

An Evil Spirit From the LORD

Book of 1 Samuel

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Bible Text: 1 Samuel 16:13-23
Preached On: Wednesday, July 20, 2016

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Let's take our Bibles and look once again in 1 Samuel 16 and we're going to read in verses 13 through 23 and the title of this message may be a shock to some but it's taken right here from this portion and that is "An Evil Spirit From the LORD." Now, imagine going out into some of these religious centers and telling them that an evil spirit has been sent to them from the Lord. They would be shocked because in their minds there is Satan and then there is God. Satan has his domain, God has his domain, and every once in a while when they get in a battle, that's when we need to start praying more and helping God out because this evil spirit, by their thinking that way, is actually more powerful than God. There are a lot of people that think that this struggle that they face whenever something doesn't go right or the way that they imagine, that somehow it's the devil.

I got into several of these types of conversations today and the Lord directed in it but that was one of them, where this lady said, "I like to get up early in the morning and I like to read my Bible and make sure I get my day started right and this morning I was lazy, I slept in and I missed my Bible reading and now everything has been out of sync and I just know it was the devil." And I said to her, "Do you think the devil is omnipresent?" Can you imagine the billions of people in the world that are thinking it was the devil? The devil is finite. He can't be everywhere at once but people imagine that it is. It's kind of like Santa Claus, he's going to make sure he visits every house. It's in men's minds and imaginations but it's fictitious. I'll tell you, when we're done here and whether you agree with me or not, it's not agreeing with me, it's agreeing with God and his word that he is sovereign and he rules over all events, all works of men, all circumstances. Everything that happens in this world, he brings to pass.

I was just catching up after my trip on the newspaper this afternoon, reading through it and this shooting and that robbery and this thing and that. Do you know what? Every one of those things, God brought to pass for his glory. I know what it does is causes people to say, "What kind of God is that?" Well, he is God. That's what the word God means. He doesn't explain himself. "In the beginning God." That word means supreme Magistrate created heaven and earth. A

And that's what we see here. 1 Samuel 16, look at it beginning with verse 13. This is where we left off last time, "Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him," that is,

David, "in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward." Now, when it says "the Spirit of the LORD came upon David," it's talking about in the sense of him being anointed as king because the Spirit was already working in David. There are some that argue that the Spirit never was in those of the Old Testament but Peter spoke of the prophets which David would have been one, where the Spirit of Christ which was in them. Well, here particularly, "the Spirit of the LORD came upon him." That's what the word "anointing" is and it's a picture of our Lord Jesus Christ who was anointed as prophet, priest and king, the anointed one. Do you see that word in verse 13? "And anointed him." That's what the word Christ means. It's not a name, it's a title, the anointed one. "So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah."

Now, here it is, verse 14, "But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul." Now, again, in what sense? Was Saul ever converted? No. So it's not that the Spirit departed from Saul in that he was a child of God at one point, the Spirit of the Lord was in him and now the Spirit left him. No, it's in the sense of, and here again the translators, editors, put it in a small "s," it should be capital "S," just like in verse 13, "and the Spirit of the LORD." There is only one Spirit of the Lord. "But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul." What that tells me is that the Spirit is at work even in the unbelieving world, restraining men. He's not going around trying to see how many he can get saved. No. But he's in the world restraining men from being as evil as they could be. You think the world is bad right now? Just let God take his hand off of some of your neighbors, more importantly, let God take his hand off of you and me. What would we be? We'd be chainsaw murderers. We would be devils. What would it take to become a devil? We are devils by nature other than God's restraining hand and the converting work of the Spirit, but this heart the Lord says is "deceitful above all things, who can know it?" Our first thought is never to say the truth. Let's just be honest. When something comes up, our first thought is to figure out a way around it. I guarantee it. And then as you ponder, if the Spirit is with you, you begin to think, "Do you know what? I've got to say the truth here." But our first thought is ever only evil.

