
Becoming Christlike – Learning How from Old Testament Kings and Prophets

Session 27 – I Samuel 20

We have had an interlude in our series in order to address the issues concerning Israel and Hamas since the October 7, 2023, invasion by Hamas.

In this session we return to I Samuel Chapter 20.

Previously we looked at the hearts of Saul, Jonathan, and David and compared them to one another. We saw that Saul is the king in political position, but David is the anointed king in God's sight.

We can also think of Jonathan as a king in the sense that as the son of Saul, had Saul been obedient and remained God's king, then Samuel would have succeeded him as his heir. However his heart for God was such that he forfeited his rightful position and recognized David as God's choice to be King of Israel after Saul.

We should remember always as we read the Old Testament that this is what Jesus studied. After the incident in the temple at age 12 when everyone was amazed at his questions and his answers there is little said about Jesus until his ministry begins at age 30. During those years from age 12-30 he was certainly reading and studying the Old Testament.

Consider Jesus reading about the heart of Jonathan. There are similarities. Christ could have been the "politically recognized king" of Israel. Many wanted to make him king because this is what they thought the Messiah was to be. He could have enjoyed all those perks but instead he forfeited that in order to redeem mankind. He died to what could have been a wonderful life as the king of Israel. Think also of the temptations in Mathew 4 and Luke 4 when the devil held out a "carrot" to him if he would "just" fall down and worship him.

Paul also read the Old Testament when he preached in the temple he taught about Christ from the Old Testament.

In these narratives on Old Testament kings that we are studying, we see human beings, their propensity to sin, their humanity and learn from them.

So where we had left off in I Samuel 19, it has been made clear that Saul wants to Kill David.

I Samuel 1

1 Then David fled from Naioth in Ramah and came and said before Jonathan, "What have I done? What is my guilt? And what is my sin before your father, that he seeks my life?"

We can sense the angst, the emotion, and the honesty in his question. I've been obedient, I have helped your father, I have been a servant to him. Why does he want to kill me? Certainly Christ could relate when he was pursued without fault, only doing good, healing, working miracles.

2 And he said to him, “Far from it! You shall not die. Behold, my father does nothing either great or small without disclosing it to me. And why should my father hide this from me? It is not so.”

Jonathan is essentially saying, “We have this covered! I will watch out and warn you.”

3 But David vowed again, saying, “Your father knows well that I have found favor in your eyes, and he thinks, ‘Do not let Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved.’ But truly, as the Lord lives and as your soul lives, there is but a step between me and death.” **4** Then Jonathan said to David, “Whatever you say, I will do for you.”

Jonathan is endeavoring to console David and pledge his help and allegiance to him.

5 David said to Jonathan, “Behold, tomorrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit at table with the king. But let me go, that I may hide myself in the field till the third day at evening. **6** If your father misses me at all, then say, ‘David earnestly asked leave of me to run to Bethlehem his city, for there is a yearly sacrifice there for all the clan.’ **7** If he says, ‘Good!’ it will be well with your servant, but if he is angry, then know that harm is determined by him. **8** Therefore deal kindly with your servant, for you have brought your servant into a covenant of the Lord with you. But if there is guilt in me, kill me yourself, for why should you bring me to your father?” **9** And Jonathan said, “Far be it from you! If I knew that it was determined by my father that harm should come to you, would I not tell you?”

Jonathan is assuring David, I am your friend, I will help you, I will tell you what he is doing.

10 Then David said to Jonathan, “Who will tell me if your father answers you roughly?” **11** And Jonathan said to David, “Come, let us go out into the field.” So they both went out into the field.

Look at their conversation and the back and forth here. It is a window into their relationship, it is not *everything* that was spoken or had transpired.

12 And Jonathan said to David, “The Lord, the God of Israel, be witness!^a When I have sounded out my father, about this time tomorrow, or the third day, behold, if he is well disposed toward David, **shall I not then send and disclose it to you?**

In other words, I will tell you.

13 But should it please my father to do you harm, the Lord do so to Jonathan and more also if I do not disclose it to you and send you away, that you may go in safety. May the Lord be with you, as he has been with my father.

