

### INTRODUCTION

Some of you may remember the victory celebrations after the last world war with people singing and dancing in the streets and everyone joining in the celebrations. Well something very similar is taking place at the beginning of this chapter. The victory gained over the Philistines the celebrations began and they sang a song (v 7) and although no one intended to be political or to offend Saul; yet this song made Saul very jealous because David was more popular than he was which was never a good thing for a King.

As a result Saul kept his jealous eye on David (v 8) from this moment on Saul and David's relationship would never be the same again.

### 1. YOU ARE EITHER FOR OR AGAINST GOD'S ANOINTED (vs. 1-9)

The slaying of Goliath brought David to the attention of the people and as a result his popularity grew considerably. We must remember that David is God's appointed king, God has decided that Saul is finished and that David will replace him although as yet this is unknown to Saul. Everyone no doubt started to talk about David after his defeat of that giant Goliath there were two people who took a special interest in David after this victory.

First of all there was Jonathan (vs. 1-8) who knew that this man David was just like him in many ways and so David wins Jonathan's heart. He became one with him in heart and he loved him as himself (v 1 & 3). We need to be clear that this relationship is one of a close friendship and it is sad that that in our own day I have to even say that.

However because of the gay agenda today; people can so easily think that because two people of the same sex are close friends that they must be in a gay relationship. To be honest because of everyone's suspicion of being thought off in this way there may be a greater reluctance on the part of men especially to enter into wholesome close friendships with other men and this I believe is one of the tragedies that the promotion of homosexuality has brought upon our society.

But here we have two spiritual men who are at one in heart and spirit who love and respect one another greatly and therefore form a close personal friendship with one another. As a result of this close friendship they made a covenant together (v 3) although it is clear that it was Jonathan who took the initiative in this. This covenant ceremony normally took of the form of cutting an animal in two and the two parties passed between the two pieces as if to say "if I am unfaithful to my word in this covenant then may I end up in pieces like this animal." Jonathan then took off his robe, tunic, sword, bow and belt and gave them all to David (v 4). All of this was highly significant and a little surprising.

It was significant because the clothes signify the person and his position and therefore what Jonathan is doing is renouncing his position as Prince and heir to the throne and he is transferring as far as his own will is concerned the right of succession to David. In other words Jonathan sees David as God's appointed King although not yet functioning as King; he has been crowned by God and is in waiting for that time when God confirms his appointment as a functional king.

This action is surprising for you never gave away your crown rights in David's society you normally eliminated your rivals not crown them as your successor. But Jonathan was beginning to understand something of God's purposes and he in no way wants to resist them but submit to God's way. That my dear friends is never easy to do, we all like to have positions of power and

authority; such things play to our pride which is why as Christians it is never easy to take a back seat and watch others get the credit or receive the praise.

It's never easy in churches to play the supporting role rather than the main part; but we must all submit to the role that God has appointed us to; some of us are leaders some of us are followers of that leadership but all of us must be humble before God and know that whatever role God has appointed us to play everyone of us is playing an important role in the work of God so that God receives all the glory.

But Jonathan is not the only man who took an interest in David for Saul also had an interest in him. At first Saul was impressed with David any man who has the courage and faith to take on a giant like Goliath must be respected and so after this incident with Goliath, Saul kept David in his household rather than allowing him to return to his Father Jesse (v 2).

David was given a number of tasks to do and whatever he did he was successful at it so Saul made him a high ranking Officer in his army (v 5) and this decision pleased all the people and of course the Officers in the army as well. It seems that there were many other battles with the Philistines after the Goliath incident (v 6) but eventually when all the battles had ended David and his army came home to a victorious reception and this is when they sang their song (v 7) and this is when Saul's attitude to David changed. Saul became increasingly uneasy with David's new found popularity.

He became very angry (v 8) because David was being given more credit than Saul and his fear was that one day if David's popularity continued to grow and if he continued to be successful at whatever task he was given (v 5); then Saul could see that it would not be long before he would take his kingdom from him.

There was no way Saul was going to give up his kingdom without a fight so he constantly kept a jealous eye on David; no doubt looking for an opportunity to discredit him or even eliminate him without somehow losing face with the population.