So when it says, "But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul," this is the Lord now turning Saul loose like a dog. Open your side gate, I don't care how well trained your dog is but open that side gate and just leave it open all day. Pretty soon you're going to get a call from someone down there by Burger King saying, "Hey, I caught your dog down here. He had his nose up in the air sniffing the burgers." I can't tell you how many times I've had people call when our dogs get out. That's their nature.

And notice, "an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him." I think sometimes we imagine when God takes his hand off of sinners and turns them loose, they're just happy, happy, happy. But here it says, "an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him." You look that up, it's talking about internal. This man was not at peace with himself. Given what he wanted, he was troubled and the Lord purposed it that way.

"And Saul's servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit from God troubleth thee." It's amazing what comes off the lips of natural minded people. Some people think that unless a sinner is converted he'll never speak the truth but we know that God caused

Balaam, you want to go to Numbers 25 and don't tell anybody it's Balaam, a charlatan, and just read what God caused to come out of the mouth of Balaam, a reprobate, but he did it for his glory. That's why the Lord told the Pharisees when he was entering Jerusalem on that donkey and they were crying, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord," and the Pharisees were upset and wanted them to be quiet and the Lord said, "If they be quiet, the stones will cry out." God is able to make the stones glorify his name.

Here we see these speaking the truth, "Behold now, an evil spirit from God troubleth thee." They could have just said, "an evil spirit troubleth thee." I dare say that demons know a whole lot more about God's sovereignty than men do. Men would just say, "Ah, it's an evil spirit. We've got to get rid of the evil spirit," they said, "from God." Even a stopped clock is right twice a day but God caused this to be stated.

So they said, "Let our lord now command thy servants, which are before thee," notice, "to seek out," not counselors but, "a man, who is a cunning player on an harp: and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well." Music has always been used by natural minded men to calm the spirits. Some of the most popular songs today, the artist wrote them out of anger, out of discontent, out of something that's got them upset and those become the popular songs because they're stating exactly how people feel out there and they're like, "Go! Yeah!" It's amazing, isn't it? And yet it's a placebo; it's no remedy. When the concert's over, people go back to their homes. And I believe that's one of the reasons why you see people today just walking around constantly with something on their ears listening. It's drowning out conscience. It's drowning out things that they don't want to have to deal with. It's a drug. I'm not against music. I enjoy it, but it's not a remedy.

But here's where I want you to see God's sovereignty even in the future acts of men. They were saying, "Let's find a man," but who was directing that? God. God brought the evil spirit that these men might say what they said, "and now let's go find the man." The Lord was causing the path of David and Saul to come together. David, he knew Saul was the king but he had nothing to do with Saul. To that point, Saul didn't even know David. This was God bringing their paths together for his purposes.

"And Saul said unto his servants, Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring him to me. Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite." It's amazing, isn't it? Out of all of Israel, here's David the shepherd tending to the sheep of his father, not even known to Samuel originally. The Lord told him, "Don't look on the outward appearance." But somehow this one in Saul's court knew David. You talk about connections.

He says, "that is cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man." It's interesting that what was his strength that the Lord gave him at this point became the very point with which Saul now went against him because when the Lord began to bless and people began to say, "Saul has killed his thousands and David his ten thousands," all of a sudden Saul

didn't like the idea of David being a valiant man as much. There is that pride. But all of this the Lord is directing.

"And a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the LORD is with him." I imagine that word had gotten around of Samuel having taken and anointed David there in verse 13 and now God is bringing David to the fore. These are the beginnings of the Lord's manifesting who is this anointed one. And if you look at that description in verse 18 of David, it's much like what Moses said to the people of Israel that, "the Lord would raise up a prophet among them like unto himself, hear him." Every description that we have here of David could be described of our Lord Jesus Christ because David is a type of Christ.

