

I Samuel

Lesson 30 - Chapter 17 and 18

I said last week that the 2 books of Samuel, and especially where we are now, simply explode with God-principles (that we learned about in the Torah) applied to the situations at hand. We're going to bump into and examine several of those principles today.

As we continue in 1st Samuel chapter 17, David has just slain the giant Philistine warrior Goliath but as we discovered last week, Goliath doesn't represent David's only battle. Saul, the illegitimate current king of Israel, has no intentions of giving up his throne just because God says the Kingdom is no longer his. Because the Lord has anointed David as the new king (*nagid*, actually, king-in-waiting) conflict between the rightful king and the pretender is inevitable.

Saul, as the Anti-King, displays for us the general characteristics (or type) of the Anti-Christ. I don't want to take this parallel too far: Saul was probably not an ancient appearance of the Anti-Christ per se. Yet as the Apostle John tells us, the essence of the Anti-King/Anti-Christ is first and foremost as a spirit of evil and there is no doubt in my mind that this spirit can be visualized as present in Saul. And that spirit that was so dominant in Sha'ul's life is also present and active today, just as it was in the Apostle John's time, even though the human being who will become the ultimate tool and fleshly container of that spirit is yet to come.

CJB 1 John 2:18 *Children, this is the Last Hour. You have heard that an Anti-Messiah is coming; and in fact, many anti-Messiahs have arisen now- which is how we know that this is the Last Hour. ¹⁹ They went out from us, but they weren't part of us; for had they been part of us, they would have remained with us.*

CJB 1 John 4:1 *Dear friends, don't trust every spirit. On the contrary, test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. ² Here is how you recognize the Spirit of God: every spirit which acknowledges that Yeshua the Messiah came as a human being is from God, ³ and every spirit which does not acknowledge Yeshua is not from God- in fact, this is the spirit of the Anti-Messiah. You have heard that he is coming. Well, he's here now, in the world already!*

John is speaking of the same pattern that we view here in 1st Samuel 17. John is saying that those who manifest the spirit of the Anti-Messiah (the Anti-Christ) were mingled in among the Believers and appeared to be part of them (meaning part of the Body of Believers, primarily Hebrews). There were several, perhaps many of them, but it turns out that while they looked and talked the part of being a Believer in reality they weren't actually part of the Body (or at least they weren't any longer as they gave up the Holy Spirit for another kind). They very likely deceived their own minds into believing that they were indeed part of the Body; they didn't at all see themselves as vessels of the spirit of the Anti-Christ.

Note how King Saul by all outward appearances was part of Israel and even their anointed and legitimate leader. Saul always talked about how he was leading God's Kingdom, and that the wars he fought were God's wars. He was present at sacrifices to make fine speeches, he surrounded himself with priests, he used religious sounding words and tried to create and maintain an aura of personal piety and loyalty to God. I have no doubt that King Saul continued to see himself as a legitimate part of God's Kingdom (despite what Samuel told him) but in reality he was far from God. In spiritual reality God had completely removed Himself from Saul, never to return. Let me be very clear here: from a **spiritual** point of view Saul was no longer part of Israel. He came from Israel, but he wasn't part of Israel (at least he isn't any more) because by definition being part of Israel wasn't only a matter of physical genealogy or race, it was spiritual. How could a person (such as King Saul) call him or herself an Israelite (a member of God's Kingdom, Israel), and yet be completely devoid of God's presence? Answer: from a spiritual standpoint he couldn't. And as always, the spiritual standpoint overrides the physical.

This perverted pattern of Saul is expounded upon by St. Paul over a thousand years later in Romans chapter 2 (a passage we've all heard many times but perhaps thought that it was a brand new thing only for Paul's day and henceforth). I want to quote it again because of its critical importance; take note that Paul is talking to ethnic Jews here. He is talking to Jews about principles that affect all men (Jews and gentiles), and thus Jews can't merely hold up their ethnicity as the sole proof of their membership in the Kingdom of God.

