

# STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF DAVID

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by

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We are in I Samuel, chapter 22 studying David's life in the wilderness. With God's training, he is beginning to learn the high cost of situational ethics. In Nob, which is just below Saul's headquarters in Gibeah of Saul, he deceived Ahimelech, the high priest of God, into giving him food and also the sword of Goliath. Apparently he also had Ahimelech inquire of the Lord for him. Then, to get away from Saul, he raced over to Gath just across the border of Judah. There he again used deceit to escape from Achish, the king of Gath, and head for the cave of Adullam. We will now pick him up, having lived by his wits, forgetting to talk to the Lord, and not doing very well.

Chapter 22, verse 1:

So David departed from there (Gath, the nearest major city in Philistine country where he ran from Saul) and escaped to the cave of Adullam, and when his brothers and all his father's household heard of it, they went down there to him. And everyone who was in distress, and everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented, gathered to him; and he became captain over them. Now there were about four hundred men with him.

The cave of Adullam is about 10 miles back toward Bethlehem up the Valley of Elah which is pock-marked with caves. It is an ideal hiding place and is very close to the border of the Philistines, where David can again flee if he has to get across the border in a hurry. It is also reasonably close to Bethlehem, his home town. So, from his perspective, he is pretty centrally located.

Have you ever noticed it is a principle of life that God takes away something only to give back something better? Remember in Chapter 18 how by a covenant with Jonathan David gained a brother. But then God deliberately moved Jonathan out of David's life, and he lost his brother. Now here at the cave of Adullam God gives him back his real brothers.

David's whole life he had been the runt of the litter. He had been the object of ridicule by his brothers, particularly his oldest brother. In Chapter 17, remember, Eliab, his oldest brother, really cut him down when he came up to the battle line to eventually face Goliath. But it should also be remembered that Eliab and the next two older brothers at this point are still soldiers of Saul. So they have committed treason by throwing in their lot with David. They are now traitors and would be killed if they were caught. His father and mother also go down to David. Probably, partly to escape reprisal from Saul, but God deliberately brings the whole family together and finally gives David what he has never really had before, a family, all united down in Adullam. But God does not stop there. David is not only going to be head of his family, he is also going to be king of Israel.

Let us consider for a moment Israel and the people who make up this nation. What kind of people are they? What are they noted for all through the wilderness? They walked out of Egypt with all its wealth, and the first thing they did was what? Rebel. They griped. They grouched. They were discontent, and there were how many tribes? 12, [actually 13, but the Levites were not counted as they were assigned to service the tabernacle], They all had their own petty jealousies, their own prejudices, and David is going to be king of these people. So, he

is going to have to learn how to bring together all kinds of diverse units, all kinds of viewpoints, all kinds of prejudices, all kinds of nasty people and still be God's man. David is about to enroll in "The School of Hard Knocks."

Most of David's life, up to now, he has been a shepherd, a shepherd of sheep! And sheep obey, don't they? If they do not, the shepherd gives them a whack with his staff, or he puts the crook of the staff around their neck or leg and gives them a meaningful jerk. David has been "king" of his sheep and his "subjects" have obeyed him. They may have been helpless and stupid, but they were obedient and did not talk back. Up to now he has had a pretty soft life as far as getting along with others except, of course, for his family.

In the midst of his extremities, what kind of people does God deliberately send to David at the cave of Adullam? All the malcontents in Israel. Notice that? This is going to be a "boot camp" to end all "boot camps" for David in learning how to rule over the twelve separate tribes of Israel. First, "Everyone who is in distress" All of these had problems, probably with Saul and also in just making it in their daily lives. Secondly, "Everyone who is in debt" Fellows who had too many credit cards. [By the way this may imply that Saul allowed interest to be charged when lending money. It was illegal for a Jew to charge another Jew interest, but it may have been to ensure his supporters continued loyalty that Saul had allowed some "loan sharks" to ply their trade. [We know this happened under some of the later kings of Israel.] But anyway these were people who could not handle their monies and took the easy way out by skipping out on their debts. Lastly, "Those who are discontented." The word is stronger than that; literally it means "bitter of soul." People who were deeply resentful, bitter and hostile. Where are these three types of people going to live? In a cave. 400 discontented, nasty people crowded together in one tight little unit. David is going to have to learn to deal with this situation if he is going to survive as their leader.. God is beginning to prepare him for his future. What, on the surface, looks like flight from Achish and from Saul and growing up as the runt of the litter is actually the preparation of a king who is going to reign as "a man after God's own heart."

