

TALE

OF TWO HEARTS



MILES WYLIE ALBRIGHT

A TALE OF TWO HEARTS IS:

The story of the Heart of David and the Heart of Saul; the story of the love of God and the fear of man; the story of passion for the truth and obsession with outward appearance; the story of the devotion of Jesus and the hypocrisy of the Pharisee.

Tale of Two Hearts will open your eyes to First Samuel to such a degree that you will never see First Samuel or the other 65 books of The Bible the same way again!

In this perceptive study of two hearts, the author exhibits a keen insight into details that are easy to overlook in the lives of David and Saul. I believe he has done the Body of Christ an invaluable service; he has helped us understand more fully what it means to be a man after the Lord's own heart. Conversely, by way of contrast, he has also painted a clear picture of the heart of one who wants to be seen as that man, but is not willing to pay the price to be him. This book will change how you understand the conflict between David and Saul, and help you become even more fully a man (or woman) after God's own heart.

—Randal Cutter MDiv, New Dawn Community Church



Miles Wylie Albright is an extraordinary Bible teacher whose "A" gift is bringing the Son of God and the disciple's cross clearly into focus from the Old Testament. He also has an extremely deep prophetic gift that encompasses vision in particular for the destiny of southeastern U.S. He is an author, speaker, cattle rancher, intercessory musician, husband, father and grandfather. He also holds a Master of Science in biology.

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Tale of Two Hearts

*“The Lord does not look at the things man looks at,
Man looks at the outward appearance,
But the Lord looks at the heart.”*

First Samuel 16:7

Miles Wylie Albright

This book
NOT FOR SALE

As supplies last, this book will be given freely without charge to individuals who would like to read it. However, to actually live the Cross of Christ as discussed in this book will cost you everything.

This book can be obtained in three different formats:

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Table of Contents

Introduction	A Study of First Samuel chapters 13-26	5
Chapter 1	Saul at Gilgal - The Two Hearts: The “David” heart and the “Saul” heart (1 Samuel 12-13)	7
Chapter 2	The Son of Saul with the Heart of David – Jonathan’s very Davidic heart (1 Samuel 14)	18
Chapter 3	Return to Gilgal - Saul’s mistake (1 Samuel 15)	39
Chapter 4	A Davidic Heart vs. a Demonic Hold - The Saul heart revealed (1 Samuel 16)	50
Chapter 5	A Rockin’ Worship Service - The Heart of David revealed (1 Samuel 17)	57
Chapter 6	Two Spears and Two Daughters - Saul’s control and manipulation (1 Samuel 18)	71
Chapter 7	Deceiving and Being Deceived – Sometimes David’s have Saul hearts (1 Samuel 19)	81
Chapter 8	Only a Step from Death - David’s Friendship with Jonathan (1 Samuel 20)	90
Chapter 9	A Fake Demon and a Real God - David hits bottom with a Saul heart (1 Samuel 21)	98

Chapter 10	David, the Original “Comeback kid” - The Heart of David back again! (1 Samuel 22)	102
Chapter 11	Reading Signs – The David heart inquires of the LORD (1 Samuel 23)	111
Chapter 12	When God Shouts - David shows extreme mercy, faith and wisdom towards Saul (1 Samuel 24)	118
Chapter 13	Saul’s Perfect Prototype – Nabal, The perfect picture of a Saul heart (1 Samuel 25)	123
Chapter 14	Saul’s Waterjug – A final example Of the “David heart” (1 Samuel 26)	132

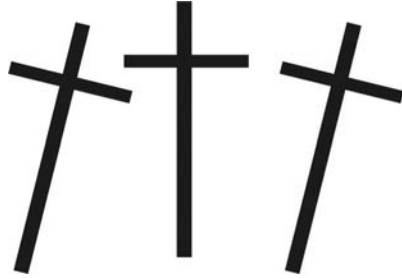
Introduction

This book is a study of the mid-section of First Samuel, chapters 13 through 26. I will be referring many times to the chapters that precede this section, but the core of my interest is these fourteen chapters. I believe God has given me a “writing block” at the end of chapter 26. I hope someday to be able to write beyond it, but this is all the “writing grace” I seem to have at this point.

There are a great many things that I will have to say in this book that will require a number of pages for me to prove to you. Some may seem “a little out there” at first. I beg your indulgence until I have time to develop what I am saying, but it is necessary to say these things before I prove them so that you can see where we are going as we are going there.