^{CJB} Romans 2:24 as it says in the Tanakh, "For it is because of you that God's name is blasphemed by the Goyim."²⁵ For circumcision is indeed of value if you do what Torah says. But if you are a transgressor of Torah, your circumcision has become uncircumcision!²⁶ Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the Torah, won't his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision?²⁷ Indeed, the man who is physically uncircumcised but obeys the Torah will stand as a judgment on you who have had a b'rit-milah and have Torah written out but violate it!²⁸ For the real Jew is not merely Jewish outwardly: true circumcision is not only external and physical.²⁹ On the contrary, the real Jew is one inwardly; and true circumcision is of the heart, spiritual not literal; so that his praise comes not from other people but from God.

In Paul's eyes (and I think fairly to say in God's eyes as well), the ancient King Saul would not have been a real (a true) Israelite from the divine perspective because his circumcision (his sign of Kingdom membership) was strictly present in the flesh, and it contained none of the (far more important) spiritual element.

With this in mind, towards the end of last week I presented you with some food for thought. We are in the habit of thinking of the coming Anti-Christ (Anti-King) as a typical gentile; likely a white-skinned European-type who is either very secular or so religiously tolerant as to adhere to no discernable faith whatsoever. But why would any modern Jew who is still waiting for their Jewish Messiah to come, even remotely be enticed into looking to a gentile as that Messiah? Conversely, why would a major portion of Judeo-Christian society accept an avowed atheist or agnostic as the possible Savior of the world or even as God Himself? Neither of those cases

seems at all likely.

On a physical level King Saul had Hebrew blood, and held himself up as a member of God's Kingdom people, even though from a spiritual level God had abandoned him. The Israelites were generally none the wiser (except perhaps for a handful of Saul's closest advisors). In fact, as of this point in 1st Samuel, David was in the dark as to Saul's spiritual position before God as well. As far as he knew Saul was still the legitimate king. There is no indication that David had any clue that he had already been consecrated as Israel's next king (David didn't know what the anointing by Samuel was really all about).

Therefore, using this as a pattern for the present and future, it is my speculation that the coming Anti-Christ must somehow appear to be sufficiently both Hebrew and Christian in order for him to fool the world, and to set off the series of prophesied events. He will be very much like King Saul was; what you see is NOT what you're getting. So it's all the more important that we carefully pay attention to the various evolving aspects of Saul's and David's relationship, as in many respects they will be repeated and possibly be an early indicator of who this coming Anti-Christ is. We (as readers looking back upon these ancient historical events in the book of Samuel) are given insights by the narrator that no one but Samuel had knowledge of at this point. Most of the Hebrew people didn't know that God had abandoned Saul, chosen David, used Goliath as an ultimately doomed symbol of paganism and indomitability, and was going to elevate David and frustrate Saul in the process. They didn't know that this was all about deliverance and redemption. The chief characteristic of God's providential involvement in human history is that it goes undetectable as events occur. Saul and David are participants in events far bigger than themselves; and like Job they have no inkling of the pivotal roles they are playing in an invisible cosmic spiritual confrontation. They are merely living their lives day-by-day and attending to matters at hand in ways that seem practical and pragmatic to their minds.

Let's read and discuss that last few verses of 1st Samuel chapter 17.

RE-READ 1ST SAMUEL 17: 54 – end

Verse 54 speaks of David taking Goliath's severed head to Jerusalem. There are a few things to understand here. First is that while the stone that flew at lightening speed from David's sling struck a fatal blow to Goliath, it did not immediately kill him. Goliath was indeed mortally wounded as he lay there on the ground, face down before David but he wasn't yet dead. Verse 51 explains that because David didn't carry a sword, he picked up Goliath's and beheaded him with his own sword; it was only then that Goliath was finally killed.

