

### I Samuel

#### Lesson 32 - Chapter 19

As we began 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel chapter 19 last week, King Saul openly announced what was at one time only a secretive dark desire that had grown to become an obsession: to kill David. He told his royal court, including his son Jonathan, that if any of them had the opportunity they needed to take it and dispose of David.

We only read the 1<sup>st</sup> 10 verses of the chapter so let's review by reading the chapter in its entirety.

#### **READ 1<sup>ST</sup> SAMUEL CHAPTER 19 all**

Saul has made David public enemy #1 of his kingdom, but Jonathan is perplexed at how his father could come to such a conclusion about Jonathan's dearest friend when the evidence seemed to make David a selfless hero of Israel rather than the conniving rebel the king said he was.

Sha'ul's dark moods and outbursts were now infamous if not to the public at large certainly to the king's court and to his family. Yet as we move through chapter 19 and on into 20 Jonathan on the one hand acknowledges his father's rash behavior and pronouncements but on the other sees them more as impulsive and fleeting and not reflective of his true nature and so sees no danger for David.

Although I was so fortunate to have been born into a Christian home with gentle, caring, loving and stable parents I am also deeply aware of the sadly large segment of society who have been subjected to a very different reality. I've personally known, counseled, and at times simply witnessed the destruction of children at the hand of alcoholic or drug addicted parents. A home that my wife and I owned in Southern California was used for many years as a safe haven and rehabilitation center for runaway and abused teenage girls. And common to all of them were that these battered children tended to make excuses for their parents' horrendous abusive behavior. Most of them, in time, voluntarily (and against the advice of the caregivers) returned to the same environment convinced that things would be different.

Somehow it is just beyond our human nature to accept that the people who gave us life would be bad or depraved people who fully intended to do what they did (and would do it again given the opportunity). So Jonathan was just like all of us; he simply could not bring himself to accept his father's occasional words about killing David as more than moments of frustration or of bouncing emotions (brought about probably by the unrelenting pressure of being the king) that would eventually give way to the decent and rational man Jonathan thought his father to be.

Thus as a good son, Jonathan tries to soothe Saul's concerns about David by pointing out what a loyal, courageous, upright servant to the king he had been. Also pointing out that from a

legal and spiritual standpoint since David was innocent of any discernable wrongdoing that if Saul had David killed, he (and the kingdom) would suffer from bloodguilt. And bloodguilt is a grievous sin for which there is no atonement under the Levitical Law system of the Torah.

But Saul's nature has so deteriorated without the Lord's presence upon him that coupled with his homicidal intentions is paranoia, suspicion and distrust even towards his own family. So at the conclusion of Jonathan's plea for Saul to reconsider his order to assassinate David, the king seems to relent and so swears an oath never to kill him. Jonathan takes it fully to heart and believes the matter is resolved. But the king only vowed because he suspected that Jonathan sided with David; the vow was only to deceive his son in hopes that the false message of peace would be communicated to David and thus he would let his guard down.

Jonathan cheerfully reports to his friend that all is well and that he should come back (unafraid) to the palace and resume his duties as the king's musician and best field commander. David reluctantly complies.

In verse 8 we see that again war broke out with the ever present Philistines who desired to keep their land trade routes open (without interference) that connected their valuable seaports on the Mediterranean to their customers to the east and north. These routes of course wound through Israel and all kings and tribal leaders wanted a piece of the action (as did Saul) as a price for the Philistine merchants venturing through their territory. Thus in the Middle East there was a constant tug-of-war over territorial control, and usually it was not so much expand a nation's boundaries as it was to merely lord over the people to create economic advantage for the conqueror. Certainly kings arose that had empire building in mind (the Babylonians, Assyrians, and Persians for example), but that was not the intent of the Philistines so far as we know.

The subject of the war is brought up only to highlight that David once again defeated the enemy Philistines that his predecessors had so little luck in putting down. One would think that Saul would be thrilled that he had a military commander that seemed never to lose. But for this king it only served to heighten his paranoia and rekindle his certainty that David was a threat to the throne that had to be neutralized. So again Saul hurls his javelin (that had essentially become his scepter and symbol of his power) at David but David was able to dodge it and escape.