When we're studying the Psalms and we see the title of a Psalm, "To the Chief Musician," and the editors put Musician in a capital "M," I like that. Any talent that David had here whereby, "he was cunning in playing," we all like to hear somebody that can really play a guitar well or a piano well. To me, it amazes me. I love to sit and watch and listen. It's amazing the musical ability that God has given even to natural reprobates and when I sit and listen to them I think, "They're not playing to the glory of God, they're playing for their own glory," and yet how many times their music or words can be used to be of a consolation to us even in a temporal way, lift your spirits a little bit. I would say that's not a bad thing.

But here was David, so this ability to play, this cunning, you see the term, "a mighty valiant man, a man of war, prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the LORD is with him." Isn't that what God said he'd call his Son, Immanuel, God with us?

"Wherefore Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, and said, Send me David thy son, which is with the sheep." So word got around. It's interesting to me that God purposed that he hear just enough to be kind to David and bring him because don't you believe that if he had known at this point that Samuel had just anointed him as the next king of Israel, that there would have been fireworks? It's like Herod when the magi came looking for that one. Herod said, "When you find him, you come back this way and tell me." He didn't have an intention, he said, "That I can go worship him or see him," but the Lord directed them another way. God rules and overrules even in these matters. It's not that God hid it. It's like when Christ came in this world, God was in him and yet Christ wasn't working out his kingdom in a secret society, it was out in public. Everything he did was in public. Why didn't men perceive it initially? Well, it's because they were blinded. God didn't reveal it and they kept questioning him, "If you truly are the Messiah," that word is "the anointed one, then tell us plainly." The Lord said, "What have I hidden?"

God was in him but even as here, Saul desired David for self-serving reasons. It's like when our Lord Jesus, men sought after him and would have made him a king but he withdrew. It wasn't because they were interested in salvation from their sin, but as the Lord said, it's not even the miracles but that it's a welfare program. "You seek me because I distribute bread." I dare say if on Wednesday night we wanted to fill this house, do you know all we'd have to do? Put a sign out front and say, "Church Supper. Free. Everybody

welcome. And oh, by the way, we're going to have a preaching service." I'll tell you what, we'd be sideways in here. We couldn't get in here. That's what men seek and that's what they think.

Years ago I thought I was smart in putting an ad in the yellow pages for our congregation and after about a year of that, I decided that's the biggest mistake you could ever do. I called the yellow pages and said, "Remove us." They said, "Well, you're a church." It doesn't matter because every time I'd come down here there would be 20 calls on that phone: need to pay the light bill, need to pay my rent, So-and-so needs gas money. That's all they want and I was of the opinion, well, if you've got it, give it but, you know, when you pull out of here and I'd never give them cash, I'd drive down and fill their tank down here at the gas station, it's amazing how fast word spreads because they're right around here. They go from congregation to congregation looking for this kind of hand-out. And I've had people at ten minutes before we're to meet for worship sitting right here and I invite them to stay for worship, you don't see them. They're gone. It's not their interest.

That's what we find here with Saul, Saul seeking David when he says in verse 19, "Send me David thy son, which is with the sheep." That in itself is a message of Christ with his sheep and bring him, seeking after him. There are some when they read that, had we not the rest of Scripture, they might think, "Well, you know, Saul is doing a good thing. He's seeking out David."

It says, "And Jesse took an ass laden with bread, and a bottle of wine, and a kid, and sent them by David his son unto Saul." It means he had to travel a little distance to get there.

"And David came to Saul, and stood before him," now it says, "and he loved him greatly." It's not David loved Saul greatly but Saul loved David greatly, "and he became his armourbearer." Had Saul had foreknowledge, do you think he would have loved him greatly and made him his armourbearer? This was the Lord moving David into position right under Saul's nose in his sovereignty just like he did with Moses when his sister put him on that river and Pharaoh's daughter found him and brought Moses into Pharaoh's household and he was there for 40 years and no one knew who he was and yet he was the one right under Pharaoh's nose who was to deliver the people from Israel. It wasn't apparent.

