

### INTRODUCTION

The way God works in our world is often unpredictable and surprising and it often leaves us pondering the ways of the Lord. For example could you have imagined God using someone like David to slay Goliath and to do it with a sling and stone; it was totally surprising. In this chapter we are going to look at the way God does certain things and I think you will be amazed just how God works, the people He uses and the results He accomplishes

### 1. THE WAY GOD WORKS THROUGH FRIENDSHIP (vs. 1-7)

Still licking his wounds after his failure to have David killed through his various schemes Saul now declares openly his intention of having David killed. However now he is no longer going to scheme so that the Philistines do his dirty work now he tells his son Jonathan and all his attendants to kill David. It is now open warfare as far as Saul was concerned (v 1).

But Jonathan is now in a dilemma because he was very fond of David; he had cut a covenant with him promising to be faithful in his friendship with David. What was he going to do? What he did was to go and find David and relay to him the plans and intentions of his Father (v 2). He instructed David to go into hiding and while David is in hiding Jonathan will wait for a suitable opportunity to influence his Father in an attempt to get him to see sense and change his mind and that is what he did (vs. 3-4).

He sang David's praises showing his Father how wrong he would be to kill David for David had done him no wrong and because he managed to kill Goliath that was of great benefit to Saul (v 4). David had risked his life to fight the giant Goliath and through him the Lord had won a great victory for the whole nation (v 5).

Therefore Jonathan's argument was that if David had done all this and Saul approved of what David did then why would Saul want to do wrong by killing David for no apparent reason (v 5). Jonathan successfully argued his case and Saul was persuaded and promised with an oath that David would not be harmed (v 6). The result was that David was restored to his position within the King's court; it was just like old times, it was as if nothing had ever happened (v 7).

God once again delivers David from danger He shows David that his God is with him and granting him success. But what can we learn from the opening verses of this chapter? There is a lesson here about the way God protects and guides his people. David was unaware of the plot to kill him until Jonathan told him about it and so God used his friend to guide David and ultimately God's protection came through David's closest friend.

God often works for our benefit through friends that He has given to us. He helps us to overcome our enemies through our friendships. For example true friends speak honestly with us in order to warn us and protect us when they see us going down the wrong path. It may be that our enemy is not a person but it is sin.

Sin is the enemy of every one of us and it is out to kill and destroy us if it can, Satan who is the enemy of every believer is out to tempt us so that our sinful nature cave in to his temptations and thereby we become entangled in sin and its consequences. How does God protect us against such an enemy? One of the ways He does it is by giving us Christian friends, people who love us so much that they are prepared to warn us about the temptation that we are longing to give in too.

You see sin is always presented attractively within our society (sex; greed etc) and therefore it is easy even for the best of us to fall into the trap set by the Devil. But God protects us from the schemes of the Evil One by sending us a fellow Christian a true friend who is able to see what we are doing before it is too late and enables us to see sense before we fall. True friends want the best for us and that is why a true friend is often willing to put that friendship at risk by telling us the truth.

We should always be willing to listen to those that we trust even when they are telling us things that are not always pleasant for us to hear but it is important to listen to their warnings and respond appropriately. David did and God delivered him. Perhaps our problem is that we so often fail to listen to those whom God sends in order to protect us from our enemies of sin and Satan and sadly we pay the consequences for our failure to respond as David did.

If we listen to those God sends to us in order to instruct and warn us and respond as we should then God will deliver us from temptation.

## 2. THE WAY GOD PROTECTS HIS ANOINTED (vs. 8-17)

Probably after a considerable period of time war broke out again between Israel and the Philistines and David once again went to war and was successful (v 8). This success roused Saul's old jealousy which presumably he was able to keep under control all the time David was back in his court. But once again being in a depressed mood and being influenced by an evil spirit Saul tries to kill David by throwing his spear at him (vs. 9-10) but David managed to elude it and made his escape.

He went home to his wife but Saul sent his men to kill David but not that night but the next morning which gave David an opportunity to escape which is what he did thanks to his wife's warning and help (vs. 11-12). Michal then took an idol; what was it doing in David's house we have no idea and she used it to make it look like David was still in bed (v 13). Then when Saul's men came to enter the house the next morning she told them David was ill.

When the men reported this to Saul, he was having none of it and commanded that David be brought to him on his bed so that Saul could kill him (v 15). What a shock for the men to find that in the bed was not a sick David but a stupid idol made to look like David (v 16). Michal was now in trouble and when questioned about why she had deceived her Father Saul, she basically said that she was afraid of David because he had threatened her which of course was a pack of lies (v 17).

The author makes no comment about the moral issues in these verses, the issue of having an idol in the home although it was probably Michal's rather than David's and the author says nothing about Michal's deception and lies because the author is telling the story as it happened in order to demonstrate how God protects his anointed David.

All I want to say about these moral issues is that there is no justification for them and in a day when situation ethics takes central stage we must never compromise on sin. However God uses these sins without being the author of them in order to protect David who is his anointed one. David is God's King, he has been anointed King but has not yet had his Coronation but one day that will happen.

God has rejected Saul and anointed David but now God must look after David so that he can fulfil the purpose for which he has been anointed. When we think along these lines we cannot help but think of great David's greater son the Lord Jesus God's anointed. Do you remember that when He was born into our world King Herod wanted to destroy him?