Jonathan continues to reassure David that he will tell him what Saul is plotting. It is interesting here that Jonathan speaks in a past tense about how **God has been** with his father, Saul.

14 If I am still alive, show me the steadfast love of the Lord, that I may not die; **15** and do not cut off^b your steadfast love from my house forever, when the Lord cuts off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth.” **16 And Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David**, saying, “May^c the Lord take vengeance on David’s enemies.” **17** And

Jonathan made David swear again by his love for him, for he loved him as he loved his own soul.

So they make a covenant with each other and keep it. Prior to this Saul had made vows and oaths but did not keep them. These two men of integrity make a vow and keep it. They make the covenant with each other's houses; it will go beyond their lifetimes.

We will see later on that David does keep this covenant to Mephibosheth and shows kindness to him.

18 Then Jonathan said to him, "Tomorrow is the new moon, and you will be missed, because your seat will be empty. **19** On the third day go down quickly to the place where you hid yourself when the matter was in hand, and remain beside the stone heap.^d **20** And I will shoot three arrows to the side of it, as though I shot at a mark. **21** And behold, I will send the boy, saying, 'Go, find the arrows.' If I say to the boy, 'Look, the arrows are on this side of you, take them,' then you are to come, for, as the Lord lives, it is safe for you and there is no danger. **22** **But if I say to the youth, 'Look, the arrows are beyond you,' then go, for the Lord has sent you away.**

So they set up a system of signals whereby Jonathan can communicate to David the state of Saul's disposition toward David.

23 **And as for the matter of which you and I have spoken, behold, the Lord is between you and me forever."**

So the two reiterate the covenant between themselves that stems from their mutual love for and commitment to God. This reiterates the friendship and love for one another.

24 So David hid himself in the field. And when the new moon came, the king sat down to eat food. **25** The king sat on his seat, as at other times, on the seat by the wall. Jonathan sat opposite,^e and Abner sat by Saul's side, but David's place was empty.

26 Yet Saul did not say anything that day, for he thought, "Something has happened to him. He is not clean; surely he is not clean."

Saul excuses away David's absence for one evening that he might have been unclean.

27 But on the second day, the day after the new moon, David's place was empty. And Saul said to Jonathan his son, "Why has not the son of Jesse come to the meal, either yesterday or today?"

Thinking essentially...by now he could be clean and yet he is still absent.

28 Jonathan answered Saul, "David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Bethlehem. **29** He said, 'Let me go, for our clan holds a sacrifice in the city, and my brother has commanded me to be there. So now, if I have found favor in your eyes, let me get away and see my brothers.' For this reason he has not come to the king's table."

30 Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said to him, "You son of a perverse, rebellious woman,

We all know the current vernacular that would be used...Jonathan you son of a _____.

do I not know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame, and to the shame of your mother's nakedness?

Saul is saying that he is on to Jonathan! He knows Jonathan is covering for David. He says that Jonathan has chosen David over Saul. Next Saul tries to appeal to Jonathan's self interest.

31 For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, **neither you nor your kingdom shall be established.** Therefore send and bring him to me, for he shall surely die."

He is saying that if they get rid of David then Jonathan can have "what is rightfully his". Again trying to provoke Jonathan to act out of self-interest. Very much like parents or grandparents today telling a son or grandson, they will be cut out of the will if they don't go to a certain college or pursue a certain profession. "No inheritance for you!"

If Jonathan didn't have the integrity and love for God that he did, Jonathan might have been tempted to think, "hmm let me think about my own life and go along with my father".

Saul is suggesting this is bringing shame on the family when in fact Saul is bringing shame by not obeying God. Turns it upside down.

32 Then Jonathan answered Saul his father, "Why should he be put to death? What has he done?" **33** But Saul hurled his spear at him to strike him. So Jonathan knew that his father was determined to put David to death.

This sounds like a repeat. This happened earlier when Saul said to Jonathan in chapter 19 look we are going to get rid of David at this juncture Jonathan is able to persuade his father. Saul vows not to put David to death. Here we are a chapter later and Saul is already violating that oath.

Saul hurls his spear at JONATHAN...his own son! It's remarkable.

Here we see two kinds of anger. Saul is not getting what he wants so he strikes out at Jonathan in carnal/devil inspired anger.

