

Survey of the Bible part 10

The last thing we ended with last week was God choosing David to be the new king of Israel. He would replace Saul, but it would not be immediately. And so, in the mean time God would allow David to see the inner workings of what it meant to be king by actually being a part of the inner court of King Saul.

1 Samuel 16:14-23 ¹⁴ Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD terrorized him. ¹⁵ Saul's servants then said to him, "Behold now, an evil spirit from God is terrorizing you. ¹⁶ "Let our lord now command your servants who are before you. Let them seek a man who is a skillful player on the harp; and it shall come about when the evil spirit from God is on you, that he shall play *the harp* with his hand, and you will be well." ¹⁷ So Saul said to his servants, "Provide for me now a man who can play well and bring *him* to me." ¹⁸ Then one of the young men said, "Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite who is a skillful musician, a mighty man of valor, a warrior, one prudent in speech, and a handsome man; and the LORD is with him." ¹⁹ So Saul sent messengers to Jesse and said, "Send me your son David who is with the flock." ²⁰ Jesse took a donkey *loaded with* bread and a jug of wine and a young goat, and sent *them* to Saul by David his son. ²¹ Then David came to Saul and attended him; and Saul loved him greatly, and he became his armor bearer. ²² Saul sent to Jesse, saying, "Let David now stand before me, for he has found favor in my sight." ²³ So it came about whenever the *evil* spirit from God came to Saul, David would take the harp and play *it* with his hand; and Saul would be refreshed and be well, and the evil spirit would depart from him.

In the next part of 1 Samuel we see David being used by God to take care of one of the enemies of Israel, namely, the Philistines, and in particular Goliath.

What is interesting about this account is that Goliath and the Philistines taunt the army of Israel for 40 days. And in that 40 days all of the army of Israel is terrified of Goliath. And so, David hears of all of this and comes down to the camp to see what's going on and asks a simple question: how will Saul reward the man who kills Goliath?

And his oldest brother responds:

1 Samuel 17:28-30 ²⁸ Now Eliab his oldest brother heard when he spoke to the men; and Eliab's anger burned against David and

he said, "Why have you come down? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your insolence and the wickedness of your heart; for you have come down in order to see the battle." ²⁹ But David said, "What have I done now? Was it not just a question?" ³⁰ Then he turned away from him to another and said the same thing; and the people answered the same thing as before.

When Saul hears that David is interested in the going's on of the impending battle he calls for David, probably to be soothed by David's music, but he hears something quite unexpected of David.

1 Samuel 17:32-38 ³² David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail on account of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine." ³³ Then Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are *but* a youth while he has been a warrior from his youth." ³⁴ But David said to Saul, "Your servant was tending his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and took a lamb from the flock, ³⁵ I went out after him and attacked him, and rescued *it* from his mouth; and when he rose up against me, I seized *him* by his beard and struck him and killed him. ³⁶ "Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, since he has taunted the armies of the living God." ³⁷ And David said, "The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "Go, and may the LORD be with you." ³⁸ Then Saul clothed David with his garments and put a bronze helmet on his head, and he clothed him with armor.

Why do you suppose Saul so quickly goes from discouraging David in such an encounter with Goliath to arming him to fight with the Philistine?

He probably sees that not only is David fearless, but more importantly he knows God is able to use the young man to destroy Goliath.

Of course the armor is designed for a full grown adult and David is not used to such protection. It's cumbersome for him.

1 Samuel 17:39-47 ³⁹ David girded his sword over his armor and tried to walk, for he had not tested *them*. So David said to Saul, "I cannot go with these, for I have not tested *them*." And David took them off. ⁴⁰ He took his stick in his hand and chose for himself five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in the shepherd's

bag which he had, even in *his* pouch, and his sling was in his hand; and he approached the Philistine. ⁴¹ Then the Philistine came on and approached David, with the shield-bearer in front of him. ⁴² When the Philistine looked and saw David, he disdained him; for he was *but* a youth, and ruddy, with a handsome appearance. ⁴³ The Philistine said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. ⁴⁴ The Philistine also said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the sky and the beasts of the field." ⁴⁵ Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted. ⁴⁶ "This day the LORD will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you. And I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, ⁴⁷ and that all this assembly may know that the LORD does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the LORD'S and He will give you into our hands."

Keep in mind that Goliath is a veteran warrior who stands upwards of 9 feet tall. And if you can imagine this scene you've got these two standing in front of each other, and what I find interesting is that David has no armor and no military weapons. He's got a stick, five smooth stones and a sling. Goliath is not only fully armored, but he has an armor bearer standing between him and David.