His plan was to get the Magi to show him where Jesus was; under the pretence of wanting to worship him but God protected his anointed by warning the Magi in the dream not to go back to Herod (Matthew 2:7-8 & 12). Then God appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him to take his wife and child and go to Egypt because Herod wanted to kill him. Joseph obeyed and God's anointed was safe (Matthew 2:13-15).

When Herod realised he had been outwitted by the Magi although in truth he had been outwitted by God; he was furious and had all the boys in Bethlehem who were under two years old killed; but of course by this time Jesus God's anointed was safe in Egypt (Matthew 2:16). Why did God save his anointed whether it was David from the hands of Saul or Jesus from the hands of Herod? The reason has to do with God's purpose.

David was going to be his King over Israel; he would be their deliverer and of course Jesus is King over his people He is described as the head of the church and He would deliver his people. David's deliverance of his people was physical but Jesus deliverance was over sin. David's deliverance involved military warfare whereas Jesus deliverance involved spiritual warfare.

We are so glad that Herod was not successful in his attempt to take Jesus' life for as a result of God's protection of his anointed one Jesus went on to live a life of perfect obedience which focused on the cross where Jesus voluntarily and willingly gave his life for sinners like us. No one took his life from him but he gave it up; because as God's anointed He had come to save his people from their sins. God was watching over David's life so that his purpose could be fulfilled and God the Father watched over and protected the life of his Son so that his purpose of salvation could be fulfilled.

If you are a Christian then God's protection of Jesus resulted in your salvation for which we ought to daily give thanks to our God. But just as God had saving purposes in mind when He protected David and his Son Jesus; so God daily protects each one of his people because He has a saving purpose for our life for He intends to save us from our sin and take us to his prepared home. Therefore his protection will continue until his purpose for us has been fulfilled.

Even our final enemy death cannot rob us of our heavenly home as God protects us even in that moment of death and takes us through the shadow lands and brings us to our heavenly home with the Lord. Therefore trust him daily He knows what He is doing and depend upon him to protect us in life and in death.

But if there is anyone here who has never received his Son as Saviour then his protection is not upon you and ultimately He will not protect you but judge you and condemn but you can know his protection by turning to him for salvation through his Son Jesus Christ. I urge to that today.

### 3. THE WAY GOD DEMONSTRATES HIS POWER (vs. 18-24)

This final incident is one of the most bizarre stories in the whole bible so let's have a look at it. David flees to Samuel in Ramah which was a mere two or three miles from Saul's capital Gibeah and tells him all that has transpired (v 18). Then Samuel and David went to Naioth which may not actually be a place but a camp or complex of building outside the town where prophets stayed (v 18), a bit like a Bible College.

When Saul heard where David was; he sent his men to capture him (v 19) but when they saw a group of prophets prophesying with Samuel in their midst God's Spirit came upon them and they also prophesied which probably means they were made to praise God (vs. 20-21). They set out to do David harm and are rendered powerless by the Spirit of God. When Saul heard what had

happened he sent more men but the same thing happened to them (v 21). Even more men were sent but once again they were rendered powerless by the Spirit of God (v 21).

Finally Saul sets out probably thinking if you want a job done you are better doing it yourself and before he even reached Naioth where David was the same thing happened to Saul. Here is the powerful king rendered powerless (v 23). But it was more than merely being rendered powerless for Saul is humiliated as he strips off his robes while being forced by the Spirit of God to praise the God of Israel.

In doing so it is as if God is saying just as I have stripped off your robes so I have stripped you of your kingship (vs. 23-24) and so the bizarre story comes to an end. But what does it teach us? Its main lesson is the powerlessness of the opponents of God when faced with the power of God. Saul the powerful King is left powerless and humiliated because he opposed God and his anointed one.

This story is a commentary on Psalm 2 where we read that God laughs at the nations of the world who conspire against him and his anointed (Psalm 2:2 & 4). God laughs because of how stupid people are to think that somehow or other they can oppose Almighty God. There are many in our world that shake their fists in defiance against God, thinking that somehow or other they can oppose almighty God the maker of heaven and earth. But God does more than laugh because one day everyone will be made to bow at the name of Jesus and every one will be made to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:10-11).

This is not something that unbelieving people will do willingly but all those people who have despised the name of the Lord, all those who have rebelled and sneered at him will one day be powerless before the mighty power of God; and they will bow the knee and confess who Jesus is even though for them it will be too late; He will not be their Saviour but their Judge. I have heard people say that when they meet God they will give him a piece of their mind.

What arrogance; how stupid to think that we mere mortals could ever give God a piece of advice? On that final day God will overpower everyone with his immense glory, power and majesty and the most ardent opponent of God will bow before him and confess Jesus is Lord. What about you? Will you say those words with a willing and joyful heart? Are you saying those words in your heart today? Could it be that there is someone present who will be forced to admit Jesus is Lord even though you have lived all your life in opposition to him? It's not too late for these verses in Philippians are set in the context of what Jesus did in entering our world; becoming man, dying on a cross and being exalted to the highest place so that one day every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord (Philippians 2:6:11).

Therefore Jesus came deliberately to die so that we who are sinners can willingly come and bow before God and declare Jesus is Lord. Will you do that?

Amen