Then something interesting happens. David now has his family back and apparently has established a real love relationship with them. So, since he is living on the run, he becomes concerned about his elderly father and mother. By now, the cave of Adullam is well known by much of Israel. It is only 10 miles from Gath, and David may have to make a hurried departure again.

Look what happens in verse 3:

And David went from there to Mizpah [the fortress] of Moab; and he said to the king of Moab, "Please let my father and my mother come and stay with you until I know what God will do for me." Then he left them with the king of Moab; and they stayed with him all the time that David was in the stronghold. And the prophet Gad said to David, "Do not stay in the stronghold; depart, and go into the land of Judah." So David departed and went into the forest of Hereth [which is to the west of the Dead Sea].

David takes his father and mother down to Moab and asks the king of Moab to please care for them while he is being pursued by Saul. How is it that David has such close ties with Moab when he knows Moab considers the nations of Israel, and Saul in particular, as its enemy? Well, remember that David's great-grandmother was Ruth the Moabitess. He has Moabite blood in his veins. Beyond that, Saul roundly defeated Moab [I Samuel 14:47] before David became a great warrior for Saul, and thus the Moabites hatred is focused on Saul rather than on David. Thirdly, all of David's great victories, up to this time, were apparently against the Philistines, so the Moabites have no compelling reason to hate David as they do Saul. Lastly, Saul, their enemy, is trying to slay David [who is part Moabite] just as Saul had slain many of them in the past. Any enemy of Saul's is a friend of Moab.

By the way, remember David's great-great-grandmother was Rahab the Canaanite harlot. If you want to take a purely objective view of this whole issue, David had the worst possible bloodline for a Jewish king. Jewish exclusiveness was totally wiped out in David. He had a Moabite great-grandmother, and a Canaanite great-great-grandmother. Also, before his mother married Jesse, she was apparently married to Nahash the Ammonite. This young man is not only the runt of the litter, he is a mongrel. In an exclusive society where the Israelites greatly value genealogy and purity of the Jewish line, this is God's man, "a man after God's own

heart." God deliberately chose a mongrel to be king of Israel. He is telling Israel loud and clear that it is the desire of a man's heart-- not is heredity -- that counts with God

Let me just toss in here, at absolutely no extra charge, another interesting note along this line. Moses, the founder, under God, of the nation of Israel, had essentially three main periods of 40 years each in his life. The first 40 year period was Moses "the son of Pharaoh's daughter." Moses, as an Egyptian nobleman, would have been married by his mother to a daughter of the Egyptian nobility or priesthood befitting his rank as "the son of Pharaoh's Daughter", just as some 400 plus years earlier, Joseph, the son of Jacob, was married by Pharaoh, on becoming his Viceroy of Egypt, to a daughter of one of the highest ranking priests of Egypt. Thus Moses' first wife was an Egyptian.

The second 40-year period Moses spent in Midian as a fugitive from Pharaoh, tending the flocks of Jethro, the priest of Midian. The Midianites were descendants of Abraham's concubine, Keturah, who, after the death of Sarah, became his wife . Thus while they were a Semite people, they were not direct descendants of Jacob and the 12 tribes of Israel, and so were not Israelites.

The last 40-year period of Moses' life was spent leading the nation of Israel out of Egypt, through the wilderness, and up to the border of the Promised Land. Early in this period Moses married a Cushite woman. The Cushites were Ethiopian or Nubian, a Hamitic people like the Egyptians rather than Semitic.

Thus, Moses, the founder of the nation of Israel, never did marry "A Nice Jewish Girl."

Let me ask you another question. Who else was God's chosen "mongrel?" The Lord Jesus Christ! Have you ever read the genealogy of Jesus in the first chapter of Matthew? There is a very fascinating study there about the woman in Jesus' bloodline. Five women are mentioned in the total genealogy of Jesus. All five are "tainted" women from the perspective of the Jews and of the world: four of them "tainted" rightfully; one of them "tainted" not rightfully but still as far as the Jews were concerned, "tainted" all the same.

