

Meadgate Spring 2019
The Early Kings

Session 5 – David (Part 1)

Bible Background – 1 Samuel chapters 16-31

At the end of Session 4 we left Samuel mourning for Saul. As we explore the second half of 1 Samuel, God challenges Samuel, saying:-

"How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king"

1 Sam 16:1

It might sound somewhat callous, but there is a time to let mourning go. It can be a very long process, but eventually it is possible, and a lot of it will be an act of choice. God gave Samuel a brand new focus - to anoint Israel's second king.

However, Samuel was well aware of Saul's jealousy, which could be fatal. (1 Sam 16:2) God reveals a strategy to get to the home of Jesse of Bethlehem; a public sacrifice. The Bethlehem elders were unsure about the prophet's presence, and asked for reassurance that he came peaceably. He invited Jesse and his sons to sacrifice – a great honour for the family. As Jesse's sons are presented, Samuel once more has to listen closely to God.

"Samuel saw Eliab and thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed stands here before the Lord."

1 Sam 16:6

Why "surely"? The next verse is crucial in order to change Samuel's thinking, and ours:

"But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

1 Sam 16:7

POINT TO PONDER

- *How much do we judge by appearances?*
- *If we could actually see the spiritual state of our heart, what would it look like?*



Seven of Jesse's sons are presented to Samuel. It is possible that Samuel was beginning to doubt his prophetic edge by this point! However, he does the right thing – he asks if there are any more sons! We read of the appearance of the forgotten son:

"There is still the youngest," Jesse answered, "but he is tending the sheep." Samuel said, "Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives."

12 So he sent and had him brought in. He was ruddy, with a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the Lord said, "Rise and anoint him; he is the one"

1 Sam 16:11-12

Again, we notice reluctance when it comes to anointing a king. With Saul, he had hidden himself away. With David, the family has effectively hidden him. It is also important to note that although Samuel anointed David in the presence of his family, Samuel returns to Ramah, and David stays with his family; he returns to the day job.



This is also another example of the private anointing coming a long time before the public acknowledgment of the anointing. Josephus places David's age as 10 years old at the point of this anointing; other commentators say he was more likely to be 15. David begins to rule over Judah when he is 30 years old, and it took another 7½ years for him to rule over the whole of Israel. Therefore, conservatively, the gap between the original anointing and the actual fulfilment was approx. 22½ years!

Chapter 16 closes with an awesome statement:

"Now the Spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord tormented him.

1 Sam 16:14

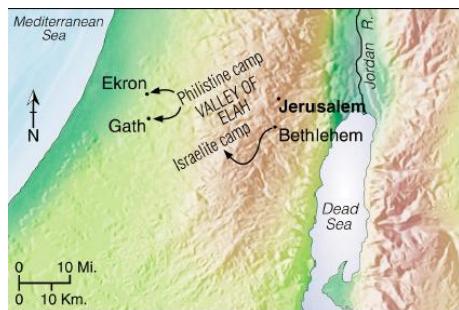
Various thoughts on this:—

- Saul was depressed (symptoms of manic depression?)
- As the Holy Spirit had left Saul, a demon was allowed to torment him as judgement for his disobedience

Either way, he descended into insanity, leading him to attempt to murder David

David is brought into the king's entourage, to soothe his troubled moods by playing the harp. Initially, he becomes a favourite of Saul's

Chapter 17 – David confronts Goliath



The armies of Israel and Philistia faced each other across the Valley of Elah, David arrives from Bethlehem and offered to fight the 9-foot-6- inch high giant. After defeating him, the Isrealite army chased the Philistines to Ebron and Gath (Goliath's hometown).

Why 5 stones? – Goliath had 4 brothers!

Note that after Goliath had been killed, it would seem that Saul had forgotten the young musician who had soothed his melancholy moods, and become his armour bearer.

David does not make a fuss, but modestly introduces himself again

1 Sam 17:58

"Whose son are you, young man?" Saul asked him. David said, "I am the son of your servant Jesse of Bethlehem."

NOTE:

David kept the plunder of the armour of Goliath – as was his right – but Goliath's sword was given to the priests as an offering of thankfulness. It will be needed much later

POINTS TO PONDER



- When you are blessed with material things, how do you react?
- Do you feel that you deserve it?
- If you could give some of it away, would you?
- David had a balanced attitude – God gives us all things to enjoy, but sometimes, it is far better to keep giving back that which could be hard for us to give.
- David could have become proud – this was, after all, what everyone was talking about

Chapter 18

In an unlikely alliance, Jonathan and David become friends.

1 Sam 18:1-4

"After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself.² From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return to his father's house.³ And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself.⁴ Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt."

This friendship will become crucial in the years ahead.

