

2155-DAVID SPARES SAUL-1 Sam 24.1-24

PRELIMS. David has been anointed king but is 'on the run' from King Saul, who is **jealous** and has **vowed** to **kill** David. David has been wonderfully *kept by the power of God* albeit living in a **cave** with 400 men. Saul has had to **give-up** his 'search' for the moment!

When Saul returned from following the Philistines...he...went to seek David [1,2]. Note the **unrelenting zeal** of the wicked - they never give up their pursuit even although they **know** they are **defeated!** Jonathan said *my father also knows this (You shall be king over Israel 23:17c)* **APP** If the **Church** was as **passionate/persevering** as the godly in their objectives, I believe there would be **revival!**

What a **Providence!** Saul actually goes into the **very cave** where his arch enemy is hiding! If he had just known! God **does** at times 'make a fool' of people! He **does** sometimes 'plays games' with His enemies - to **expose** their **vulnerability** and His **sovereignty**. Just think how **humble** Saul must have **felt** after this incident! He would have felt '**small**' before the great God with whom He had to do!

One of the most **difficult** things in life is to **interpret Providence!** Note the different interpretations David and David's men interpret this event. David's men: *Here is the day of which the LORD said to you, 'Behold, I will give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it shall seem good to you'* [4]! Ie, 'David, this is what we have all been praying for, God has answered your prayers'! They saw it as nothing less than a **golden opportunity**, sent by God Himself, to kill Saul and become King! 'One strike and you are on the Throne'! All your troubles are over now, David. Congratulations - your strategy has paid off'! On the surface it could appear like that, couldn't it? What do **you** make of it? Were David's men right?

Well, David saw the incident completely **different!** David's greatest difficulty came from having to **disagree** with his **best friends!** That is **always** the most difficult part for a Xn - when even his **Xn** friends have it wrong! I always admire **politicians** who choose a path which **alienates** them from their **best colleagues** in government! **APP** Have **you** ever **resisted** '**taking revenge**' when an excellent opportunity arose to get your 'own back'? How good a **Xn** are you really? Your

decision at such a time is an **excellent thermometer** of your **Xnity!** Jesus, of course is our perfect example. When Peter **cut off** the ear of Malchus, Jesus rebuked Peter - and **healed** Malchus [Luke 22:51] Again when James/John wanted to call fire down, Jesus rebuked them ‘You do not know what Spirit you are of!’ [L9:55AV] **Amazing** that did not cause them to think about the Personality of Jesus!

David therefore had the additional problem of **restraining** his men from attacking Saul! *So David persuaded his men with these words and did not permit them to attack Saul* [7] **APP** Is it not true, that we ourselves, have **allowed others** to carry out the evil deed when we **could** have stopped them! Have we not also ‘**rejoiced**’ at the fall of our enemy! **Lar Cat 9** Command requires; ‘**defending** the good name of our neighbour when need requires it...**sorrowing** for and... **covering** their infirmities ...**acknowledging** their gifts and graces’!

Now **what exactly** was the problem here? **Why** did David hesitate to take Saul’s life - it could be argued it was in **self-defence!!** Why did *David’s heart struck him, because he had cut off a corner of Saul’s robe* [5]? What was **wrong** with that? Wasn’t it **wonderful** that was all he did? He **didn’t harm** Saul in any way! Yet David is **full of guilt!** Why? D had a **tender conscience** - unlike those whose hearts were **hardened by the deceitfulness of sin** [Heb 3:13] As we progress in **unconfessed sin, unwittingly** our hearts become **hard!**

David is **full of God**. He has the **fullness of God** that X had [Col 1:19] and for which Paul prayed the Ephs would have, *I bow my knees...that...He...may grant you to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God* [Eph 3:19] And **what** does that **mean?** It just means God is the ‘big thing’ in your life - God comes into your thoughts constantly and naturally. The wicked are defined *there is no fear of God before their eyes* [Psa 36:1]. God is **never** in their **thoughts**, whereas the Xn always has the Lord ‘before him’, ie, God’s ‘view’ is **always considered** in decision-making. **APP** When a sudden opportunity comes your way to ‘**make a quick buck**’, is your decision based **first** of all on what God’s view of the ‘deal’ is - or the **common standards** of the **culture!?** For David it was God’s view!!