David receives different reactions towards him. Jonathan loved him and was one in spirit with him whereas Saul was jealous and kept his eye on him. But such reactions should not surprise us for Jesus who is "Great David's greater Son" also drew from people both these reactions. Some loved him and committed themselves to him whereas others like the Jewish leaders were jealous of him and hated him and sought to kill him; a task that they eventually succeeded in. But then that is the response that we ought to expect from people; for Jesus is never a neutral figure, people either love him and follow him or they hate him and seek to be rid of him (John 7:37-43 & 9:16).

Jesus always brings division for either people are for him or against him even in the same household this division can be seen for some will be for Jesus and follow him while others of the same family will be against him and reject him (Matthew 10:34-37). Therefore if that is how they treated Jesus our Master can we who follow him expect anything different?

Jesus himself said that "all men will hate you because of me" (Matthew 10:22) so we are not to be too concerned when people for no apparent reason dislike us and even hate us and seek to do us harm. It may be that they hate us because they hate Jesus Christ and because we follow him and seek to live for him and by his standards then that pricks their conscience and they seek to do us harm as a result.

However Jesus says that "he who stands firm to the end will be saved" (Matthew 10:22) therefore we must remain faithful and keep on following him in the knowledge that ultimately one day we will be saved from all the hatred of this world. But it is possible that even in our building this morning

there are people who either love Jesus or hate him. O you may say how can I ever hate Jesus; what would I be doing in church if I hated him?

You can come to church for all sorts of reasons including believing that by coming to church you are working your way to heaven; but in reality if you are not following Jesus, if you do not identify yourself to him through repentance and faith then you must hate him; for there is no other option.

The fact that you refuse to turn from your sin even though you are a sinner and the fact that you refuse to trust Jesus Christ and call out to him for mercy and salvation tells us that you do not believe what He says. Therefore you are against him rather than for him. Where are you in relation to Jesus Christ today? Are you for or against him? Have you been converted, are you born again?

If not then you are against him which is a tragic position to be in for all who reject him will be rejected by him on the day of judgement. He will say to you “depart from me you who are cursed” (Matthew 25:41) and you will be cast in hell. I urge and plead with you today to turn to Jesus Christ embrace him and receive his salvation which He grants to all who seek him.

## 2. DAVID ENJOYS THE BLESSING OF GOD (vs. 10-30)

It is clear that David’s growing reputation and popularity comes about because the Lord is with him (vs. 12, 14 & 28) and this is the theme of this closing section on this chapter it is clear that David is enjoying God’s hand of blessing upon him and this is seen in the way that he is protected from Saul and in the way that everything he does is successful. Let’s follow this theme through these verses.

As soon as David’s popularity grows Saul goes into one of his depressive moods no doubt these moods were being exploited by the evil one (vs. 10-11). David is sent for because as we have seen a little bit of music therapy has worked in the past and so David begins to play; but Saul in a fit of rage and it seems from an increasing deranged mind throws his spear at David twice hoping to kill him but on both occasions David eluded it (v 11).

It may well be that David at this stage is unaware of Saul’s growing hostility towards him otherwise he would not have consented to Saul’s other requests in this chapter. David may well have put Saul’s fits of rage down to his depressive state and his growing frustration; he may well have said “he did not mean it was just one of those things.” But the point is this although unknown by David, God’s approval was upon him and it was the Lord who was watching over him and protecting him through all these incidents. I wonder how many times unbeknown to us have our lives been spared by the blessing of the Lord preserving us.

We simply have no way of knowing although we can all point to situations where events could have turned out very differently but for the fact that the Lord’s hand was preserving us.

Saul was very much aware that the Lord’s hand of blessing was on David how else could his successes be accounted for and this fact made Saul even more afraid of David (v 12), Saul knew that when God intends to bless there is nothing and no one who can stop him but Saul is not content to accept that fact; he is going to use every ploy he can to outwit David and to ultimately outwit God.

But of course although it may be possible to outwit God’s people, it is never possible to outwit the Lord which must be a great comfort to those of us who follow the Lord. Saul had another idea he promoted David and put him in charge of 1000 men (v 13). This may seem a strange way to

oppose David but there was a method in Saul's madness. By promoting David he was hoping for two things one would be a decreasing of popularity among the soldiers for it is a well known fact that managers and those in charge at never popular for they have to make some tough and often unpopular decisions.

