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## Becoming Christlike – Learning How from Old Testament Kings and Prophets

### Session 32 - I Samuel 23 and the Psalms

In our last session we covered I Samuel 23:1-14

Chapters 21-26 all describe David on the run from Saul. Commentators say this was a period of about 1 ½ years. How did David remain peaceful and calm for such a period of time? It had to have been his relationship with God that enabled him to keep going. God continued to deliver him, sometimes at the last minute.

It is tempting to summarize this section and move on to other Kings, but it is important to look at these records in the Old Testament that many people never read and are robbed of the joy of seeing what God has recorded for our learning.

The last verse in I Samuel 23 that we considered last session was verse 14.

**14** And David remained in the strongholds in the wilderness, in the hill country of the wilderness of Ziph. **And Saul sought him every day, but God did not give him into his hand.**

#### The Phrase “But God”

The phrase “BUT GOD” is one that occurs many times throughout scripture and one that we should pay attention to. Man, in this case Saul, was seeking David every day...BUT GOD can always override what man is doing. When there is a faithful believer God is going to protect, provide, give refuge and strength, grace and mercy. Despite any and all conditions that oppose us or give us obstacles God will take care of you and me. God promises to help me, to keep me whole, deliver me.

Look at this phrase in Ephesians 2!

#### Ephesians 2:1-4

**1** And you were dead in the trespasses and sins **2** in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— **3** among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body<sup>a</sup> and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.<sup>b</sup>

Look at all the things the Word declares about us, could it possibly get any worse than that?

- Dead in trespasses and sins
- Following the course of this world
- Following the prince of the power of the air (devil)
- Lived in the passions of our flesh, fulfilling those desires
- By nature children of wrath

- Like the rest of mankind...

Then in verse 4...

**4 But<sup>c</sup> God**, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, **5** even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—

### The Phrase “But now”

Watch also for the phrase “BUT NOW”

#### **Ephesians 2:11-13**

**11** Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called “the uncircumcision” by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands— **12** remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

- You were Gentiles
- Called the uncircumcision
- Separated from Christ
- Alienated from Israel
- Strangers to the covenants of promise
- Having no hope
- Without God

**13 But now** in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

### Back to I Samuel 23

**14** And David remained in the strongholds in the wilderness, in the hill country of the wilderness of Ziph. **And Saul sought him every day, but God did not give him into his hand.**

**15** David saw that Saul had come out to seek his life. David was in the wilderness of Ziph at Horesh. **16** And Jonathan, Saul’s son, rose and went to David at Horesh, **and strengthened his hand in God.**

We can’t gloss over that and read it too quickly. Jonathan (the son of Saul, the king who seeks to kill David) is at risk (Saul has already threatened him as well.) but goes out to David. He “strengthened David’s hand in God”. Think of the heart of Jonathan toward David, in spite of Saul. He goes out to help and encourage his friend. Remember the covenant he had made with David in I Samuel 20:

#### **I Samuel 20**

**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.”

Things are much worse now that Saul understands the heart of Jonathan toward David.

**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.<sup>g</sup>

Regardless of how great any man or woman of God is, under stress we get tired and need encouragement. Here Jonathan is likely giving David a spiritual pep talk. He is reminding him that he is the Lord’s anointed. That he is to be king over Israel. Jonathan has great confidence in God to protect David and he is helping David remember who he is and what is before him to do.

**17** And he said to him, “Do not fear, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find you. You shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you. Saul my father also knows this.”

I am not going to partner with my father against you. I am not going to turn you in to him. This is still the case today, people can know the Word and Will of God and still continually buck it as Saul is doing. They can be hard-hearted and go against it.

[I know I keep going to the New Testament and have decided that in the near future I will begin a second track of teachings from the New Testament making the things we are learning in the Old Testament applicable to our own lives now which are directed primarily by the New Testament.]

#### **Romans 1:18**

**18** For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness **suppress the truth.**

Despite what he knows Saul persists in trying to kill David. He is suppressing the truth he knows about David’s calling and his loss of the kingdom and why he lost it and so much more he is suppressing.

**18** And the two of them made a covenant before the Lord. David remained at Horesh, and Jonathan went home.

Jonathan and David make yet another covenant.

**19** Then the Ziphites went up to Saul at Gibeah, saying, “Is not David hiding among us in the strongholds at Horesh, on the hill of Hachilah, which is south of Jeshimon? **20** Now come down, O king, **according to all your heart’s desire to come down, and our part shall be to surrender him into the king’s hand.**”

David is on the run and the Ziphites know where he is. They contrive together (looking at their self-interest and benefit), why not tell Saul where David is hiding? Saul is the king. They might gain future perks from him by giving David into his hand.