Again, we see how men in their blindness, they will speak of Christ and they will say that they love him so long as that Jesus or that Christ is satisfying their wants and needs, but as soon as it's revealed who he is in truth, in his sovereignty, as it became apparent as we're going to read on here, that this was one that the Lord, this was a king that the Lord had set on this throne, then it's just the opposite. This time, when David came to play, Saul was soothed by the music but we're going to read later when David came to play, what happened? Saul took a javelin and tried to kill him. That's what men do when they perceive who is the Christ of Scripture, but I'll tell you, God's purposed one thing and that's to glorify his Son. This whole event here, even the sending of the evil spirit to trouble Saul was to bring David into that household and that God would preserve David all the way to the throne; that there wasn't one thing that Saul, this wasn't at a distance,

this was right under his nose, there wasn't one thing that Saul could do to rid himself of David. Just like when Christ was on the earth, men sought to kill him. When they finally realized what this was about, they would take up stones to stone him and he'd walk right through their midst because God had purposed only one way in which his Son would die and that would be on the cross. You talk about God's sovereignty regarding the acts of men and their supposed free choices. Peter preached about it on the day of Pentecost, didn't he? That God according to his foreknowledge and counsel, delivered up his Son into your wicked hands. They did their will at that point in crucifying Christ, and yet all the while God was doing his will. There is an example of God's sovereignty over all things.

"He became his armourbearer." You cannot get any closer. We're talking about the one that protects the king wherever he goes. That's amazing and yet David didn't take advantage of it. As the Lord taught David, he waited on the Lord. That time where Saul had him cornered in the cave, we're going to read about that in a little bit, and the men said, "Let's get him," David said, "No, I will not lay my hand on the Lord's anointed." He saw even in that that Saul until the time that God purposed that he should ascend to that throne, that that was God's anointed and he took and cut off a piece of his garment so when Saul got up and went, he called after him and reminded him, he said, "I could have killed you but I didn't." You know, the disciples had to learn that. When Christ was on this earth, he said, "My kingdom is not of this earth otherwise my servants would fight." There were plenty that were really waiting and ready for Christ to say the word and, boy, we're going to take this Roman government on. But what did Paul say in Romans 13? There is not one power that exists but what God has ordained it.

You talk about, "It is well with my soul. Be still my soul." I don't care who is elected, I don't care how they come into power. I heard today on the radio that they are saying there is some plot in the military to overthrow if, you know, a certain candidate becomes president. Well, do you know what? If that's the way God purposes, then that's the way it'll be but if not, it will never happen. I don't know about you but I can go home and just rest. Turn off the news if it's troubling you too much. Let's just rest in the fact that God is sovereign and he is ordaining his will in doing it.

I remember flying over to Madagascar from where I was on the Ivory Coast. It's a long flight and two things happened on that flight. One was on Ethiopian Airways, we took off from Ivory Coast to go to Ethiopia and from there fly down to Madagascar and on the flight all of a sudden the stewardesses and everybody just were in a panic and we found out that Addis Ababa had fallen to the rebels and we were going to land in that airport. You know, I'm thinking we're flying right into the hornets' nest here but do you know what? Flew in, the airport was calm. On the way back, we couldn't go back, had to go through Nairobi, Kenya. But amazingly and I thought, "You know, I'm on a mission here. If this is the way the Lord is pleased to take me out, then this is the way I'll go."