34 And Jonathan rose from the table in fierce anger and ate no food the second day of the month, for he was grieved for David, because his father had disgraced him.

Jonathan has righteous anger, righteous indignation, at his father for unjustly wanting to kill David. The previous three times that Saul lashed out and threw his spear at David it said a harmful spirit came upon him. It does not say that here, but it would not be surprising if that is what happened especially since he is hurling at his OWN SON!

35 In the morning Jonathan went out into the field to the appointment with David, and with him a little boy. **36** And he said to his boy, "Run and find the arrows that I shoot." As the boy ran, **he shot an arrow beyond him.** **37** And when the boy came to the place of the arrow that Jonathan had shot, Jonathan called after the boy and said, "**Is not the arrow beyond you?**" **38** And Jonathan called after the boy, "Hurry! Be quick! Do not stay!" So Jonathan's boy gathered up the arrows and came to his master. **39** But the boy knew nothing. Only Jonathan and David knew the matter. **40** And Jonathan gave his weapons to his boy and said to him, "Go and carry them to the city."

According to the signals that Jonathan and David had set up, it is communicated that Saul was still on the hunt for David.

41 And as soon as the boy had gone, David rose from beside the stone heap^f and fell on his face to the ground and bowed three times. And they kissed one another and wept with one another, **David weeping the most.** **42** Then Jonathan said to David, “Go in peace, because we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, ‘The Lord shall be between me and you, and between my offspring and your offspring, forever.’” And he rose and departed, and Jonathan went into the city.^g

The covenant and depth of emotion they feel for one another is reiterated here. So there are great lessons to be learned here about fidelity and the three hearts that have been exposed.

In Chapters 21-26 of I Samuel we will see David on the run from Saul.

It’s important to note here that just earlier in response to Jonathan’s logic and appealing to his father not to wrong David who had done no wrong, as soon as circumstances change Saul changes in order to accommodate his flesh. “A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.”

Because Saul does not have a solid commitment to the Lord, when circumstances change he changes to accommodate his flesh.

He is not able to keep any promises that he makes. This is a great lesson to learn. Few people are firm enough in their commitment to stay steady when circumstances change.

Psalm 24:1-6 (speaking of integrity and hearts)

1 The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof,^a the world and those who dwell therein,

2 for he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers.

3 Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place?

4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully.

Jonathan and David swore before God and kept their commitment. Saul had made an oath and then broke it within a chapter because circumstances changed.

5 He will receive blessing from the Lord and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

6 Such is the generation of those who seek him who seek the face of the God of Jacob.^b Sela

Those verses describe the hearts of Jonathan and David.

Psalm 15: 1-4

1 O Lord, who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell on your holy hill?

2 He who walks blamelessly and does what is right and speaks truth in his heart;

3 who does not slander with his tongue and does no evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his friend;

4 in whose eyes a vile person is despised, but who honors those who fear the Lord; **who swears to his own hurt and does not change;**

Both Psalms speak of who gets to be in the presence of the Lord. Integrity, righteousness, walking blameless, speaking truth. vs Saul: A double-minded man is unstable in ALL HIS WAYS, what do we see in Saul? A double mind and instability!

Think about the Old Testament and Saul being willing to throw a spear at his own son. In 2023 in Islam if a child converts to Christianity, they are “mercy killed” for going over to the dark side and becoming an infidel.

Voice of the Martyrs is a great free publication. The opening letter this month is titled:

The Shocking Wickedness of Lost Men – Cole Smith

“Please be aware that the stories in this magazine describe acts of cruelty. We present these true testimonies carefully and responsibly, yet readers will surely experience strong emotions as they enter into fellowship with our precious Christian family members. The word “inhuman” is sometimes used to describe acts of cruelty and abuse and that usage has merit in declaring the truth of evil spiritual powers that inspire the acts of wicked men. However, scripture informs us that abominable acts are inherently part of the fallen condition of lost and sinful people. We may be shocked by cruelty and wickedness, but we should not be surprised.”

This was all written and planned before the events in Israel took place.

As God has not changed, “I am the Lord, I change not.” Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever. The devil has not changed either.