**21** And Saul said, “**May you be blessed by the Lord,** for you have had compassion on me.

Here we see Saul's self-interest coming to the fore. He even has the gall to declare that they will be blessed by the Lord for surrendering David to him.

**22** Go, make yet more sure. Know and see the place where his foot is, and who has seen him there, for it is told me that he is very cunning. **23** See therefore and take note of all the lurking places where he hides and come back to me with sure information. Then I will go with you. And if he is in the land, I will search him out among all the thousands of Judah."

Meaning he has slipped away from me a couple of times. Be spies for me. Spy out where he is and come back and tell me when you are absolutely certain. Like military intelligence gathering.

**24** And they arose and went to Ziph ahead of Saul. Now David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon, in the Arabah to the south of Jeshimon. **25** And Saul and his men went to seek him. And David was told, so he went down to the rock and lived in the wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard that, he pursued after David in the wilderness of Maon. **26** Saul went on one side of the mountain, and David and his men on the other side of the mountain. And David was hurrying to get away from Saul. As Saul and his men were closing in on David and his men to capture them,

Picture this! The king is out in the wilderness with his army seeking just one man, David and his cohort. David is on the eastern slope toward the Dead Sea and Saul on the opposite side.

**27** a messenger came to Saul, saying, "Hurry and come, for the Philistines have made a raid against the land." **28** So Saul returned from pursuing after David and went against the Philistines. Therefore that place was called the Rock of Escape.

Look at God's intervention...what timing! God is never late. If we stay faithful God will deliver us every time and ontime. Saul gives up his pursuit of David.

<sup>a</sup> **29<sup>b</sup>** And David went up from there and lived in the strongholds of Engedi.

If you have ever visited the Bible Lands you probably went to Engedi there you can still see the water source on top and the caves along the sides and read or recall this record of where David went to hide out at Engedi. <https://www.bibleplaces.com/engedi/>

### Some Corresponding Psalms

Next we are going to look at some Psalms written by David. It is important to realize that while David was on the run from Saul as he was relying on God he was recording his thoughts and prayers in Psalms. It is important and helpful to know which Psalm relates to what event.

Josephus, a first century historian wrote in *The Antiquities of the Jews*:

"And now David being freed from wars and dangers and enjoying for the future a profound peace composed Psalms and Hymns to God. He also made instruments of music and taught the Levites to sing Hymns to God. Both on that called the Sabbath Day and on other festivals."

We can call these Psalms, and some do, *Psalms of the Fugitive*.

There was a recent article in "The Midnight Call" <https://midnightcall.com/archive/midnight-call/> Which goes back and forth between the records in I Samuel and some of the Psalms.

## Psalm 59

### I Samuel 19:11,12

**11** Saul sent messengers to David's house to watch him, that he might kill him in the morning. But Michal, David's wife, told him, "If you do not escape with your life tonight, tomorrow you will be killed." **12** So Michal let David down through the window, and he fled away and escaped.

This incident in I Samuel 19 is the backdrop for Psalm 59. It shows the heart of David as he was inspired by God to write these words.

### *Deliver Me from My Enemies*

**To the choirmaster: according to Do Not Destroy. A Miktam<sup>a</sup> of David, when Saul sent men to watch his house in order to kill him.**

**1** Deliver me from my enemies, O my God; protect me from those who rise up against me; **2** deliver me from those who work evil, and save me from bloodthirsty men. **3** For behold, they lie in wait for my life; fierce men stir up strife against me. For no transgression or sin of mine, O Lord,

Who would have read this? Jesus! He knew this was just what would happen to him. There are many parallels. Both were innocent, both were pursued. Paul, who also was continually pursued, would have read and related to David through I Samuel and the Psalms.

We see the grace of God in giving us his written Word for individuals to read and understand David's situation and their own and find help, comfort, and encouragement!

**4** for no fault of mine, they run and make ready. Awake, come to meet me, and see!

The Israelites are acting like Gentiles. We also see this in the New Testament where Paul wrote to the Corinthians saying your sinfulness is just like the Gentiles. You are behaving just like the world.

**5** You, Lord God of hosts, are God of Israel. Rouse yourself to punish all the nations; spare none of those who treacherously plot evil. Selah **6** Each evening they come back, howling like dogs and prowling about the city. **7** There they are, bellowing with their mouths with swords in their lips— for "Who," they think,<sup>b</sup> "will hear us?" **8** But you, O Lord, laugh at them; you hold all the nations in derision.