Matthew, chapter 1, verse 1:

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David [the descendant of three of these "tainted" women and the husband of another of them], the son of Abraham [who, as a resident of Ur, was involved in some of the most grossly sensual idolatry of his day until God called him. Abraham was able to break free from the grip of the perverted sensuality, but his beloved nephew, Lot, was never able to even though he, too, became a true believer in Abraham's God]

verse 3:

...to Judah was born Perez and Zerah by Tamar;

The first "tainted" woman's story is a little difficult to explain. Her name was Tamar and she was the daughter-in-law of Judah, one of the patriarchs of the twelve tribes of Israel. Her husband, Er, was the first born of Judah by his Canaanite wife. But Er was such a wicked man that God slew him. So, Judah gave Tamar Onan, his second born son, to raise up children for his slain first born. The Mosaic Law said if a man died without issue, his brother was to take this widow and raise up children to carry on the dead brother's name [and in this case the dead brother's first born rights]. Unfortunately for Tamar, the second son of Judah was also very wicked, and "whenever he went in to his brother's wife, he wasted his seed on the ground, in order not to give offspring to his brother" [Genesis 38:9]. In direct defiance of God's Law, Onan wanted to get the first born rights for himself, not for the dead brother's son. So, God slew him also. Finally Judah promised Tamar his youngest son when he matured, but Judah, through his marriage, had become so immersed in the superstitious Canaanite culture that he apparently thought Tamar was cursed and he did not give Tamar his youngest son.,

So Tamar took matters into her own hand and, putting a veil over her face, sat by the side of the road appearing to be a cult prostitute knowing that Judah would be coming by. Judah, now thoroughly steeped in

Canaanite sexual practices as well, went into her thinking she was a cult prostitute. Since he did not have with him the usual payment of a kid of a goat for a cult prostitute, he left as a pledge his ring and his staff. As soon as Judah left, Tamar unveiled herself and went home to the compound of Judah. Eventually it was discovered that she was pregnant. As soon as Judah heard of his daughter-in-law's pregnancy, he became very self-righteous and demanded, "Bring her out and burn her." She responded, "The one by whom I am pregnant is the owner of this ring and this staff", which, of course, were Judah's. She had an incestuous relationship with her father-in-law in order to raise up children to her dead husband's name. Judah publicly confessed that Tamar was "more righteous than I" since he had broken his promise to give her his youngest son. Thus Tamar's first born son, Perez, of the twin sons that she bore Judah, became directly in the line of Jesus.

Then down in verse 4 we read:

...and to Ram was born Amminadab; and to Amminadab, Nahshon; and to Nahshon, Salmon;

Salmon is the son of Nahshon, who was a prince of the tribe of Judah.

...and to Salmon was born Boaz by Rahab;

The second "tainted" woman was Rahab, a Canaanite prostitute. The Hebrew indicates she was just a common prostitute of the streets, selling her body to make a living. But because of her belief in the Israel's God and her act of faith in saving some Israelite spies because of this belief, she was allowed to join Israel and she eventually married a prince of the tribe of Judah.

...and to Boaz was born Obed by Ruth;

They had a son named Boaz, and Boaz married Ruth, the Moabitess, the third "tainted" woman. [Moabites worshipped Baal with all the filthy sexual practices involved.] By the time of her marriage to Boaz, Ruth was a convert to Judaism, having married into a Jewish family who migrated to Moab during a famine in Israel. All the male members of the family died in Moab during the famine. When it was over, Ruth's mother-in-law decided to return to Israel and Ruth chose to return to Israel with her. She abandoned her Moabite culture and gods and adopted Israel's in their place.