From here forward David becomes a fugitive. As long as Saul is alive and on the throne David's life will be one of living on the run. David has married Michal, Saul's younger daughter. After the spear incident and David turns up missing Saul is certain that David will return home to his young wife for sanctuary and so the king sends what most Bibles will translate in verse 11 as "messengers" to lie in wait for him. The word in Hebrew is a familiar one for us, **malach**. **Malach** does indeed mean messenger, but it also often translated as "angel". In fact it is the only Hebrew word used for angel. So we see that **malach** has very different meanings depending on the context. Perhaps when translating **malach** into modern 21<sup>st</sup> century English, a better general word to use is "representative". In other words, in our day a messenger is more like a low-level courier; someone who has no authority and no power, they merely deliver a message as is. But a representative is an agent for whomever

they serve. They can act (within limitations) on behalf of the one who sent them. Biblical *malachim* of every type usually seem to have some degree of power and authority. Heavenly angels are much more than couriers of God's Word; they also carry out God's will and can even bring forth His wrath.

So the so-called "messengers" that Saul sent were undoubtedly soldiers or royal body guards performing a personal task on behalf of the king, and their assignment was to kill David. David arrives home but his wife is aware that the assassins are waiting to make their move. How does she know about this? She is after all the king's daughter and while her father no doubt kept this plot from her, she still had eyes and ears loyal to her inside the palace. It's never been any different; no matter how hard the leadership tries to maintain secrecy, husbands reveal things to wives and girlfriends, servants overhear things they shouldn't and gossip, and soldiers stand around campfires and share scuttlebutt.

We don't know with certainty where David and Michal were living, but it was for sure a walled city. There's a good chance their home was still in Gibeah, Sha'ul's hometown. King Saul specifically instructs his men to wait overnight and then kill him as he emerges from his home in the morning. Reminiscent of Rahab and her helping the Israelite spies escape from Jericho, David and Michal's house must also have been built into the city wall (not an unusual thing for that era). After dark Michal lowers David down from their window, to what can only have been outside the city wall, and he flees undetected.

Knowing that when David didn't come out in the morning the assassins would come into their home and kidnap him from his bed, Michal sought to buy time by making it appear that David was still in bed, asleep. Let's be clear; we don't have two separate incidents, here, as some scholars claim. That is some will say that in verses 11-13 Saul sent a group of men to get David, and then (apparently having been unsuccessful) verses 14 -16 record a second attempt. Rather we see this that this is a literary style among the so-called chroniclers whereby they will give a broad explanation of some event and then in a few verses back-up a bit to add some detail. These chroniclers are called so because generally speaking they weren't the namesake of the book or in any way involved in the historical events that are being recorded and retold in our Bibles. Rather they have taken scattered information and traditions about an event or time period, organized them, editorialized to some unknown degree (to aid in understanding for the listeners and readers who are far removed from the time it all occurred) and put it down in some kind of coherent order for the purpose of retelling. The books of Samuel and Kings were written by chroniclers.

Verse 16 explains that when the king's representatives burst into David's home, there in the bed was the Teraphim with some goat's hair laid on top of its head (obviously made to look like David was there because he was ill). It's kind of hard not to laugh when one mentally pictures young Michal frantically figuring a way to give her beloved husband a little more time for his getaway and determines that she will use this strange wooden cult object, covered up with a blanket, adorned with a toupee' of course goat's hair as a suitable ruse. And this of course only if the bad guys don't go away once she informs them that her husband's not feeling well at the moment, and couldn't them come back for him later.

Most Bibles will translate what was found in the bed as the “household idol” and that is correct. The Hebrew is Teraphim and while the term is a general one that can indicate most any idol, it is also true that as the Biblical era rolled on it came to more specifically refer to the standard and widespread use of household idols formed into human shapes as opposed to idols one might find in official use at a temple to a god. What is interesting is that this one was apparently near human adult size! But what is concerning is that David had one in his own home.