*David’s time to be king had **not yet** come - and Satan knew that - so

he **harasses** David by either telling him he **will not live** to be king or by **stirring** him up to be **impatient** and **rushing** to become king! But as Scripture says *Whoever believes will **not be in haste*** [Isa 28:16]. David, like the Lord Jesus, knew his time was not yet come. He was not going to **engineer** his coronation, far less kill king Saul. David was not going to **manipulate events** for his own ends! There was not going to be any occasion for saying that David's kingship was a **self-appointment!** 'Behind the scenes' in many **political appointments**, are the machinations of individuals to '**engineer**' their promotion, as well as 'engineering' the downfall of political opponents!

Not so David! *there is **no wrong** or treason in my hands. I have **not sinned against you**, though you hunt my life to take it. May the Lord judge between me and you, may the Lord avenge me against you, but **my hand shall not be against you*** [11,12] *It is really an **internal contest** between the 'flesh' and the 'spirit' in our hearts! Paul: *the desires of the **flesh** are against the **Spirit**, and the desires of the **Spirit** are against the **flesh*** [Gal 5:17] **Within** the Xn there is a battle between what is wrong and what is right. Jesus Himself **prayed not as I will, but as You will** [Mat 26:39]

No one can really be successful in achieving any high goal, unless they are **disciplined**. A man **must** be able to **govern himself** before he can govern anyone else. The **most important** government is **self-government**. No one who cannot discipline/control himself can be in charge of others. We will never be able to govern a home, a family, a school, a business a community, a political party, unless they can first of all govern themselves. David knew, if he could not **control** his own **impulses** he would not make a good leader of people.

Whoever is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city [Pro 16:32] *Good sense makes one slow to anger* [Pro 19:11] *Whoever is slow to anger has great understanding but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly* [Pro 14:29] **APP Children** - that is why **parents** are so insistent on discipline in the home - because if you leave home without being able to control yourself, it **not likely** you will learn how to do **afterwards!**

*If we have **saving faith** - it **will be tested!** There is **no** such thing as faith that is not tested! Jesus spoke from heaven and told the Church

at Smyrna *Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested* [Rev 2:10] It will **continually** be tested! **After** Abram left Ur of the Chaldeas we read *After these things God tested Abraham!* Did Abraham not **prove beyond all doubt** that he had faith when he packed his bags and left all he had **without knowing** where he was going? Yes! But we must remember it is **glorifying to God** for us to **manifest** our faith in Him! God **rejoices** over the faith of His people!

Some people are not sure what to make of Saul! Was he a good man or an evil man. He started off good - as if he was indeed the Lord's - but he turned away from God. Ultimately he was happy to commit suicide rather it be said that a Philistine killed him! Look at him here! Yes he makes **good confession** - or does he? He says to David *You are more righteous than I* [17] He still thinks himself as righteous although not as righteous as David. He did **not** see himself a **sinner!**

Saul also blesses David may the Lord reward you with good for what you have done to me this day [17, 19]. But you do not need saving faith and grace to do that! Many unregenerate people can wish even their enemies well. This confession was **mainly emotional** - he *wept* [16] Saul's **emotions** were **high** - after all his life had just been spared so he **must** have been **thankful** to have his life - and therefore in **good mood**. When we are in good mood we're much nicer/kinder!

Circumstances can affect our **judgment** - and what we may **say!** We see also what was **very important** to Saul - **his name** - *Swear to me therefore by the LORD that you will not cut off my offspring after me, and that you will not destroy my name out of my father's house* [21] **APP** So many people are concerned about their **name** being 'carried-on' after them. **Football stands**, and **empires** carrying their name is important! Psa 49 *though they called lands by their own names. Man in his pomp will not remain. Fundamentally* Saul does not seem to be genuine for he did **not stop pursuing David!** [26:1cf] '**Repentance** is always followed by a **swift amendment of life!**'

On the other hand, **David**, was **protected by God** - *Saul sought him every day, but God did not give him into his hand* [23:14] And God will protect **you/I** if we have **faith** in Him and follow Him.