Verse 6;

...and to Jesse was born David the king. And to David was born Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah;

Here is our fourth "tainted" woman. Notice, God does not call her Bathsheba. Why "the wife of Uriah?" God had made provision in Scripture for a married woman or a betrothed virgin about to be raped. If she was out in the field, where crying out for rescue would do her no good, she was considered innocent. However, in town where she could have been heard, if she did not cry out, she was considered to be adulterous and was stoned along with the man who had the adulterous relationship with her. There is no record Bathsheba ever cried out; she apparently went along with King David in their adulterous affair. So God called her, "the wife of Uriah the Hittite." She was an adulterous woman in the eyes of God even though David later, after having her husband murdered, legally married her.

Then in verse 16, there is the betrothed virgin Mary, who was innocent of any wrong doing but was considered adulterous by the people of her day. She was impregnated by the Holy Spirit of God, but according to a Jewish tradition it was thought she was impregnated out of wedlock by a Roman soldier. While she was not stoned, she was certainly the object of scorn as was Joseph for going ahead with their marriage.

In the genealogical line of His Son, God deliberately names five women, and only five, who from the world's perspective, were all "tainted". From that same line He picked a man after his own heart who would become the greatest king in the history of Israel. What do you think He is trying to tell us by that? He does not care who our ancestors are, what our lifestyle is, who we are, as far as our activities go. All he wants is us. His

Son's act of redemption covers all sin -- and in the case of King David this involved both adultery and murder.

All the women named had social stigmas attached to them, but God in deliberately publishing that fact, is saying, "I know they had problems, but I made provision for that, and I want you to know that I have made provision for you too."

So David left his parents there in Moab because of his blood ties to the Moabites, and he returned to his stronghold in the cave of Adullam.

Then God sent Gad, the Prophet, to David to tell him to leave the safety of his stronghold and go back into the wilderness of Judea. [Gad, has a long career as a prophet (II Samuel 24:1) with David. In fact, he and two other prophets, Samuel and Nathan, write David's biography which we are studying in these chapters (I Chronicles 29:29)] Why would God call a prophet, probably away from Samuel up in Ramah, to come all the way down to David to tell him to get out of the safety of his stronghold and go back over into the land of Judah where Saul is waiting? Yes, that is exactly what God is calling on David to do. This is what is known as "tough love."

How will David ever learn to trust God with all his heart, to be a man after God's own heart, if he is safe in his stronghold at Adullam where his safety is tied to a physical relationship of hiding in a cave with his 400 men instead of a spiritual one of simply trusting God in time of danger? So, God deliberately sends him back into Judah where there is risk. The Christian life is a life of risk taking. It is called "faith." Faith is when you step out and act like you believe that what God says is true, even when you do not see how it is ever going to work out. So, David is called to go back into Judah and become a man of faith.

Now, he is back in the land in obedience to God, but the fact remains that he did deceive Ahimelech. He did lie and cheat, and while he is now back in the land in obedience to God and his fellowship with God is restored, that does not stop the natural consequences of his sin. There is a law of God in Galatians that says, "Whatever a man sows, that he shall also reap. [starting in this life down here]. He that sows to the flesh shall reap of the flesh corruption [starting down here]. He that sows to the Spirit shall reap of the Spirit life everlasting." And remember that Galatians was written to Christians.!

David sowed to the flesh and the corruption process goes right on in spite of the fact that David is now back in the land in obedience to God. Here begins the corruption. I Samuel 22, verse 6:

Then Saul heard that David and the men who were with him had been discovered. [Now that David is back in Judah with a force of over four hundred men] Now Saul was sitting in Gibeah, under the tamarisk tree on the height with his spear in his hand, [that acts as his scepter since Saul is a warrior king] and all his servants were standing around him. And Saul said to his servants who stood around him, "Hear now, O Benjamites! [Apparently only his own tribe constitutes Saul's standing army at this time.] Will the son of Jesse [David was of Judah a rival tribe] also give to all of you fields and vineyards? Will he make you all commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds? For all of you have conspired against me so that there is no one who discloses to me when my son [Jonathan] makes a covenant with the son of Jesse, and there is none of you who is sorry for me or discloses to me that my son has stirred up my servant against me to lie in ambush, as it is this day."