Second, why would David take Goliath's head to Jerusalem? There is much debate on this. Some scholars say that this is immediately a problem in that Jerusalem was not in existence in this time and so it can only be that some extraneous verses were added at a much later date; and that although there was a walled city there occupied by the Jebusites, that it certainly was not called Jerusalem but rather Jebus (thus the name of the inhabitants, the Jebus-ites). And what would possibly be the purpose, no matter who ruled that city or what name it went by, in taking Goliath's head there?

I can't give you a definitive answer to these questions but I will give you some opinions held by respected scholars. First, there is more and more evidence that while Jebus was indeed a walled city inhabited by some Canaanites who were referred to as Jebusites, that immediately outside the walls (as a kind of suburb) was also a place called Jerusalem. And that David went there (to that Hebrew suburb) with the head to show the residents that Goliath had been defeated (why that was important we don't know). Further that the name of the suburb called Jerusalem eventually got transferred to walled city of Jebus after David captured it for his capital.

A second view is that Jebus was at that time a city of mixed nationalities: some Israelites and some Canaanites living side-by-side. And that the Canaanites tended to refer to the city by its older Canaanite name, Jebus, while the Israelites tended to refer to it with a newer Hebrew name Yerushalayim.

Third is that the use of the name Jerusalem is an anachronism. In other words, as is rather common in the Bible and in most any history book, the most modern name is used to describe an ancient place that originally went by another name. The old name had become so out of use and forgotten, that to use it meant that the listeners (or readers) would have no idea what place was being referred to. It was also common that over the centuries languages would change, or that a city occupied by one people would be taken over by another people who used a different language. So either the place name would be roughly phoneticized in the new language to sound like the old, or an entire new name was assigned by the new residents in their new language. So the new name was used even if when the story took place it went by an entirely different name.

While the issue of David bringing Goliath's head to Jerusalem is interesting (but hardly earth shattering), now comes the confusing matter of the conversation between Saul, Abner, and David. The conversation takes place immediately following David's slaying of Goliath. And the confusing issue is that (at least at first glance) Saul doesn't seem to recognize David. Since David was given the honored title of armor-bearer who has been acting as Saul's official court musician, how can it be that Saul is oblivious to David's identity? Since the King apparently doesn't recognize the victorious shepherd boy, Saul asks his top general about him (and Abner says he knows exactly zero about this lad). So finally the King summons David and asks, "Whose son are you?"

The usual take on this is that we have at least two different (and somewhat conflicting) stories combined here and we wind up with a corrupted and illogical narrative. Or that someone added this conversation at a much later date and they weren't clever enough to notice that what they added contradicted what was said earlier. Another rather standard opinion is that King Saul was becoming more and more mentally disabled, and so he couldn't remember who David was even though he had him in the palace playing the lyre on a regular basis.

To me, this is a tempest in a teapot. It's a case of not seeing the forest because of the trees. Here's the key: Saul doesn't ask David who HE is. Rather he asks who David's FATHER is (whose SON are you?) This matter of who David's father is connects perfectly to this story when we look back to verse 25 where it says this:

CJB 1 Samuel 17:25 *The soldiers from Israel said [to each other], "You saw that man who just came up? He has come to challenge Israel. To whoever kills him, the king will give a rich reward; he'll also give him his daughter and exempt his father's family from all service and taxes in Israel."*

The promised prize to the Champion of Israel who confronted and killed Goliath was: 1) a rich reward (money), 2) one of the King's daughters in marriage (thereby officially making the Champion part of the ruling family), and 3) that the Champion's FATHER's family would be exempt from taxes and service to Israel.

The confusing conversation was about Saul addressing the 3rd part of the offer. In order to reward David's family he obviously had to know who David's father was. Recall that it was not Saul who found David to be his court musician; it was one of his court advisors. They merely brought David's name to the King; the King agreed and summoned him. Indeed in chapter 16:19 we have Saul sending to Jesse for his shepherd son. But that in no way means that Saul personally knew of Jesse or even personally sent for him. Saul would have had one of his royal cabinet handle such a message, merely putting his stamp of authority upon the messenger. It's not unlike someone saying that they got an invitation from our President to attend a state function. It is a figure of speech. There is no way that our President personally did anymore than to delegate the task of compiling a list and then contacting the invitees; the office person would attend to the entire function, in the name and authority of the President.