Point to ponder



Note that a true friend gives you the clothes off his back, their robe of reputation, and any weapons. They become defenceless with you, trusting you not to use those weapons against them.

Tension mounts as the Israelite women celebrate David's military exploits when they sing : "Saul has killed his thousands, David his tens of thousands." (1 Sam 18:7) Saul tries to kill David when he plays his harp (1 Sam 18:11), and then transfers David from the palace to the army. Saul offers his daughter Merab to David, asking in return that David fight for him, and secretly hoping that David

will be killed in battle. David is diffident about becoming the son-in-law of a king, but in the event, Merab is married off to Adriel the Meholathite. Michal, another of Saul's daughters, loved David. Saul asks for the dowry of a hundred Philistine foreskins – an extraordinary sign of strength and power on David's part. David delivers two hundred, and marries Michal. David's fame and popularity grows constantly, as does Saul's jealousy.

Chapter 19

Saul becoming increasingly erratic, now making life intolerable for Jonathan
 Saul plots the murder of David, attempting to enlist the help of Jonathan and his servants. Jonathan tells David to hide, pleads for him, and manages to effect reconciliation. Following more military success against the Philistines, Saul attempts to kill David with a spear again. David flees with the aid of his wife Michal, who puts an image in his bed covered with goat's hair. When Saul challenges Michal about this, she claims that David had threatened to kill her. David flees to Samuel at Ramah, and then they both go to Naioth. Saul sends messengers to capture David, but instead they prophesy in the presence of Samuel and other prophets. Saul goes himself, and starts to prophesy, causing onlooker to ask, "Is Saul among the prophets?"

Chapter 20

In this chapter, David and Jonathan make a covenant together concerning their families

David asks Jonathan about Saul's intentions towards him; Jonathan promises his help to David. David avoids the feast of the New Moon with Saul, hiding in a field but making the excuse that he must go to a yearly sacrifice with his family. David asks Jonathan to ascertain Saul's disposition towards him: if he is satisfied by the excuse, then all will be judged well, but if he is angry, then David will know that Saul intends evil to him. Jonathan and David make a covenant, with David promising never to withdraw his kindness from Jonathan's house. Jonathan proposes a signal to tell David of Saul's reaction: he will send a lad after some arrows shot at a target, and if he says the arrows are to the side of him, then all is well, but if he says the arrows are beyond him, then David must flee. Saul is furious at David's absence, accuses Jonathan of complicity with him, and throws a spear at him. Jonathan gives David the sign, and David tearfully departs from Jonathan and flees from Saul.

Chapter 21

David flees to the priest Abimelech in Nob, saying he goes there on business for the king. He asks for bread to eat, but the only food available is holy bread. However, David pleaded, saying that his men are pure, and the priest happily gives him the bread. When David asks for a weapon to fight, the priest gives him Goliath's sword (1 Sam. 21:9). David then flees to king Achish of Gath, one of the key cities of Philistia, and feigns madness in order to protect himself. Interesting that to hide, David goes to the city of his enemy



POINT TO PONDER

- When we are in battle situations, sometimes the Lord will provide weapons which would otherwise have been used by our enemies.
- When The Israelites left the slavery of Egypt, they went with the “spoils of the Egyptians” (Exodus 12:36).
- That which had been used by their enemies now became a source of provision for them. Sadly, they chose to use most of those provisions to make the golden calf.

Chapter 22

David escapes to cave of Adullam, where he becomes leader of 400 family members, debtors and other discontents. He then dwells in Moab, before the prophet Gad tells him to go to Hareth forest. Saul accuses his aides of treason, so Doeg the Edomite tells Saul he saw David at Nob. Saul demands of his officials that the priest's extended family be killed, but they refuse. Doeg, the one who betrayed David, is ordered to kill 85 priests and many citizens at Nob in retaliation. It is tragic that for helping David, so many were massacred. Abiathar, the only son of Ahimelech to survive, flees to David and is protected by him.

Chapter 23

David fights with Philistines at Keilah in Judah. He is constantly checking with God whether this is the right course of action – always a wise move. Saul's forces besiege Keilah, but David flees before the men of Keilah deliver him into Saul's hands. David hides in the wilderness of Ziph. David and Jonathan meet again, and reaffirm their covenant. The Ziphites betray David to Saul. Saul pursues David to the wilderness of Maon; David hides at a rock and is encircled, but then Saul's forces are recalled by a Philistine threat.