Did you pick up the implication as to how Saul guaranteed the loyalty of his own tribe despite his increasing madness?. He bought their loyalty, didn't he? [Apparently the government "pork barrel" was not invented by the United States Congress after all.] In chapter 8 of I Samuel, what did God warn the Jews would happen when they got a king? He told them that their sons would be conscripted as soldiers and would have commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds placed over them. He said the king would take their vineyards and their fields and give them to his followers. That is exactly what Saul did. He bought himself followers by treating them royally with other people's property. He told them quite frankly, "You are not going to get out of the tribe of Judah what I have given you." Saul projected his own greed, his own desire, onto his own people. Interestingly enough, they are the one tribe that should be loyal to him since he is a Benjamite. Also he projected onto the two most loyal people in his realm his own bitterness and hostility

against God and his blindness and greed and desire for power. He considered both Jonathan and David traitors: the two people who really love him and were willing to die for him.

What does that say happens to you when you allow bitterness, hostility, rebellion to reside in your life? Blindness! And what do you do when you allow those things to live in your life? What do you do with those feelings, those emotions, those attitudes? You project them onto everyone around you, don't you. You see them through your eyes, not through the eyes of God. They do not become objects of your love, of your grace, of your compassion. They become threats. They are just like you, and you do not like you. You know what you are like. So, you look at them and you see them as being like you. You cannot trust them, and you cannot love them, and you cannot have compassion for them. Everybody is your enemy. Because who is your worst enemy? Yourself, and you project yourself onto them. This is what Saul has done. This is the wage of his sin.

I Samuel 22, Verse 9:

Then Doeg the Edomite, [the man who was in the presence of Ahimelech back at the tabernacle. He was going through the rites of purification for some reason and therefore, he was a proselyte to Judaism, although he was an Edomite,] who was standing by the servants of Saul, answered and said, "I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub And he inquired of the Lord for him, gave him provisions, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine."

This is exactly what Saul has been waiting to hear.

Then the king sent someone to summon Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's household, [the whole high priestly family] the priests who were in Nob; and all of them came to the king. And Saul said, "Listen now, son of Ahitub." [When Saul started calling you "the son" of something, watch out. First it was "the son of Jesse" and now it is "the son of Ahitub]" And he answered, "Here I am, my lord." Saul then said to him, "Why have you and the son of Jesse conspired against me, in that you have given him bread and a sword and have inquired of God for him, that he should rise up against me by lying in ambush as it is this day?"

Why does Saul leap on this thing so desperately? Who is Saul really angry at? God. Who rejected Saul? God. Who chose David? God. Who sent a spirit of evil to harass Saul? God. Who won't answer Saul when he inquires of Him? God. Saul is really angry at God. But, how can you strike against someone who is invisible? You can't! So, how do you get even with God? By picking on someone who is the visibility of God, the priests of God, and one other person. What is David? God's anointed. What does the word "anointed" mean in Hebrew? Messiah! Saul is after God's Messiah and Saul is after God's believing priests. He is going to wipe out both, if he can. Who is Satan after? Who are his two primary targets? 2,000 years ago he tried to get one of them, the Messiah, Jesus Christ, God's anointed. And who has he been trying to destroy for the last 2,000 years? God's priests, you and I, the believers. See who has taken possession of Saul's thinking processes now. This is not a physical battle. This is only the playing out of an action that has been going on in the spiritual realm. Saul is playing the role of Satan's tool down here, and he does not even know it. Saul has become spiritually blind.

Now, who does Satan really want to be? [Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28.] God! He wants to be God. He thinks he is equal to God. He is called the "Prince of the power of the air" in the New Testament. We'll see how Saul fits into this same picture.

Verse 14:

Then Ahimelech answered the king and said, [Essentially the high priest's response follows this pattern: Why wouldn't I have shown favor to David when he stood in this relationship to you Saul?] "And who among all your servants is as faithful as David," [He is your most faithful servant] "even the king's son-in-law," [you gave him your daughter in marriage.]

"who is captain over your guard," [You made him head of your picked troops.] "and is honored in your house?" [Who sits in a place of honor in your court] "Did I just begin to inquire of God for him today?" [I've done this many times before with your knowledge.]