First Samuel is definitely my favorite Old Testament book, and teaching the Old Testament is my life. Insofar as my life will count for something, the pages of this book will be a large part of my contribution to the Kingdom. I hope and believe you will enjoy this book, the Word of God, and this particular aspect of the glory of God Himself.

Miles Wylie Albright
September 2018



The three crosses found on the cover of this book represent the Tale of the Two Hearts. The center cross is Jesus. The cross leaning into Jesus is the heart of David. The cross leaning away from Jesus is the heart of Saul.

It's really all about **Jesus**, the son of David.

Chapter 1

Saul at Gilgal

The Holy Spirit's chief theme in the books of Samuel is that there are two very different hearts: the "David" heart and the "Saul" heart.

No mortal man has ever been able to maintain a David heart attitude all the time, not even David. And not even Saul was always "Saul." The first "David heart" in First Samuel was not David; it was a broken, barren woman named Hannah, a truly "desperate housewife." The original Saul in First Samuel was not King Saul, the tallest man in the kingdom, but Eli, the High Priest of Israel, who was probably the fattest!

The Pharisees in the New Testament had Saul hearts. Saul was all about outward appearance, and, consequently, the fear of man ruled him. The hearts of the various Sauls of the Books of Samuel seethe with fear, pride, and self-focus.

Later on in this book, we will see that Israel's neighbors, the "uncircumcised Philistines," were completely given over to the Saul heart. As strange as it may seem, the sanctimonious Pharisees and "the uncircumcised Philistines" had a lot in common!

The Davidic heart is the heart "after God's own heart," as the prophet said. The heart of a David is absolutely, blissfully confident that God's love and affection are focused on him. Consequently, this heart is DEEPLY in love with Jehovah, and cares only for what He thinks. A David has no secret life apart

Tale of Two Hearts

from God. A David knows that everything is open and laid bare before the eyes of the Lord, and he/she wouldn't want it any other way. "Davids" also know instinctively that no power or strategy can succeed against the Lord. They believe that God's knowledge and power are as WIDE as the horizon. They have no fear that God will drop them, or that they will have some kind of accident that their God failed to see coming.

Therefore, trust in the Lord is both DEEP and WIDE for a David heart.

At one point in our study, we will see Saul with the grace to be a David. Yet, he will not choose to embrace his cross, be circumcised in heart, and remain a David. We will also see God permitting David to be overwhelmed and become a Saul. David will, nonetheless, rise from the ashes of his weakness and return to turning his heart toward God's heart; David will become really "David" again!

Several lenses must be properly lined up in a barrel in order for a telescope to allow us to see what is otherwise unseen. There are three special verses in this book, each of which has an overarching significance, that we must gradually line up. Through them we will eventually be able to focus in and see the big picture of what God is saying in this special book. These verses are:

"So it became a saying: 'Is Saul also among the prophets?'"
(1 Samuel 10:12)

"The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."
(1 Samuel 16:7)

"May my lord pay no attention to that wicked man Nabal. He is just like his name—his name is fool and folly goes with him."
(1 Samuel 25:25)

We will have several chapters under our belts before we get these verses lined up, but I need to mention their pre-eminent importance in order to prepare us for the time when they will begin to bring some things into focus.

Though we really begin our in-depth study in First Samuel 13, let's take a brief overview of the preceding chapters and the context they create.

In chapter eight of First Samuel, Israel insisted on having a king.

In chapter nine, Saul was selected by God to be that king.

In the tenth chapter, Saul was anointed king, though he was despised by some of the troublemakers in the kingdom.

The eleventh chapter of First Samuel opens with Saul, the anointed king, humbly pursuing the farming that had been his life before he was anointed. This was a very "Davidic" thing for Saul to do. Young David later quietly pursued shepherding even after he had been anointed king. True to the nature of the cross, neither man insisted on immediately being given the prerogatives of kingship. Then, (in chapter eleven), when Saul learned that Israel was being attacked at Jabesh Gilead, he dropped his plow, mustered an army, and led the previously hopeless Hebrews to a stunning victory! After the battle, Saul protected and defended those who had earlier despised his fledgling kingship. (Being "despised" by "Sauls" is the peculiar fate of "Davids" in both First and Second Samuel) Again, Saul was at this point very "Davidic."