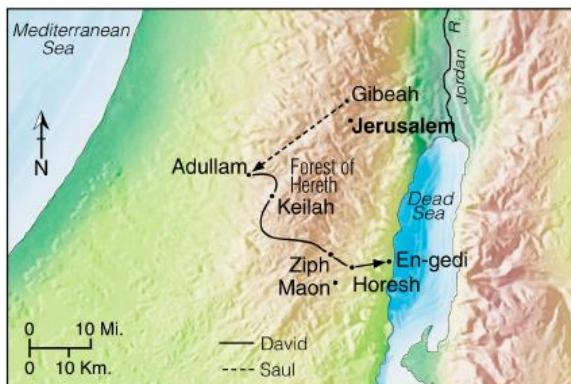
1 Sam 23:26-28

Saul was going along one side of the mountain, and David and his men were on the other side, hurrying to get away from Saul. As Saul and his forces were closing in on David and his men to capture them, 27 a messenger came to Saul, saying, "Come quickly! The Philistines are raiding the land."

28 Then Saul broke off his pursuit of David and went to meet the Philistines. That is why they call this place Sela Hammahlekoth".

Sela Hammahlekoth – means “Rock Of Escape”

This was a very close call – God literally took David and his men to the wire; David's army was on one side of the mountain, Saul's on the other.



David Flees from Saul

David and his men attacked the Philistines at Keilah from the forest of Hereth. Saul came from Gibeah to attack David, but David escaped into the Desert of Ziph. At Horesh he met Jonathan, who encouraged him. Then he fled into the desert of Maon and into the strongholds of En Gedi

Chapter 24

A crucial chapter. David has just 600 men, Saul has 3000 "Chosen men" (1 Sam 24:2) Saul again hunts David, this time in En Gedi. Without knowing, Saul comes to a cave where David and his men are hiding.

1 Sam 24:3-4

"He (Saul) came to the sheep pens along the way; a cave was there, and Saul went in to relieve himself. David and his men were far back in the cave.⁴ The men said, "This is the day the Lord spoke of when he said to you, 'I will give your enemy into your hands for you to deal with as you wish.'

There is **no record** of God ever saying this to David



POINT TO PONDER

Just because an opportunity presents itself to damage your enemies, check first!

David restrains himself and his men from killing Saul (who is the Lord's anointed), and secretly cuts off a part of his robe. David had great respect for Saul, in spite of Saul trying to murder him. Although Saul was rebelling and sinning against God, David still respected the position he held as God's anointed king. David knew he would be king one day, and he also knew it was not right to strike down the man God had placed on the throne. If he assassinated Saul it would set a dangerous precedent for himself.

Romans 13:1-7 teaches us that God has placed the government and its leaders in power. We may not know why (?) but we are to respect the positions and roles of those to whom God has given authority

There is one exception, though: because God is our highest authority, we should not allow a leader to pressurise us to violate God's law.

David then reveals himself to Saul, and is honoured for his mercy. Saul asks David to swear that he will not cut off Saul's descendants when he becomes king.

Chapter 25

Samuel dies, and is buried at Ramah. All Israel mourns for him (1 Sam 25:1). David requests ‘favour’ for protecting Nabal’s sheep against Philistine raiders. Nabal refuses, so Abigail, Nabal’s wife, secretly gives David gifts of bread, wine, sheep, grain, raisins and figs, and intercedes, averting bloodshed. Abigail is described as “an intelligent and beautiful woman” (1 Sam 25:3), who is extremely wise in her dealings with David. God strikes Nabal with a heart attack and he dies ten days later. David marries Abigail, and also Ahinoam of Zerreel. Saul has given Michal, his daughter and David’s wife, to another.

Chapter 26

The Ziphites betray David again. David and Abishai the Hittite creep into Saul’s camp, and steal his spear and jug from his tent. David chides Abner, Saul’s bodyguard, saying he is worthy of death. David appeals to Saul (the Lord’s anointed) once more, whereupon Saul repents.

POINT TO PONDER



- *David demonstrates that he has the ability to get close enough to Saul to do serious damage, yet refrains.*
- *Is this a mark of cowardice? No – he is actually showing great strength.*
- *Knowing you have the ability to hurt someone else, and choosing not to, is a fantastic demonstration of Godly character*

Chapter 27

David escapes to the Philistine king Achish at Gath once more. This is the king David had pretended to be insane in front of. He has obviously forgotten! Saul decides to stop searching for David. Achish grants David Ziklag; the kings of Judah own it to this day. David stayed there for 16 months, with his close family.

David wages battles against the Geshurites, and the Gezrites, and the Amalekites, but tells Achish he fights against Judah. Achish believes him.

1 Sam 27:12

“Achish trusted David and said to himself, “He has become so odious to his people, the Israelites, that he will be my servant forever.”

Chapter 28

The Philistines and Israel prepare to fight. Saul, who had banned all occult practices, is afraid; God does not respond to him through dreams or prophecies. Saul disguises himself and visits the witch of Endor. The witch is cagey, but is persuaded to summon up Samuel.