Apparently David, as he went out to fight for Saul, always inquired of God, through Ahimelech, whether or not to go. Ahimelech did inquire of God for David back at the tabernacle of Nob. It was not recorded at that time, but it is recorded here, and what did David do right after he left Nob? He fled to Gath. And what did he have to do at Gath to save his skin? Deceive. What would this seem to indicate about whether God answered David or not? He undoubtedly did not get an answer. God did not answer David when David was deceitful. So David, living by his wits, fled to Gath where he almost got killed. What should God's refusal to answer David back at Nob have told David? "David there is sin in your life. Deal with it. You do not have access to God in your present state," but he ignored it. He lived by his wits, went down to Gath and only avoided getting killed by being deceitful. God was trying to stop this process, but David would not behave himself.

Now, here goes Saul, verse 16:

But the king said, "You shall surely die, Ahimelech, you and all your father's household!" And the king said to the guards who were attending him, "Turn around and put the priests of the Lord [the priests of YHWH whom Saul now considered his enemies] to death, because their hand also is with David and because they knew that he was fleeing and did not reveal it to me." But the servants of the king were not willing to put forth their hands to attack the priests of the Lord. [Even his own tribe were afraid to touch the priests of YHWH] Then the king said to Doeg, "You turn around and attack the priests." And Doeg the Edomite turned around and attacked the priests, and he killed that day eighty-five men who wore the linen ephod. [The ephod was the sacred garment, the mark of office of God's priests. He wiped out 85 of the 86 priests that were in the high priest's family] And he struck Nob the city of the priests with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and infants; also oxen, donkeys, and sheep, he struck with the edge of the sword.

Saul put the city under the ban. Do you remember the provision made in Deuteronomy why cities were to be put under the ban, in other words, were to be totally destroyed? Deuteronomy 13 gives us a concept of where Saul's mind is now, and who is Saul's god now. In Deuteronomy 13 God gives some commandments on how to deal with false prophets, the people who lure His people away from the true God himself.

Deuteronomy 13, verse 12:

"If you hear in one of your cities, which the Lord your God is giving you to live in, [this is talking about Jews in Jewish cities] anyone saying that some worthless men have gone out from among you and have seduced the inhabitants of their city, saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods (whom you have not known), then you shall investigate and search out and inquire thoroughly. And if it is true and the matter established that this abomination has been done among you, you shall surely strike the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, [now these are Jews killing Jews for idolatry] utterly destroying it and all that is in it and its cattle with the edge of the sword. [the city is to be obliterated] Then you shall gather all its booty into the middle of its open square and burn the city and all its booty with fire as a whole burnt offering to the Lord your God; and it shall be a ruin forever. It shall never be rebuilt. And nothing from that which is put under the ban shall cling to your hand [you cannot take any booty out of there], in order that the Lord may turn from His burning anger and show mercy to you, and have compassion on you and make you increase, just as He has sworn to your fathers, if you will listen to the voice of the Lord your God, keeping all His commandments."

Saul orders the city of the priests of YHWH put under the ban. Who is Saul's god now? Himself! [He doesn't recognize that it is Satan.] He sees idolatry against himself as idolatry against his god, namely himself. Saul is an Old Testament man. He knows the punishment of God for idolatry. He executes on the city of Nob, the priests of YHWH, the very ban that God says is to be exercised on those who go against God.

A city is to be put under the ban because of what? Idolatry! False gods! What does Saul consider YHWH right now? A false god. What do you think Satan offered Saul? What did he offer Eve? What was the key offer to Eve? "Be like God." What do you think he has offered to Saul? "Be like God." Saul has been suckered into being his own god. This same sales talk worked on Eve who was deceived into disobeying the known commandment of God, and, with Adam's willful deliberate disobedience, plunged the whole human race into the fall. Satan has not changed his approach one iota in thousands of years. Why should he when it has been working so well on those who are not focussed on the true God.

What does this say that you and I should be particularly careful about? Any approach to us by Satan will have as the key appeal "pride," the exaltation of "self," the putting of "self "in the place of God. Wondering, "Is God really fair?" That is what Satan told Eve, "Is God really fair? Is he really what He claims to be: holy, righteous, just and good?" And Eve doubted God and left herself wide open to Satan's influence in her thinking, and the fall of man followed.