In chapter twelve, Samuel delivered a word of correction and warning to Israel and their king. In God's kindness this word had been withheld till the young man Saul had a chance to gain some credibility as the leader of Israel. Samuel warned them that this particular kingship had been established out of a desire for good "outward appearance, the fear of man, and reliance on their own strength and mind" (my paraphrase). He told them

that they were thus out of step with the perfect will of God. Samuel dramatized the Lord's displeasure by calling for a display of thunder and rain in the midst of the harvest season, (a serious material loss). He told them that they "must...fear the Lord and serve Him faithfully with all [their] heart ...lest they and their king...be swept away." Thus, the Word of the Lord to Saul and company at this point was that they had started "Saulishly." The only way for Israel to rewind and get off their disastrous course was to be spiritually circumcised and receive a new, devoted heart.

Now, we are ready for First Samuel 13:1 –

“Saul was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned over Israel forty-two years. Saul chose three thousand men from Israel; two thousand were with him at Micmash and in the hill country of Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan at Gibeah in Benjamin. The rest of the men he sent back to their homes. Jonathan attacked the Philistine outpost at Geba, and the Philistines heard about it. Then Saul had the trumpet blown throughout the land and said, “Let the Hebrews hear!” So all Israel heard the news: “Saul has attacked the Philistine outpost, and now Israel has become a stench to the Philistines.” And the people were summoned to join Saul at Gilgal. The Philistines assembled to fight Israel, with three thousand chariots, six thousand charioteers, and soldiers as numerous as the sand on the seashore. They went up and camped at Micmash, east of Beth Aven.” (1 Samuel 13: 1-5)

It was prophetically significant that Israel and her king had been called to the Gilgal region. In the days of Joshua, Gilgal had been the point of entry for the nation of Israel into the Promised Land. God had miraculously parted the waters of the Jordan at flood stage to enable them to cross the Jordan and to make camp at Gilgal. This meant they were in Canaan with all routes of retreat cut off. Additionally, God commanded that there, in a strange land, and in the presence of an overwhelming host of enemies, all the men, both young and old, had to be circumcised in their flesh. This mass surgery

made them physically helpless before their enemies. They had to submit, in faith, to being put into a very impractical position. Their situation was such that if God did not come through, they were lost.

There's a special kind of test we see both Saul and David have to take. It involves facing a problem caused by the past sin of one's self or one's family. Part of the reason the Israelites, under Joshua, had to be circumcised at Gilgal was their parents' general lack of obedience in the wilderness. During their forty years of wandering, they had failed to practice circumcision. Circumcision is best performed when a baby is eight days old. When a guy is forty and in active service in the army, circumcision is a little hard on him, to put it mildly! It could make a fellow wish Dad and Mom had been a little more Orthodox when he was born, especially if he was expecting a fight to the death at any moment! Similarly, Saul at Gilgal was leading an army that the Prophet of God had just said was on "thin ice" because of their sin. This rebuke had shaken their confidence. Additionally, the Philistines had them outnumbered and "out gunned" so to speak – the Hebrew's weapons and armor were vastly inferior to those of their enemies. Like Joshua before him, Saul at Gilgal was nose to nose with the consequences of Israel's unbelief. Often, failure to muster a little faith, (like circumcising baby boys for Israelites), precipitated a test for their children that can only be passed by walking in great faith.

It is built in to the ways of God that if you fail a test you get to take a make-up test. Make-up tests, however, are always harder than the original test. A David is generally so contrite for failing a test, or his ancestors failing a test, that he will rejoice in taking the make-up test, not even noticing that it is harder. A Saul heart, on the other hand, sees both the failure of the original test and having to take the make-up test as rejection by the Lord. A Saul will be fearful and resentful. This is because he does not know the faithful love of the Lord. He does not believe he is the favorite of an Omnipotent God.

Tale of Two Hearts

“When the men of Israel saw that their situation was critical and that their army was hard pressed, they hid in caves and thickets, among the rocks, and in pits and cisterns. Some Hebrews even crossed the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. Saul remained at Gilgal, and all the troops with him were quaking with fear. He waited seven days, the time set by Samuel; but Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and Saul’s men began to scatter.” (1 Samuel 13:5-8)

Up to this point Saul had been as “Davidic” as David. But under the pressure of what follows, the “Saul” in his heart came out. The following verses will reveal that his heart was more man-conscious than God-conscious, and that he feared man’s rejection more than he feared God. The form of the rejection he so feared was the desertion of his soldiers. Thus, when his men began to scatter he said,

“Bring me the burnt offering and the fellowship offerings.”
And Saul offered up the burnt offering.” (1 Samuel 13:9)