But Saul was also hoping that as a Commander of a 1000 men he would have to lead his men into battle which placed him on the frontline and also made him a target as the enemy often targeted the Commander for in killing him the troops would become dispirited and surrender easier. Saul had hoped that David would be killed in battle and that would save him having to do it and would remove his problem legitimately.

But once again God's blessing was upon David and in everything he did he had great success because the Lord was with him (v 14) and this only increased Saul's fear of him and David's popularity (vs. 15-16). Of course David was unaware of Saul's intentions but I wonder how often the Lord has thwarted the plans of our opponents.

How often have people intended to do us harm but because the Lord's hand of blessing has been upon us what was intended to do us harm has actually turned out for good (Joseph). We have no way of knowing of course but this passage clearly indicates to us that God's hand of blessing is upon his people and He works our everything for our ultimate good for which we ought to rejoice and praise his great name (Romans 8:28).

But Saul is not finished yet he comes up with another plan. In case David is beginning to get suspicious Saul offers him his eldest daughter in marriage in exchange for David being willing to continue to fight against the Philistines (v 17). Saul's intention is made clear to us but not to David he was hoping that the more battles that David fought then surely sooner or later some Philistine would kill him.

Saul is so set on having David removed that he is willing to play with his own daughter's happiness and future for if his plan is successful his daughter will be a widow. David is reluctant to become the King's Son in Law for he saw himself as unworthy but he consents nevertheless but when the time came for David to receive Merab the King gives her to someone else (vs. 17-19).

Poor David is deceived yet again but he does not become bitter because the Lord's hand was upon him keeping him dependent upon the Lord. The only way that we can be saved from bitterness when the schemes of unbelievers make our life hard is to experience the grace of God in our lives. Left to ourselves we would all become bitter and twisted when we are unfairly and unjustly treated which is why we all need God's grace daily to keep us trusting in him.

Pray dear Christian friend for God's grace so that we will be able to bear the injustices of life that come our way, especially as so often it seems it is the unbeliever who benefits at our expense. David must have been becoming more suspicious but Saul is still intent of having David removed from the scene so when he finds out that his youngest daughter Michal is in love with David (v 20) he seeks to take advantage of the situation.

Saul seeks to exploit his own daughter's feelings by promising to give her to David in marriage and in doing so he was hoping that Michal would be a "snare" to him (v 21) in that she may persuade him to risk his life for her and in doing so place himself into dangerous situations and Saul might even be hoping that Michal would blunt David spiritually and as a result the Lord would remove his hand from him in that case death would almost be certain for David. The offer is put to David (v 22) but David responds with amazing humility which is another sign of the Lord's hand upon him and besides he could not pay the King's dowry for Michal (v 23). But Saul had it all worked out and made a deal that if David kills 100 Philistines in a certain period of time then he could have

Michal as his wife. The Philistines would be the dowry price and the evidence that he did kill 100 is that he was to present to the king their foreskins (v 24).

But once again Saul's real purpose in this request is that David would fall at the hands of the Philistines (v 24). David agreed to the terms and went out with his men and killed 200 Philistines and did so before the time stated (vs. 26-27) and so Saul had to give in and give his daughter Michal to David in marriage (v 27).

Even Saul realised that the Lord's hand of blessing was upon David and whatever he does God turns it out for David's good even his own daughter loves David, and David's reputation grew and grew (v 30). But Saul was not going to submit he would remain David's enemy for the rest of his life he would simply not submit to God's purposes he would continue to oppose the Lord and his people for the rest of his life (v 29).

It is sad when people realise that the Lord is with his people and yet refuse to submit to the Lord. Perhaps they have opposed his people and even tried to hurt them but the Lord has turned it around and has blessed his people but yet those who oppose God still refuse to submit to him. They prefer to fight even though they are on the losing side rather than turn to him.

There are plenty like that in our society, they carry on fighting God even though they cannot win rather than turning to him That is what sin does and I hope there is no one present today who is fighting against God and his people. My dear friend you cannot win because the Lord is with his people and will turn everything around so that even plans intended to harm us will turn out ultimately for our good.

So stop fighting God and turn to him. But as I finish I want those of us who are believers to understand that God is on our side and whatever may happen to us, whatever is thrown at us, whatever evil may come upon us "in all things God works for the good of those who love him" (Romans 8:28). Do you believe that, if you do you will never complain to God or question him but you will trust him in all things because the Lord intends to bless his people for which we give him all the praise and glory?

Amen