As Cole Smith states, it inspires strong emotion. I want to go back to verse 41.

I Samuel 20:41

[41](#) And as soon as the boy had gone, David rose from beside the stone heap^f and fell on his face to the ground and bowed three times. And they kissed one another and wept with one another, **David weeping the most.**

When we see the word “weeping” in the Bible we should not take it lightly. It is used very pointedly in the scriptures. God is a God of emotion. We are created in His image.

Men and women of God weep regarding certain circumstances. It is a good word study to look at “weep” and “weeping”. We will look at just a few.

II Kings 8:11

[10](#) And Elisha said to him, “Go, say to him, ‘You shall certainly recover,’ but^a the Lord has shown me that he shall certainly die.” [11](#) And he fixed his gaze and stared at him, until he was embarrassed. **And the man of God wept.** [12](#) And Hazael said, “Why does my lord weep?” He answered, “Because I know the evil that you will do to the people of Israel. You will set on fire their fortresses, and you will kill their young men with the sword and dash in pieces their little ones and rip open their pregnant women.”

Elisha wept because he saw all the pain and torment that Hazael would cause. We weep with compassion when we see acts of atrocity and the pain of others.

Isaiah 22:4, 12

[4](#) Therefore I said: “Look away from me; **let me weep bitter tears**; do not labor to comfort me concerning the destruction of the daughter of my people.”

[12](#) In that day the Lord God of hosts **called for weeping and mourning**, for baldness and wearing sackcloth

Jeremiah 9:1,10

1^a Oh that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, **that I might weep day and night** for the slain of the daughter of my people! **10** “I will take up weeping and wailing for the mountains, and a lamentation for the pastures of the wilderness, because they are laid waste so that no one passes through, and the lowing of cattle is not heard; both the birds of the air and the beasts have fled and are gone.

Jeremiah 13:15,16, 17

15 Hear and give ear; be not proud, for the Lord has spoken. **16** Give glory to the Lord your God before he brings darkness, before your feet stumble on the twilight mountains, and while you look for light he turns it into gloom and makes it deep darkness. **17** But if you will not listen **my soul will weep in secret for your pride; my eyes will weep bitterly and run down with tears, because the Lord’s flock has been taken captive.**

This is not a movie! This is not staged. This is not an actor delivering lines. This is the heart of God being reflected in the heart of Jeremiah.

The Children of Israel were so full of pride, thinking “certainly this can’t happen to us, we are God’s chosen people etc.”

Jeremiah was called the weeping prophet because he so reflected the heart of God.

When we see “David weeping the most”, it is because he knew what was coming. He is going to be pursued, he is one step from death. It brought great despair.

Christ had said, Bles”sied are those who weep now you are going to be comforted”

50 years ago when Michael first got into the Word all he could think about was the more abundant life he was going to have with prosperity and health. Then he soon learned that being a Christian means you have a target on your back and there will be times when you are weeping at the condition of people’s lives. You have a desire to help, sometimes they will respond with meekness, sometimes they will not out of pride and it’s hurtful.

Judges 21:2

2 And the people came to Bethel and sat there till evening before God, and they lifted up their voices and wept bitterly.

This was after what had happened to the tribe of Benjamin, which is a heart-wrenching record.

Ezra 10:

1 While Ezra prayed and made confession, **weeping and casting himself down before the house of God**, a very great assembly of men, women, and children, gathered to him out of Israel, for the **people wept bitterly.**

This is a record after they came back from exile. You would think they had learned something! Ezra comes back and finds that in chapter 9 the exiles who had come back had intermarried with the heathens.

When we look back at our lives with missed opportunities to help people or sins we have committed. We weep bitterly as we see the consequences.

When David wept bitterly it was from the depth of his heart. Jesus wept for Jerusalem, why?, because he saw what was coming. It would be and indeed was destroyed in 70AD. The entire wonderful city of God was destroyed. Even today one can see huge stones that were thrown down from the temple mount.

We weep over the condition of the world; we will be comforted.

In Mathew numerous times it says, "there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth". This is speaking of the missed opportunity of being saved that the lost will experience in the end times.

In our next session we will be summarizing Saul's pursuit of David and soon after moving on to Solomon and other Kings.