Did Samuel really come back from the dead at the call of this medium?

The medium shrieked at the appearance of Samuel – she knew that the spirits she usually contacted were either contrived or satanic. Somehow Samuel's appearance revealed that she was dealing with a far higher power. It also enabled her to recognise Saul through his disguise. She did not call Samuel up by trickery or the power of Satan; God brought Samuel back to give Saul a prediction regarding his fate, confirming what he already knew. This does not justify any efforts to contact the dead or communicate with spirits from the past. God is strictly against all such practise (Galatians 5:19-21)

Samuel upbraids Saul, tells him the Lord has departed from him, and that he will lose the battle.

Chapter 29

The Philistines pitch their armies at Aphek, the Israelites at Jezreel. David is still with Achish, but the Philistines become agitated that he will turn against them, and so he is sent home.

Chapter 30

The Amalekites invade Ziklag, to which David has returned. All the women are taken captive, including David's two wives. The men wanted to stone David. God tells David (who dons an ephod to ask divine advice) to pursue the Amalekites. David goes with six hundred men, but leaves two hundred men at the Besor Ravine because they are too faint to be able to continue the pursuit. David and his remaining four hundred men come across a starving Egyptian, abandoned because he had fallen sick. The Egyptian brings David and his company to the Amalekites, who are feasting and enjoying themselves. There is a great slaughter, and David manages to recover everything and everyone that had been taken away, including his two wives. David shares the spoils with the two hundred men at the Besor Ravine, despite some grumblings. He shares the spoils further with the elders of Judah.



Point to Ponder

- David had left Ziklag unguarded
- It is critical for those in leadership to garner support and protection for their families
- **Intercessors take note:** it is highly strategic to pray for all those God has placed in authority over you, that God would build fortresses of protection around them.

Chapter 31

The Philistines slay the Israelites at Mount Gilboa. Wishing to avoid death at the hands of the enemy, Saul asks his armour bearer to run him through. The armour bearer refuses, however, so Saul falls on his sword. The armour bearer does likewise, and Saul's sons also die. Saul's corpse is decapitated, and fastened to the wall of Bathshua, along with his sons. The men of Jabesh Gilead (presumably still grateful to Saul after he had delivered them from Nahash) rescue the corpses, cremating and burying them properly.

Samuel	Saul
Characterized by consistency, obedience and a deep desire for God's will.	Characterized by inconsistency, disobedience and self-will.
Dedicated to God	Dedicated to himself

Saul's death was also the death of an ideal – Israel could no longer believe that having a king “like all the other nations” would solve all their troubles. The real problem was not the form of government, but the sinful king. Saul tried to please God by spurts of religiosity, but real spirituality takes a lifetime of consistent obedience.

“Heroic spiritual lives are built by stacking days of obedience one on top of the other. Like a brick, each obedient act is small in itself, but in time they build up, and a huge wall of strong character will be built – a great defence against temptation.”¹

One final thought –

How do we “handle” those God has anointed, when they are clearly in the wrong?

David had multiple opportunities to harm Saul, yet refused every time. He often faced rebellion from his own men for not “pressing the advantage”, yet he would not stoop to Saul’s tactics.

Sometimes you will be in the position where you believe leaders within a church are in the wrong.

Like David, you need to constantly seek God about the best way forward, recognizing that God still protects leaders who are wrong, and it is not your place to dole out justice. Guard your tongue, your opinions, and let such situations drive you to your knees in intercession for them. God will teach you much.

¹ From footnote commentary to 1 Samuel 31:13, Life Application Bible

Appendix 1

Life of David vs. Life of Saul

	SAUL	DAVID
1	Saul was man's kind of King (1 Sam 10:23)	David was God's kind of King (2 Sam 7:8-16)
2	Saul was a man after people's praise (1 Sam 18: 6-13)	David was a man after God's heart (Acts 13:22)
3	Saul's kingship was rejected (1 Sam 15:23)	David's Kingdom was eternal – through Jesus (2 Sam 7:27)
4	Saul was cruel (1 Sam 20:30-34, 22:11-19)	David was kind and benevolent (2 Sam 9:1, 1 Chronicles 19:2,3)
5	Saul was unforgiving (1 Sam 14; 44, 18:9)	David was forgiving (1 Sam 26)
6	When confronted, Saul lied (1 Sam 15:10-31)	David repented (2 Sam 12:13, 24:10)
7	Saul was fearful (1 Sam 17:11, 18:9-13)	David was courageous (1 Sam 17, 1 Chronicles 18)
8	Saul was separated from God (1 Sam 16:14)	David was at peace with God (Psalm 37:11, 119:165)