As his military general, Abner dealt with soldiers, not musicians. He was not part of the group who handled the issue of summoning David to come and play music for the King; so Abner spoke truthfully that he had no knowledge about the family of this giant killer. Nowhere in these passages is David asked his name; but three times the question is asked: "whose son are you?" And indeed David doesn't answer with his own name, but rather with his father's name, because that is the proper response to Saul's question.

Further in the next chapter we're going to see Saul deal with the 2nd part of the promised prize for the killer of Goliath: one of the King's daughters is to be given as the victor's wife. So this really isn't so challenging after all is it?

Let's move on to chapter 18.

READ 1ST SAMUEL CHAPTER 18 all

Please notice that the chapter markers are poorly chosen and thus give the timing of these events a wrong sense to them (that is, it's as though some time passed since the end of chapter 17 and beginning of chapter 18). It would have been more accurate and appropriate to have chapter 18 begin at what is currently chapter 17 verse 55, because the first words of the current chapter 18 refer directly to the conversation with David, Saul and Abner about the identity of David's father. So chapter 18 (as currently constituted) begins by saying, "By the time David had finished speaking to Sha'ul (about who his father is)"; this was merely the ending of the aforementioned conversation. So no time has passed and the meeting immediately following Goliath's defeat is ongoing.

Y'honatan (Saul's eldest son) found himself awestruck by David's character and abilities and therefore greatly desired to be his closest friend. In verse 1 it says that Jonathan "loved" David as he loved himself. In fact we'll find a number of occasions whereby we're informed that Jonathan "loved David as he loved himself". I said this last week but it bears repeating; some modern liberal scholars and pastors have regularly taken this to indicate a homosexual love affair between David and Jonathan. This is ridiculous on its face and political correctness at its worst. First of all homosexuality is dealt with over and over in both the Old and New Testaments and it is condemned on the highest level by the Father. Second, the use of the term "love" (**ahab**) here carries a sort of political or even mystical context to it; or even better it denotes a sense of partisanship or dedication or loyalty. It has nothing to do with erotic affections. Notice that the verse even explains that the KIND of love that Jonathan had for David was the same kind that Jonathan had for himself (the proper healthy kind that we're all supposed to exhibit). Not even in the twisted sexual perversions of today do we think in terms of a person having an erotic sexual affection for one's own self!

Rather this is a fundamental reference to a God principle that we're all familiar with: love your neighbor as yourself. And the meaning of this core Biblical principle is certainly NOT that the Lord instructs His people to go have sexually intimate relations with our neighbors. Rather this is a love of acceptance and devotion and doing. The first place we see this commandment concerning love is in the Torah in the book of Leviticus (and then it is repeated 7 more times in the Bible).

^{CJB} **Leviticus 19:18 *Don't take vengeance on or bear a grudge against any of your people; rather, love your neighbor as yourself; I am ADONAI.***

Notice something key: the context of this verse in Leviticus is about actions that we take. It says that rather than take the action of vengeance against people (because of grudge), take actions of goodness for those you know just as you automatically take actions of goodness on your own behalf. This isn't about emotions or how one feels about people (although the two are obviously connected).

The CJB (which employs what is called a dynamic translation) doesn't handle this first verse very well and so the impact of it is muffled. What it says in the Hebrew is that Jonathan's **nephesh** became knitted together with David's **nephesh** so that Jonathan loved David as his own **nephesh**. Or, Jonathan's soul became so knitted and united with David's soul that Jonathan loved David as he loved his own soul.