And so, the two confront each other. Goliath hurls insults at David and David stands his ground. In fact, he goes so far as to predict the outcome of the fight by saying that he will cut off the head of the Philistine. But he doesn't stop there he goes on to say that he will strike down the army of the Philistines.

But how does he plan on doing this and in what way could he possibly accomplish this?

1 Samuel 17:46-47 ⁴⁶ "This day the LORD will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you. And I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, ⁴⁷ and that all this assembly may know that the LORD does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the LORD'S and He will give you into our hands."

David, by faith in the God of Israel, would simply do what the Lord prompted him to do, knowing that God would go before him.

1 Samuel 17:48-58 ⁴⁸ Then it happened when the Philistine rose and came and drew near to meet David, that David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet the Philistine. ⁴⁹ And David put his hand into his bag and took from it a stone and slung *it*, and struck the Philistine on his forehead. And the stone sank into his forehead, so that he fell on his face to the ground. ⁵⁰ Thus David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, and he struck the Philistine and killed him; but there was no sword in David's hand. ⁵¹ Then David ran and stood over the Philistine and took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him, and cut off his head with it. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled. ⁵² The men of Israel and Judah arose and shouted and pursued the Philistines as far as the valley, and to the gates of Ekron. And the slain Philistines lay along the way to Shaaraim, even to Gath and Ekron. ⁵³ The sons of Israel returned from chasing the Philistines and plundered their camps. ⁵⁴ Then David took the Philistine's head and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put his weapons in his tent. ⁵⁵ Now when Saul saw David going out against the Philistine, he said to Abner the commander of the army, "Abner, whose son is this young man?" And Abner said, "By your life, O king, I do not know." ⁵⁶ The king said, "You inquire whose son the youth is." ⁵⁷ So when David returned from killing the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul with the Philistine's head in his hand. ⁵⁸ Saul said to him, "Whose son are you, young man?" And David answered, "*I am* the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite."

So, David kills Goliath and then, and only then, does the army of Israel pursue an already fleeing Philistine army. They destroy the Philistines and then plunder their camp.

What I find interesting is that Saul had previously had a pretty lengthy conversation with David. David has been in his court previous to this because Saul himself had sent for David when he found out that David could play music to soothe Saul when the evil spirit taunted Saul.

And so, it's not as though Saul didn't know who David was and yet he asks of Abner this question.

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Abner the commander of the army, "Abner, whose son is this young man?" And Abner said, "By your life, O king, I do not know." ⁵⁶ The king said, "You inquire whose son the youth is." ⁵⁷ So when David returned from killing the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul with the Philistine's head in his hand. ⁵⁸ Saul said to him, "Whose son are you, young man?" And David answered, "*I am* the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite."

How is it that Saul can have David in his court, knowing previous to this that his father was Jesse, and yet ask the question to Abner, who is this young man's father?

It may very well be that Saul's mind was affected by all of the stress of knowing that not only was he going to lose his kingship to another, but the evil spirit may have affected his ability to think straight.

From this point in this book there seems to be an almost schizophrenic relationship between Saul and David. It's almost a love hate thing. On the one hand Saul treats David like a son and the next moment he tries to kill David on several different occasions.

And yet, David always remains faithful to Saul. In fact, David actually had an opportunity to kill Saul and yet he chooses not to because he knew that despite the fact that Saul wanted him dead God had not as of that time released Saul from being king to put David on the throne.

1 Samuel 24:1-6 ^{NAU} Now when Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, saying, "Behold, David is in the wilderness of Engedi." ² Then Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel and went to seek David and his men in front of the Rocks of the Wild Goats. ³ He came to the sheepfolds on the way, where there *was* a cave; and Saul went in to relieve himself. Now David and his men were sitting in the inner recesses of the cave. ⁴ The men of David said to him, "Behold, *this is* the day of which the LORD said to you, 'Behold; I am about to give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it seems good to you.'" Then David arose and cut off the edge of Saul's robe secretly. ⁵ It came about afterward that David's conscience bothered him because he had cut off the edge of Saul's *robe*. ⁶ So he said to his men, "Far be it from me because of the LORD that I should do this thing to my lord, the LORD'S anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, since he is the LORD'S anointed."

Later Saul and David would confront each other and David would once again establish the fact the Saul was still God's anointed and Saul would respond in an entirely different manner than before when he was trying to kill David.