In my research I came across all sorts of speculations about this Teraphim in David's house, and one of the most popular was that it MUST have belonged to Michal, and David merely allowed it (being newlyweds and all). Perhaps. But there is no evidence of that at all, just speculation. Nonetheless, it is certainly a wrong thing and indefensible for David to have such an abomination in his own house. It violates the very heart of Torah. David, God's anointed king, clearly possesses a life-sized idol. This will not be the last of many flaws in his character and sins that he commits that will be exposed in the coming chapters.

Saul brings his daughter in for questioning and demands to know why SHE would deceive HIM? Wow. Talk about the pot calling the kettle black. Or maybe the apple doesn't fall to far from the tree? But again Saul doesn't mince words and refers to Michal's husband David as Saul's enemy (which of course explains Michal's response when she blatantly lies and tells her enraged father that David made her do it under threat of death). One can only imagine King Sha'ul's hatred intensify as his own children become more and more embroiled in this conflict between he and David.

And lest we get so involved in this riveting story that we forget that it establishes a pattern for the future conflict between God's Messianic King and the Anti-King/Anti-Messiah who is battling God for the throne, what an interesting similarity we notice as those who Saul feels ought to be loyal only to him find his eternal enemy more attractive. And Saul's reaction (as the Anti-King) is to progressively act out more irrationally and violently not only against the God-anointed King, but against those who choose by their own free will to put their trust and faith in him. Thus we are to expect that as history progresses to its well-defined end (as prophesized in Revelation), we will find Satan going to greater and greater length to persecute those who belong to Messiah. And this because the Evil One is getting more and more desperate as his plans unravel and his time for destruction gets very near. Look around you today, and see if that isn't exactly what is happening on an unprecedented worldwide scale.

Verse 18 explains that upon Michal lowering David from the widow of their home in the city wall, David fled to Samuel in Ramah. Starting about now we find David creating prayers and petitions to the Lord that are so poignant and deep that they will eventually be recorded and gathered together as Psalms. In fact, one Psalm is dedicated to this particular event that we are reading about; Psalm 59. Turn you Bibles there now, please.

### **READ PSALM 59 all**

What makes the Psalms beloved by Jew and Christian is that they are so humanly honest and display such a transparency. In the vernacular of my surfing youth, when it's David who is

speaking them he just lets it all hang out. But many of the Psalms also display a mysterious quality about them that seems to interweave the present with the future. Many Bible scholars are quite uncomfortable with this concept and so attempt to explain it away in a number of methods by saying that those particular Psalms were ham-handedly edited at a later date to achieve their mysterious quality, or that we today completely misunderstand their purpose, or that what we have in our modern Bibles is corrupted and inaccurate. Particularly beginning in the 1700's, coinciding with the European Enlightenment period, many of the Church's scholars adopted and adapted the philosophies of the Enlightenment to the church and so decided that there were no such things as miracles and thus we had to find our Scriptural truth in the realm of the natural. Or that whatever seemed mysterious simply indicated textual error or ancient superstition that had no legitimate place in modern rational religion. That mindset is really the basis of most modern Christian scholarship that we are familiar with today, and as you can imagine I reject many of the conclusions produced from that kind of mindset.

So the way that I prefer to present this mystery of some of the Psalms is that what was occurring when they were written was the shadow, but with the eventual fuller manifestation yet to come in some unknown time in the future. What was actually occurring (and so what was meant) at the time of the creation of these many petitions to God was quite real and tangible, and yet it somehow also connected to a future time in redemption history that the writer may not have even been conscious of or necessarily intended. I have struggled for years to find the words to understand, illustrate and communicate this obvious but perplexing Bible mystery and some time ago I settled on calling it the Reality of Duality because there is dual quality of these particular Psalms that speaks of the now and the later, simultaneously. They also speak of the physical and the spiritual operating simultaneously, side by side, but unseen and unknown to the human author. Then again, that is the very nature and outcome of God-established patterns, isn't it?