But leaving there going down to Madagascar, I landed in Madagascar and you talk about a Marxist government, when I walked into the lounge where the reception, you have to have customs and everything, there were actual school desks sitting there and I was

handed this packet of paper, it just had been copied, you could hardly read it, and I had to answer everything about where I had been and where I was headed and what I was going to do. You had to write down every bit of money that you had on you. When I got there, they took away my yellow card, my health card, because they said since I came from the continent of Africa, I was under quarantine for 30 days and I said, "Well, I'm not even here for 30 days." They said, "Well, we're still taking your card and you can't get out without it." I kept thinking, "I hope I don't fall sick while I'm here because then they're going to hold you up." I mean, you talk about regulations and the whole time I was there, in my mind, you know the little things that trouble you was, "I wonder if that yellow card is going to be there when I get back to the airport?" Or whether they're going to get me like you do a horse, "Open your mouth," because that's what they did, they pulled you in a side room and you're under quarantine. There is a guy in a white robe when you get there to go out and he's checking you out. Thankfully, the guy did pull out the drawer and there it was. But change, they made me put everything I had in my pocket. If I was leaving with more money than I came in with, I was arrested. I had to account for every...receipts for everything.

Such was the regimen that was there but when I was in the country there were riots. There were protests and, there again, you know, you're in a strange land, but the Lord directed that I should go and preach where I was supposed to preach and then when I got back to the airport to take off to fly back out, it was like going through a military camp, getting out of a military camp, prison. I was never so relieved to get on that airplane and sit in that seat, take a deep breath and think, "Okay, now I'm heading back to where there was trouble when we started." Of course, my family's there in Ivory Coast. There is no communication. When I landed in Nairobi, I heard that that plane was the last flight out because Antananarivo had been overtaken in a coup d'etat, a change of government, and I thought, you know, I could have been stuck there and yet the Lord opened the way at every step. Now, the worst thing that happened was an 18 hour layover in Nairobi, Kenya and when I got to Ivory Coast, I went to pick up my bag and it felt pretty light and somebody had actually cut it open and stolen everything out of it. All it was was the bag but I was glad to have just the bag and my life.

You know, our steps are ordered of the Lord and the reason I'm telling you that is that you can be in the worst situations and dangers that you could ever imagine and yet we're immortal until such time as the Lord is pleased to take us regardless of what the situation is and the Lord brings those to mind now everything seems trivial. When you've been through stuff like that, you know, driving back from Atlanta yesterday, 1 ½ hour delay because of a wreck and having to get off on a side road, the Lord gave me that peace of mind, "You know, I'm going to enjoy the fields of Mississippi." I looked out there, there was a cotton field, I snapped a picture of it. The clouds look pretty good, snapped a picture of that. You pull up next to somebody, roll the window down and chitchat. Make their day better. Do something but even that, the Lord ordained. I was just thankful I wasn't the one in the wreck. You know, we get all frustrated and thinking, "Why can't we keep going?" Someone may have lost their life, I don't know. I was trying to listen on the news but the Lord purposes all these things and that's what I want you to see, "he became

his armourbearer." He put him right next to Saul and Saul was unaware that it was God doing his will all the time.

"And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favour in my sight." Didn't we just read that in Proverbs 16? When a man's ways please the Lord, he causes even his enemies to be at peace with him. When God is pleased to cause a way of a man to prosper, it doesn't matter what the enemy is, they're going to be at peace. You stop and think about all the people, as evil as the heart is, and yet God causes them to show you kindness. I deal with them all the time in the business world and I don't know why but they kind of like me. Someone said the other day, "When we're with you, you kind of perk up our day." And I said, "Well, you kind of perk mine up too." It goes both ways. But anytime the Lord causes even an unconverted sinner to be kind to us because if they truly knew, that's where you get them upset when they get into conversations about God and Christ and all of a sudden they turn tail and go the other way. But here it says, "Let David," verse 22, "I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favour in my sight." That was the Lord.

Here it is again and in case you missed it, it wasn't a mistake in the print, verse 23, "And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed." There was no conversion but there was a pacifying of Saul. Why do you suppose that was? For David's sake. God had his eye on David and therefore used a very natural means to pacify Saul for David's sake. Everything God does is for Christ's sake, his Son's sake. "And was well, and the evil spirit departed from him."

We're going to have to come back to that. There is a lot more we didn't touch on but may the Lord bless what we've heard to this point.