1 Samuel 24:12-22 ¹² "May the LORD judge between you and me, and may the LORD avenge me on you; but my hand shall not be against you. ¹³ "As the proverb of the ancients says, 'Out of the wicked comes forth wickedness'; but my hand shall not be against you. ¹⁴ "After whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom are you pursuing? A dead dog, a single flea? ¹⁵ "The LORD therefore be judge and decide between you and me; and may He see and plead my cause and deliver me from your hand." ¹⁶ When David had finished speaking these words to Saul, Saul said, "Is this your voice, my son David?" Then Saul lifted up his voice and wept. ¹⁷ He said to David, "You are more righteous than I; for you have dealt well with me, while I have dealt wickedly with you. ¹⁸ "You have declared today that you have done good to me, that the LORD delivered me into your hand and yet you did not kill me. ¹⁹ "For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him go away safely? May the LORD therefore reward you with good in return for what you have done to me this day. ²⁰ "Now, behold, I know that you will surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hand. ²¹ "So now swear to me by the LORD that you will not cut off my descendants after me and that you will not destroy my name from my father's household." ²² David swore to Saul. And Saul went to his home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

It was at this time that Samuel died and all Israel mourned for him. But the interesting thing is that even though we read in chapter 24 that David and Saul seemed to have made peace with each other, it was the furthest thing from the truth because Saul continued his campaign to kill David and a second time David had the opportunity to kill Saul and yet he didn't.

1 Samuel 26:8-12 ⁸ Then Abishai said to David, "Today God has delivered your enemy into your hand; now therefore, please let me strike him with the spear to the ground with one stroke, and I will not strike him the second time." ⁹ But David said to Abishai, "Do not destroy him, for who can stretch out his hand against the LORD'S anointed and be without guilt?" ¹⁰ David also said, "As the LORD lives, surely the LORD will strike him, or his day will come that he dies, or he will go down into battle and perish. ¹¹ "The LORD forbid that I should stretch out my hand against the

LORD'S anointed; but now please take the spear that is at his head and the jug of water, and let us go." ¹² So David took the spear and the jug of water from *beside* Saul's head, and they went away, but no one saw or knew *it*, nor did any awake, for they were all asleep, because a sound sleep from the LORD had fallen on them.

What is David's reasoning in not killing Saul?

When God is ready to judge Saul, God will also arrange the means for that to happen. In David's mind, whether it's Goliath or Saul, the battle belongs to the Lord.

In chapter 31 of 1 Samuel, the last chapter of this book, we have recorded for us the death of Saul. Interestingly enough prior to this David, who was still on the run from Saul, had made an arrangement with the very people he had destroyed years earlier, that is, the Philistines.

Keep in mind that he was traveling all throughout Canaan with an army of men who were faithful to him. And so, as David is raiding some of the people's of the land the Philistines see that he is no longer an ally of Saul and they approach him to sue for peace if you will.

1 Samuel 27:8-12 ⁸ Now David and his men went up and raided the Geshurites and the Girzites and the Amalekites; for they were the inhabitants of the land from ancient times, as you come to Shur even as far as the land of Egypt. ⁹ David attacked the land and did not leave a man or a woman alive, and he took away the sheep, the cattle, the donkeys, the camels, and the clothing. Then he returned and came to Achish. ¹⁰ Now Achish said, "Where have you made a raid today?" And David said, "Against the Negev of Judah and against the Negev of the Jerahmeelites and against the Negev of the Kenites." ¹¹ David did not leave a man or a woman alive to bring to Gath, saying, "Otherwise they will tell about us, saying, 'So has David done and so *has been* his practice all the time he has lived in the country of the Philistines.'" ¹² So Achish believed David, saying, "He has surely made himself odious among his people Israel; therefore he will become my servant forever."

Achish was one of the commanders of the Philistines and he sees that David is out on his own and asks if he would join him against the Israelites and David agrees.

1 Samuel 28:1-6 ^{NAU} Now it came about in those days that the Philistines gathered their armed camps for war, to fight against

Israel. And Achish said to David, "Know assuredly that you will go out with me in the camp, you and your men." ² David said to Achish, "Very well, you shall know what your servant can do." So Achish said to David, "Very well, I will make you my bodyguard for life." ³ Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him and buried him in Ramah, his own city. And Saul had removed from the land those who were mediums and spiritists. ⁴ So the Philistines gathered together and came and camped in Shunem; and Saul gathered all Israel together and they camped in Gilboa. ⁵ When Saul saw the camp of the Philistines, he was afraid and his heart trembled greatly. ⁶ When Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD did not answer him, either by dreams or by Urim or by prophets.