Despite what is happening to David he has greater faith in God and God's deliverance of him.

**9** O my Strength, I will watch for you, for you, O God, are my fortress.

Despite what I see I will watch for you. You are my fortress. We can learn from this, and we need to do the same!

**10** My God in his steadfast love<sup>c</sup> will meet me; God will let me look in triumph on my enemies.

**11** Kill them not, lest my people forget; make them totter<sup>d</sup> by your power and bring them down, O Lord, our shield! **12** For the sin of their mouths, the words of their lips, let them be trapped in their pride. For the cursing and lies that they utter, **13** consume

them in wrath; consume them till they are no more, that they may know that God rules over Jacob to the ends of the earth. Selah

I want to make a comment in response to a question one of the listeners posed and tying this into current events. When we read in a Psalm where the Psalmist is beseeching God to kill the enemies of God. Remember in Deuteronomy Moses said to remember the Amalakites and what they had done. Then in I Samuel 15 we read that Saul was directed by God to utterly destroy all the Amalakites and their belongings. We often see in the Old Testament that the enemies of God and Israel are to be eliminated.

In current time Netanyahu has referenced the Amalakites of the Old Testament and equated them with Hamas. You can understand why they did that because of the atrocities that were committed by Hamas. It is important to realize that Israel today did not accept Christ, they are not born again, and they are still living under the Old Testament dictates.

We in the New Testament are taught to love our enemies and to do good to those who hate us. How do we reconcile this? Israel is operating as they did in the Old Testament. Christ had not yet come, and the mindset was "Somebody is going to die... either the Amalakites or Israel." God says it can't be Israel. They had to make it alive till the Messiah comes for all of humanity to be saved. That was a fundamental truth during that time. People who were hell-bent on destroying Israel had to be eliminated.

What has changed with the coming of Christ is salvation and eternal life has been accomplished! So God's direction now is love your enemies, do good to those who hate you. Why? Because those people can actually get saved and also receive eternal life. It may be that you risk your life to save evil people. That is happening today.

It is very common in recent years to hear incidents of Muslims who are disillusioned with Islam and the acts being done to have dreams of Christ appearing to them. They have dreams of who they should speak to in the marketplace and subsequently meet these people and get saved.

We can see the change from the Old Testament to New. Israel is still operating under Old Testament Commandments as Hamas = all evil, all must die.

Christians are willing to step out and risk their own lives to save some. Why? Because we know that we have eternal life.

With that being said, when Hamas is dedicated to wiping out Israel, Israel had a 100% right to defend itself and to bring justice to those who committed the atrocities.

Hopefully that "aside" helps us to understand a key difference between the Old Testament, the New Testament and the orientation of Israel today.

## Psalm 52

### I Samuel 21

This is the record of Doeg the Edomite. He is the one who ratted on David after Ahimelech, the priest, let him eat the holy bread. He was ordered by Saul to kill all the priests of Nob and then all the people of Nob.

## Psalm 52

### *The Steadfast Love of God Endures*

*To the choirmaster. A Maskil<sup>a</sup> of David, when Doeg, the Edomite, came and told Saul, "David has come to the house of Ahimelech."*

**1** Why do you boast of evil, O mighty man? The steadfast love of God endures all the day.

**2** Your tongue plots destruction, like a sharp razor, you worker of deceit.

**3** You love evil more than good, and lying more than speaking what is right. Selah

**4** You love all words that devour, O deceitful tongue.

**5** **But God** will break you down forever; he will snatch and tear you from your tent; he will uproot you from the land of the living. Selah **6** The righteous shall see and fear, and shall laugh at him, saying, **7** "See the man who would not make God his refuge, but trusted in the abundance of his riches and sought refuge in his own destruction!"<sup>b</sup>

**8** **But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God.** I trust in the steadfast love of God forever and ever. **9** I will thank you forever because you have done it. I will wait for your name, for it is good, in the presence of the godly.

We see the great contrast here. We can see why David is called a man after God's own heart. Despite being pursued he is trusting God, grateful and thankful... he will wait on God.

Here are more pairs of records in I Samuel and the corresponding Psalm that you can recall and read on your own:

[Psalm 57](#) – [I Samuel 22](#), after leaving Gath he goes to Adullam

[Psalm 54](#) – [I Samuel 22](#)

[Psalm 63](#) – [I Samuel 23](#), 24 in the wilderness of Ziph (most likely this Psalm)

Look also at the rest of Saul's pursuit and see the corresponding Psalms.

We will now begin our two tracks of teachings.

We will continue looking at the Old Testament Kings but we will also look at the New Testament and how these records apply to us today.