I only want to briefly examine a couple of parts of this Psalm 59: verse 6, 9, and 14. The first few verses find David in a very anxious state, pouring out his fears and asking for deliverance from the Father. Saul has hired men to kill David and David is stating his case, boldly pleading his innocence, and asking the Lord to institute His justice because the kind of "justice" that Saul is bringing upon David is unfair and defies the Torah.

The first 5 verses (in light of what we have just read in 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 19:11-17) are pretty straightforward but then we hit that very odd 6<sup>th</sup> verse.

***CJB Psalm 59:6 You, ADONAI Elohei-Tzva'ot, God of Isra'el, arouse yourself to punish all the nations; spare none of those wicked traitors. (Selah)***

Arise to punish all the nations? What in the world does that have to do with those bloodthirsty assassins sent by Saul to kill David? How are "nations" involved in this matter?

Later in verse 9, after David continues to characterize these men who are lying in wait for him as evil dogs who just go around snarling, we get:

***CJB Psalm 59:9 But you, ADONAI, laugh at them, you mock all the nations.***

Mock all the nations? What do the gentile nations have to do with the King of Israel, Sha'ul, sending some his loyal men to kill David?

Starting in verse 10 David's fears begin to subside, and his frenzy turns to resolute anger. Hope emerges since God is in charge and rules over everything, everyone, and every situation. Thus he determines that if it is God's will to rescue him (as he is asking) then God will put an end to his enemies and adds:

***CJB Psalm 59:14 Finish them off in wrath, finish them off, put an end to them, and let them know to the ends of the earth that God is Ruler in Ya'akov. (Selah)***

Let them know "to the ends of the earth" that God is ruler in Jacob (meaning Israel)? This is not an international incident; this is an internal Israeli matter. This is all about the current Israelite king trying to dispose of an Israelite rival.

The point is that these 3 verses don't seem to fit very well into the context of David's current circumstances. But they certainly do fit into a future time when Yeshua and all of His disciples are being persecuted not only by the heathen nations, but the Hebrew Believers are being persecuted even by their brother Hebrews who do not trust in Messiah Yeshua for salvation. And of course it is the Anti-King/Anti-Christ's ruler, Satan, who is ordering his demons and all those humans who heed his voice to go out and pursue and kill those who are loyal to Christ and the God of Israel.

***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.***

***CJB John 16:1 "I have told you these things so that you won't be caught by surprise.<sup>2</sup> They will ban you from the synagogue; in fact, the time will come when anyone who kills you will think he is serving God!<sup>3</sup> They will do these things because they have understood neither the Father nor me.<sup>4</sup> But I have told you this, so that when the time comes for it to happen, you will remember that I told you.***

Let's get back to 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 19.

David fled to Ramah where Samuel lived and tells him what's happened. It doesn't take long before Sha'ul finds out where David is hiding. We are told that David and Samuel went to stay in **Naioth**. **Naioth** translates more or less literally to "at the camps". So some Bible translations will say the pair went from Ramah to a camp where a sect of prophets lived. But it appears that while **Naioth** translates to "at the camps", in reality it is a proper name of a place. The CJB assumes that the meaning is that there was a sort of dormitory for Samuel's flock of prophets located there. In any case there was some kind of settlement there and that is where they were reported to Saul as being found. It makes sense that they would not stay in Ramah since it's probably only a couple of hours walk from Gibeah, Saul's hometown.

In verse 20 Saul dispatches some more of his henchmen to capture David, but a really strange

thing happens. They arrived in **Naioth** when some of these prophets were prophesying and the soldiers too were overcome and started prophesying and thus couldn't fulfill their duty. When Sha'ul heard about it, he sent another contingent of men to capture David and exactly the same thing happened to them. He did this a third time with identical results. Frustrated, Saul decided he'd have to go there himself.

On the road to **Naioth**, suddenly the Spirit of God overcame Sha'ul and he not only started prophesying but he also stripped off his clothes in Samuel's presence and lay there all day and night. Now to a modern Christian that is just plain odd.