God was no longer speaking to Saul and so it is at this point that Saul seeks a medium to call on Samuel hoping that Samuel will give him some good news about the upcoming battle with the Philistines

It was at this point that the medium calls upon Samuel and to her surprise Samuel actually shows up and the medium discovers that it is Saul himself who is inquiring of her. Prior to this Saul had banned all mediums in the land upon fear of death and so she panics, but he assures her that it's okay.

Interestingly enough, though we know that the dead cannot actually be called back to the earth, it seems that God makes an exception to actually allow Samuel to give Saul the news of the upcoming battle, and it's not good news.

1 Samuel 28:15-19 ¹⁵ Then Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?" And Saul answered, "I am greatly distressed; for the Philistines are waging war against me, and God has departed from me and no longer answers me, either through prophets or by dreams; therefore I have called you, that you may make known to me what I should do." ¹⁶ Samuel said, "Why then do you ask me, since the LORD has departed from you and has become your adversary? ¹⁷ "The LORD has done accordingly as He spoke through me; for the LORD has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, to David. ¹⁸ "As you did not obey the LORD and did not execute His fierce wrath on Amalek, so the LORD has done this thing to you this day. ¹⁹ "Moreover the LORD will also give over Israel along with you into the hands of the Philistines, therefore tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. Indeed the LORD will give over the army of Israel into the hands of the Philistines!"

Now keep in mind that David and his army are now an ally of the Philistines who are about to go into battle against Saul and his army.

1 Samuel 29:1-7 ^{NAU} Now the Philistines gathered together all their armies to Aphek, while the Israelites were camping by the spring which is in Jezreel. ² And the lords of the Philistines were proceeding on by hundreds and by thousands, and David and his men were proceeding on in the rear with Achish. ³ Then the commanders of the Philistines said, "What *are* these Hebrews *doing here?*" And Achish said to the commanders of the Philistines, "Is this not David, the servant of Saul the king of Israel, who has been with me these days, or *rather* these years, and I have found no fault in him from the day he deserted *to me* to this day?" ⁴ But the commanders of the Philistines were angry with him, and the commanders of the Philistines said to him, "Make the man go back, that he may return to his place where you have assigned him, and do not let him go down to battle with us, or in the battle he may become an adversary to us. For with what could this *man* make himself acceptable to his lord? *Would it not be* with the heads of these men?" ⁵ "Is this not David, of whom they sing in the dances, saying, 'Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands?'" ⁶ Then Achish called David and said to him, "As the LORD lives, you *have been* upright, and your going out and your coming in with me in the army are pleasing in my sight; for I have not found evil in you from the day of your coming to me to this day. Nevertheless, you are not pleasing in the sight of the lords. ⁷ "Now therefore return and go in peace, that you may not displease the lords of the Philistines."

Why do you suppose the commanders of the Philistines didn't want David and his men to join with them in the battle against Saul?

They most assuredly thought it might be a trick and David, who had previously spared Saul, might decide to fight against the Philistines even while he was in their midst.

So, David agrees and departs from the Philistines, but finds himself having to fight against the Amalekites who have raided his camp full of men and women and they carry off the inhabitants. So, David has to go and rescue them, which he does.

But the Philistines attack Saul and his army.

By the way, why else do you think David was not allowed to go up against Saul with the Philistines?

I believe the Lord was protecting him from having to take part in destroying the Lord's anointed.

1 Samuel 31:1-6 ^{NAU} Now the Philistines were fighting against Israel, and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines and fell slain on Mount Gilboa. ² The Philistines overtook Saul and his sons; and the Philistines killed Jonathan and Abinadab and Malchishua the sons of Saul. ³ The battle went heavily against Saul, and the archers hit him; and he was badly wounded by the archers. ⁴ Then Saul said to his armor bearer, "Draw your sword and pierce me through with it, otherwise these uncircumcised will come and pierce me through and make sport of me." But his armor bearer would not, for he was greatly afraid. So Saul took his sword and fell on it. ⁵ When his armor bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his sword and died with him. ⁶ Thus Saul died with his three sons, his armor bearer, and all his men on that day together.

And so ends the book of 1 Samuel but it doesn't end without continuing on into the second book of Samuel where the death of Saul and his sons is picked right up in the first chapter and David is going to have something to say about that as we start there next week.