was, the Jebusites dwelt in Jerusalem and Israel had not yet found a way to capture this stronghold of the enemy (Josh. 15:63; Judges 1:21). The Jebusites were so cocky about their ability to maintain their stronghold they defied them saying, "The lame and the blind could defeat you," yet David and his men defeated the Jebusites, and Jerusalem even came to be called "the city of David"!

Like David, our King, the Lord Jesus Christ, has been anointed (Messiah) of God to rule from the throne of our hearts over our entire life. We must allow Him to remove any and all "strongholds" that the enemy has established. II Cor. 11:35 says, *"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"*

But notice in II Samuel 5, that just as soon as the stronghold had been defeated and David had been established in Jerusalem, the old enemy, the Philistines, show up! Recognize, that until we receive our glorified body, we're never going to be "out of the woods," and that one of the key times Satan will attack us, is when he thinks we have been "lulled by the blessing" of a recent victory.

Note also, that as the Philistines were in pursuit, David sought clear direction from the Word of the Lord and victory was granted. As the enemy (the Philistines)

attack a second time, David didn't assume another victory, but once again sought clear direction from the Lord.

In chapter 6, David is about to do something monumental: Return the ark (representative of God's presence among His people) to its rightful place. The ark has been in the possession of the Philistines for 20 years, and sadly, no one seemed to miss it, or be impassioned to see it returned! The return of the ark was an incredibly exciting and worshipful experience for all involved. The spiritual atmosphere was electric! A great lesson is to be learned, however. God is never interested in self-styled worship, and good intentions and proper motivation mean nothing if there is not complete obedience to God's Word. In David's zeal to see the ark returned, the method of carrying it (on a new cart) was in violation of how God had clearly instructed Israel to carry it. (See Num. 4:15; 7:9) When the oxen pulling the cart stumbled on Nachon's threshing floor and well-meaning Uzzah reached forth to keep the ark from falling off, just as God had warned, he was immediately zapped! Don't ever forget, "God says what He means, and means what He says" (Num. 4:15). The whole incident caused David to "take the standing eight count" as to whether returning the ark was what he really wanted. He pawned it off on the Obbedom, and it stayed there for three months, until David saw how the ark had brought such blessing to Obbedom and his entire family.

In chapter 7, God established the Davidic covenant. This key unconditional covenant promised that David would have a child that was yet to be born who would succeed him and establish his kingdom. This son (Solomon) would build the temple instead of David, and the throne of his kingdom would be well established forever, even in spite of the sins he may commit. It further promised that David's house, his kingdom, and his throne would be established forever.

David was deeply moved by God's covenant of grace, and humbly came into God's presence and offered the prayer of thanksgiving recorded in 7:18-29.

In chapter 8, David consolidates the kingdom by defeating in rapid succession the Philistines, the Moabites, the Syrians, and the Edomites. The key to these conquests is found in verse 14, "*And the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went.*"

CHRIST IS REVEALED:

Through DAVID, THE ANOINTED KING OVER ISRAEL – II Samuel 5:3 (Psalm 2:2; John 1:41 – Christ is the Lord's Anointed. Note that "Christ" is the Greek word for the Hebrew word "Messiah," which means "anointed one.")

Saturday – April 8, 2017

Reflection

Looking back over our week of in the word, we ended the Book of 1 Samuel and entered into 2 Samuel. We ended the record of Saul's kingdom, yet we read of the rise of David's. Reading of David provides so much application for us as believers because of his unique relationship with God Almighty. As we'll continue to see over the next several weeks through the account of his reign, and even into the Books of the Bible that he penned, David's life is exemplary in so many ways. Of course, we will read of his faults and failures, as that, "All have sinned" (Romans 3:23), yet, we'll also read of his brokenness and repentance to restore his relationship with God. We write of David, never to uplift a man, but rather, understanding that "God is no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34), therefore it is possible for us, as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ to maintain the same type relationship with God, if we simply obey and submit as David did. Recall Psalm 119:1-3 (penned by David himself), "ALEPH. Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways." We should agree that this is a formula for "success" (Joshua 1:8) that can surely be followed.

To highlight one point from the week, let's revisit Friday, and revisit what was written concerning the dwelling place for God. To take the time to fully expound to the best of our ability this very subject, would probably take the rest of this year in in the word, and then some, because it is the overall theme of our lives after salvation. This dwelling place that David was approached to build was a place where God could set up a throne and rule and reign as He deserves, and as He desires. Although, times have changed, God has not (Malachi 3:6). He, on this day, desires a dwelling place where He can sit on a throne to rule and reign. We have mentioned throughout this devotional that the Lord Jesus Christ is our "example", our "measure" (Ephesians 4:13; 2 Peter 2:21). That being said, check out 2 Corinthians 5:19, "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." The first seven words of that verse highlight the exact point that needs to be made. While Christ was on this earth, physically, He provided a proper dwelling place for God Almighty: "God was in Christ". He, Christ, provided a dwelling place where God was on the throne ruling and reigning, therefore allowing for fellowship and communion between God and our

Lord Jesus Christ. To grasp this incredible thought is quite amazing. Jesus was walking on this earth, with God inside, doing the will of the Father (not His own), living in full obedience and submission to God's word, therefore He "reconciled the world unto Himself". He then, through scripture, tells us to do the same (Philippians 2:5-8). He tells us to live lives where God can sit on the throne of our hearts, where we obey and submit to His word, living to fulfill His will (not our own). If we do, we too will reconcile men to God, because of the conversation of our lives. The question is, has our lives produced the same effect that the Lord Jesus Christ did while on this earth? If not, "it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." (Romans 13:11)

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION:

1 Samuel 20:3 *"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."*

1 Samuel 24:6 *"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."*

1 Samuel 26:2 *"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."*

2 Samuel 3:36 *"And all the people took notice of it, and it pleased them: as whatsoever the king did pleased all the people."*

2 Samuel 7:5 *"Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the LORD, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in?"*