We would never ask that ourselves, would we? Would we? Would you like a little gauge of whether you would or not? Saul just had killed 85 priests of YHWH, plus women, children, infants, cattle, sheep, and oxen all of them free from involvement in any wrong doing in this situation, and God let him do it. On the other hand, God kept alive, protected and will make king of Israel David who caused it all, and caused it all by his own deceit and wrongdoing. Now, how fair do you think God is? Don't pick on Saul if you are wondering in your heart, was God fair? Does God have the right to allow innocent people to be killed while He saves the life of the wicked sinner who caused their destruction? Can He assert that right and still remain fair? How you answer that will determine your theology, my friends. I am asking you, what was the first reaction deep in your own heart when I put that question to you? Wasn't it, "He was not fair!" Thus you see that we are still open to the same deception that Saul and Eve were. Do not kid yourself; the moment you begin to question God's sovereignty is the moment you open the door to Satanic assault. Satan always comes in by picking on the character of God, the character of Christ. The cults do exactly this in their perversions of true theology. They always involve the character of Christ, making him something less than the Lord God Almighty. It works for them so why should they change Satan's sales pitch. So if any of you had a feeling that God was not quite fair, be careful. Don't let Satan sucker you.

If you had the feeling, "What a rotten deal that David is alive, the one who caused the problem and even infants were killed by the sword," then let me ask you another question, "Where did the infants go when they died?" To be with God. "Where did the children go when they died?" To be with God. "Where did the believing priests and their families go when they died?" To be with God. Now, if you really believe what the apostle Paul states in Philippians when he says, "I would rather depart and be with Christ which is very much better," [The future life in heaven is so much better than this present earthly one, that if I had a vote, Paul says in Philippians, I would vote to go home.] then you can see God gave these that were slain a gift. Instead of continuing on through the struggle and the suffering of "boot camp" down here, he promoted them from their earthly life to live in His presence forever more. But we are so "this world" oriented, however, that our first thought is, "God is not fair." We must remember always to keep an eternal perspective when we read the Word of God.

Someone from the audience just asked "What do you mean when you say 'God just allowed this to happen,' that God had no responsibility in that?" No, God takes full responsibility for whatever happens to his own. He never evades his responsibilities, and I make no excuses for my God. God could have stopped this whole episode with the snap of a finger. All he had to do was give Saul a massive heart attack, and that would have been the end of that. There was no Stanford University Medical Center in those days. However, he did not. He chose to make David king of Israel, and David would be Israel's greatest king. God was going to make David into what God Himself calls him "a man after my own hear," and when God finished working on David, David would be exactly that. Two of the advantages that go with being God is that you are always right and that you always win; and the sooner we learn this and bow to its implications in our lives, the sooner we will really enjoy being God's children.

God's apparent "extravagance" with the lives of believers is classically illustrated in the martyrdom of the early Christians. They, together with their families, were thrown into arenas as food for lions. They were put on



stakes, covered with tar and lit as torches for banquets. Actually the word "martyr" in the Greek simply means "witness." But because in those days so many times witnessing cost you your life, the term became consistently used as a witness by death. "Martyr" today means to die for your witness. Those early Christians died by the hundreds and God could have stopped that, but he did not. But, again, take your eyes off this life a moment and think, "Where did those believers go when they died and with Whom were they after death?" Additionally, early accounts show that numbers of pagans became Christians by watching the way Christians died. Again, if God chooses to evangelize the lost in this manner, it is His right. "The blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church."

Next God is going to deal with David. God is going to teach David a lesson in unjust suffering. He does discipline his own. While He does protect them, He also disciplines them. Next week Chapter 23.

**Prayer:**

Father, we thank you so much for the way you expose the fallacy that goes around that this earth is so important, that this life is where it is, that we can be like gods and have our own little empires and our own little ego trips and do all our own little things and it does not really matter. Thank you, Father, for making us realize that when we begin to question you and your actions and your attitudes, we begin to put ourselves in the place of God, and we open the door wide to the god of this world, and he moves right on in and reinforces our stupidity. Help us, Father, to be mindful that that is exactly what occurs just as night must follow day. Make us wise as serpents and harmless as doves. Thank you, Father, in Jesus' name.

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