

The Backslider and His Recovery

Texts: Psalm 1; I Samuel 27:1

This is a far departure for the man described by God as "...a man after mine own heart..." (Acts 13:22b). David is not the brave young lad standing alone in the Valley of Elah facing the giant Goliath; this is a man now consumed for his own preservation. C. I. Scofield entitles this chapter, "David's lapse of faith. He goes to Philistia."

I. DAVID IS DECEIVED BY HIS OWN HEART.

I Samuel 27:1, 2. Already God has delivered David twice out the ruthless hand of Saul who has every intention on murdering David. David says to King Saul in I Samuel 24:14, "After whom is the king of Israel come out? after whom dost thou pursue? after a dead dog, after a flea." I Samuel 26:20: "Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth before the face of the LORD: for the king of Israel is come out to seek a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains."

I Samuel 27:1a: "And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul..." Of all people, David should have known this was not true. Three years earlier I Samuel 16:1 records, "And the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons." The story continues in verse 13: "Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah." David was aware of his special anointing to be the once and future king of Israel. The Bible informs us the "the Spirit of the LORD came upon David." How could David not know that he was operating in a very special dispensation, having received the anointing of the Third Person of the Holy Trinity? David should have been walking in faith, knowing that he was destined by God to sit upon the throne of Israel. Even Jonathan, David's best friend and Saul himself knew that David would live to sit upon the throne. I Samuel 23:16, 17: "And Jonathan Saul's son arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God. And he said unto him, Fear not: for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and that also Saul my father knoweth."

Why did David embrace the lie? The answer is found in Jeremiah 17:9: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"

So when faith is put aside, we rely on our own wits, powered by man's faulty wisdom. Observe David's reasoning in I Samuel 27:1b: "...there is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines...."

When faith is put aside, we forget to count our blessings and be content with the Lord's provision. I Samuel 27:2a: "And David arose, and he passed over with the six hundred men that were with him unto Achish...." David had six

hundred loyal men, more than enough to give the future king cover and protection.

II. DAVID IS LIVING IN FALSE PEACE.

I Samuel 27:3-7. David is now embedded with the enemy. It is true, when Saul was told David was in Gath, he temporarily gave up his hunt, but he was in no way pacified. Peace does not always confirm the will of God for our lives. Case in point is found in Jonah 1:5, 6: "Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them. But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep. So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not." Jonah was peacefully asleep in the midst of the storm, but totally out of the will of God. The wind obeyed God. The sea obeyed God. The lots the sailors cast obeyed God. The great fish obeyed God. The gourd obeyed God. Even the worm obeyed God. And ultimately even the people of Nineveh obeyed God. The only one not obeying God was Jonah. We discover God's will by three confirmations:

- A. Peace in prayer. I John 5:14, 15.
- B. A word from the Word. Psalm 119:105.
- C. An open door of opportunity. Revelation 3:8.

III. DAVID EMBRACES THE WAYS OF THE HEATHEN.

I Samuel 22:8-12. In Jeremiah 10:2, the LORD tells Israel, "...learn not the way of the heathen...." David leads a massacre against the Gershurites, the Gezerites and the Amelekites. Although these nomadic people were natural enemies to Israel, we do not see where God gave David an order to make this raid. King Achish asked David whom he raided and David answered, "...Against the south of Judah..." (I Samuel 2:10), deceiving Achish to believe it was against his fellow Jews. Furthermore, David made sure there were no survivors to tell the whole truth. Was David trying to help Israel out as a double agent? The Bible doesn't say, nor lead us to believe so. We do see David trying to curry favor with Achish. David is not obeying the very words he wrote in Psalm 1:1, for he now is walking in the counsel of the ungodly, standing in the way of sinners and scorning the truth.

I would suggest that God gives us insight to the toxic environment David was now involved in these words, "Now Samuel was dead...." There was no prophetic voice to call David back to his senses. See I Thessalonians 5:20.

IV. DAVID IS REJECTED BY THE HEATHEN.

I Samuel 29. God informs Saul through the visit from Samuel in the illegal witch of Endor's fake attempt to communicate with the dead that turned into a final prophesy from the old prophet. It appears David is prepared to lead his men into battle with Achish against Israel. Again, we do not know David's intentions, but we do know this, David was in the wrong place with the wrong people. The princes of the Philistines would have none of it. So David was sent away with his

men. II Corinthians 6:17: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you."

V. DAVID RETURNS TO THE LORD.

I Samuel 30:1-7. When David and his warriors returned to Ziklag, the Amalekites had attempted revenge for David's raid by burning their town and kidnapping all their families. Even David's faithful men were ready to stone him! David seeks God in I Samuel 30:7: "And David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod. And Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David." David cries out for the ephod, the only true way for Old Testament Israel, under the law, to have the will of God confirmed. The Bible says that David "...enquired of the LORD..." (I Samuel 30:7, 8). It was six years since we find the phrase used, "...David enquired of the LORD..." (I Samuel 23:2, 4). That was six years earlier. So much happened in the six years David is out of communication with his LORD. David marries two more wives and he takes up residency under the dominion of the heathen. David wisely does what he should have been doing for six years, "...But David encouraged himself in the LORD his God" (I Samuel 30:6c).

VI. DAVID RECOVERS FROM BACKSLIDDING.

I Samuel 30:8, 18: "And David enquired at the LORD, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them? And he answered him, Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all. And David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away: and David rescued his two wives."

Please make note, David "...recovered all."

Some may be reading these words right now and you're ready to give up. Perhaps you think you've gone too far. You can recover! Our LORD will inflict His chastening hand, but provides a way back. Joel 2:25: "And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you."

-Pastor Pope-