Here's what we can know about this incident: in our study of the Torah we learned something interesting about both holiness and uncleanness: they are contagious. Holy Temple instruments and furnishings could infect a common object or person with holiness if they came into contact (and so this contact between the holy and the common was carefully guarded against). An unclean Hebrew could touch a clean Hebrew and transmit uncleanness to him. A person with **Tzara'at** could transmit his defilement to a chair, and that chair could then infect the next person who sits in it. But even though these all have spiritual consequences, they are all physical effects that result from physical contact. These things all occur in the physical sphere. In our principle of the Reality of Duality, however, there is a higher and better spiritual counterpart to this and that is what we are witnessing here in the last few verses of chapter 19.

What prophesying means in the context of these final verses is that the prophets of **Naioth** were speaking the Word of God. Now I don't necessarily mean that they were quoting what we would call Scripture. Rather they were speaking the holy truth; a truth that God revealed to them and I can only conclude that they were speaking the truth that David was God's anointed king and Saul was not and when Saul's soldiers encountered this Word of Truth it was so powerful that it infected them (so to speak) with its truth and they understood that they couldn't possibly carry out what they came to do. No physical object or human being touched these men so that holiness or righteousness would be transmitted into their evil hearts; it was accomplished their hearing the spoken Word of God.

We are witnessing the spiritual counterpart to the physical infection of holiness that comes from object to object or human to human or human to object contact. Only of course the spiritual is even more awesome in its effect than the physical and it occurs in the spiritual sphere. The truth contained in God's Word is so powerful that it can change evil men's hearts and minds in an instant. Now does that seem so odd to you when put that way? Of course not. Every Believer who has ever lived has experienced this exact thing whether we thought of it that way or not. It's a bedrock principle of the salvation experience. The effect of God's Word upon these men resulted in what was happening here. And it even overcame Sha'ul such that he could not continue in his own plot that day.

Now the part about Saul taking off his clothes is interesting and profound because it is directly related to the incident that takes place a few years later when David removed his royal clothes, donned a linen ephod (a priestly garment) and danced before the Ark of the Covenant. Here's what we need to understand: Kings always wore royal attire that set them apart as royal. The royal clothing may have been something as simple as a special pattern or fringe sewn into the

hem of a garment or as complex as a magnificent robe but it was always a symbol of king's supreme authority. The Word of God's truth caused Saul to remove his royal garments and lay them down before Samuel and before God. The force of God's Word virtually compelled him to take off of his body what was not legitimately his to wear: the symbols of kingly authority over God's people and God's Kingdom of Israel.

David, years later, did something quite similar on the one hand, but quite different on the other. Upon the Ark of the Covenant arriving to where David was located, he voluntarily and with joy took off his royal garments because the TRUE king of Israel had just arrived: Yehoveh. David didn't remove his clothes in some kind of pagan ritual nor was he being rash or an exhibitionist. He did not dance naked as is often erroneously stated (and the Scriptures confirm he was not naked). Rather he humbly set aside his kingly garments for those of a priest's ephod because a priest is first and foremost a servant: God's earthly servant. David's spiritual instincts told him that he couldn't possibly hold himself up as royalty in the presence of the ultimate king.

What's the difference between what Sha'ul did and what David did? All the difference in the world. It's the difference between being exposed for being a fraud and divinely subjected to shame versus a humble willingness to divest oneself of authority and offer it up to the divine. Saul's kingly robes were removed because of shame. David removed his as an act of humility and exchanged them for those of a priest/servant.

And so the question this poses for us all is: when will we voluntarily take off our robes of authority over our lives, placing them at the feet of the Lord, and exchange them for garments of a servant? Or will we continue to hold on tight to our robes of authority and in time be subjected to shame as they are ripped away from us at the judgment that is to come for all men? For all humankind will ultimately lay down our robes before God, just as both the anointed King and the Anti-King did. One way was meant for salvation, the other for destruction. Which way will you choose?

We'll begin chapter 20 next time.