This is speaking of a mysterious connection and unity on a spiritual level. It is a meeting of the mind and heart based on a commonly held set of holy principles and beliefs and it all rests on trusting God. It has NOTHING to do with a mere meeting or connection of the flesh. It is an early example of exactly the type of spiritual (soul-ish) unification the members of God's Church are to have in concert with Christ. It is a similar kind of inexplicable unity that the Church Doctrine of the Trinity of God demonstrates; it is called **echad** (one-ness) in the Torah and Tanach. The Body of Messiah is commanded to emulate the unity and one-ness that is the Godhead. Thus even as God manifests His unity in at least 3 entities so the Church is also one unity but manifests itself in many entities (the millions of Believers).

^{CJB} **Ephesians 4:1** *Therefore I, the prisoner united with the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called.² Always be humble, gentle and patient, bearing with one another in love,³ and making every effort to preserve the unity the Spirit gives through the binding power of shalom.⁴ There is one body and one Spirit, just as when you were called you were called to one hope.⁵ And there is one Lord, one trust, one immersion,⁶ and one God, the Father of all, who rules over all, works through all and is in all.*

This is the nature of the love that Believers are to have for one another. It is the kind of bond of love that David and Jonathan formed. It is a kind that is not possible without God as the glue that both initially binds it together and keeps it together (Yes, all this in but the first verse of this chapter).

In verse 2 a comparison and contrast is established in the way that Jonathan behaves toward David versus the way Saul behaves toward David. And of course this behavior is a reflection of the condition of the souls of each party. We're told that King Saul on that day (the same day that David killed Goliath), TOOK David into his service and wouldn't let him return home to his family. On the other hand, Jonathan made a covenant (of friendship) with David and sealed it by giving to David his cloak, armor, and weapons. Saul took, Jonathan gave. And in the next several verses were going to see a list of things that Saul "took".

As much as has taken place here in the spiritual sphere, what is happening simultaneously in the earthly sphere is but what Samuel told Israel would happen once the administration of Judges was prematurely replaced with an administration of Kings.

Turn your bibles back a few pages to 1st Samuel chapter 8.

READ 1ST SAMUEL 8:10 – 18

The Lord warned the leaders of Israel through Samuel that this king that THEY chose would be a taker. God's Judges weren't takers; they were deliverers. So what was predicted is now happening, and it is happening to David who is practically legally kidnapped from his family to serve King Saul. There was no ruckus over it, because all understood that in the world this is the way of kings and kingdoms and one has no choice in the matter.

Let me point out something else. In verse 3 it is said that the REASON that Y'honatan made this covenant with David is because he loved him. This was not a contract for services rendered. No self-serving political alliance was formed and maintained. There was no financial gain or business venture contemplated. It was not a mutual protection treaty. All of these were indeed the typical reasons for forming a covenant in that era. But this one was strictly out of love.

Jonathan was of the royal family and so he was the one that had to offer it. Lowly David, a commoner, could NOT offer a covenant to the King's family. This is yet another demonstration of the nature of the several covenants that God made with men. The Created could not come to the Creator with an offer of a covenant. Man could not come to God with the offer of a

covenant; God had to come to man. Whether it was the Covenant with Noah not to destroy the world by flood again, or the Covenant with Abraham to establish a set-apart people and give them an inheritance of divine blessing, land and kingdom that would someday benefit the whole world, or the Covenant with Moses to give the redeemed people of Israel a manual for living and a means to maintain harmony with God, the reason for the covenant was always God's love for lesser beings. God gained nothing, and often gave something up.....like His Son.

Jonathan gained nothing by making this covenant with David. It was for the sake of a spiritual kind of love that he sought the bond. Jonathan would eventually even give up his right to succeed Saul.

It is said that the New Covenant in Christ's blood is a covenant of love; true enough. But the reality is that ALL of the ancient covenants between God and mankind, between God and Israel, were covenants of love. And here we have Jonathan covenanting with David in exactly that same mold. And we have the royalty giving his covering and his protection to the lesser mortal as a free gift, rather than when in earthly terms one would expect the lesser being to give a gift to the higher being for offering such a covenant.

We'll resume this study when next we meet.