Heretofore Saul had not fallen to the sin of manipulation. At this point, however, he had heard God’s warning that the circumstances that brought about his kingship were grievous to the Lord. Though this situation was the result of no sin on his own part, the Saul heart forming in him interpreted this as a personal rejection by God. Since he had no real intimate, confident relationship with Jehovah in the Most Holy Place of his heart, he had nothing and no one else to fall back on. He fell back on using manipulation, (as we are about to see), because the only thing he really knew was reliance on his own strength. (Manipulation is the illegitimate use of spiritual things to obtain power over men, and is the rough equivalent of witchcraft)

In this particular case, Saul’s manipulation took the form of doing something “spiritual” before his men to pacify them, control them, and give them a psychological boost. As I said, a distinguishing mark between a Saul and a David is how they handle trials that come to them through the sin of others. Saul

felt the pain of inheriting a kingship of questionable legitimacy. David knew a certain second-class status in his father's house. Saul was afraid and drew into himself. David lost himself in his love for his heavenly Father. God was not unjust in his timing of Saul's present trial. He did not confront Saul and the people with the questionable nature of their kingship until after they had the kingship well established and had the victory at Jabesh Gilead under their belts. At this point Saul was forced to see that he and Israel had not been circumcised for many years in their particular wilderness. His failure was that he would not submit to letting God make him weak, (circumcise him), in the presence of his enemies.

“Just as he finished making the offering, Samuel arrived, and Saul went out to greet him.” (1 Samuel 13:10)

Here, as is so often true in life, the difference between a hero and a heel is about five minutes of being still and quiet. But Saul's inability to endure a short waiting test proved that he was not just an innocent victim of the circumstances that caused his kingship to have questionable roots; he was personally guilty of the sin that made it questionable. The test he failed in not waiting for Samuel is similar in a couple of ways to the test the people failed when they insisted on having an immediate kingship. Their test came to them by way of a godly man: Samuel himself.

Let me describe Samuel's sin that pushed the people over the edge and caused them to sin by insisting on an immediate kingship.

It was wrong for any judge to set his (or her) children in as judges after him. Judges, unlike kings were supposed to be hand-picked by God and were therefore one generational. It was an even more serious sin for Samuel to give his wicked sons lifetime judgeships. No one can make anyone sin, but Samuel's sin in this matter tempted an already carnal people to say in effect, “Samuel, if you're going to make your judgeship multi-generational, and put in wicked leaders on top of that,

Tale of Two Hearts

then give us a full fledged multi-generational kingship to reign over us.” In the present scenario at Gilgal, Samuel was a little late, at least by Saul’s watch. And thus Saul was tempted by the tardiness of Samuel to not wait. And so he gave in to taking matters into his own hands. Do not misunderstand me. It was sin for the people to ask for a king, just as it was sin for their king to try to manipulate them by a “spiritual act.” Both were tempted to fall by the weakness of others.

Jesus laid out a vital truth we need to get into our hearts in Matthew’s awesome eighteenth chapter. He said that:

- 1.) Causing someone to stumble is a major spiritual sin.

But, in the next breath He said, basically, that:

- 2.) No one can cause YOU to sin! If you have to, cut off your hand to stop from sinning, but don’t sin.

This seeming paradox is true. As far as you and God are concerned, nobody can make you sin. But, as far as you and God are concerned, He may hold you accountable for causing someone else to sin, particularly a person who is a “little one,” either spiritually or physically. But the person you “caused to sin” is not necessarily off the hook just because you are on the hook. In the same way, Samuel’s shortcomings tempted both the people to insist on a king, and they tempted Saul after he became king. But they were accountable to God for their sin nonetheless.

“What have you done?” asked Samuel. Saul replied, “When I saw that the men were scattering, and that you did not come at the set time, and that the Philistines were assembling at Micmash, I thought, ‘Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the LORD’s favor.’ So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering.”

(1 Samuel 13:11-12)

When a David falls, he is at once very aware of his own sin, and yet even more aware of being in the hands of a Father eager to forgive. The Davidic heart will be so aware of his own sin that he will be effectively unaware of anyone else contributing to his fall. The Saul heart can hardly be forced to see his own sin, and will, like father Adam, quickly list those who, supposedly, caused him to sin. David intimately knew the heart of the One eager to forgive. Saul labored, fearfully and resentfully, under the demonic delusion that God was eager to judge and condemn him.

When Adam sinned, he blamed both God and Eve. Saul blamed in order, “the men,” “you,” (Samuel), and “the Philistines.” Since this blatant blame shifting was fundamentally a deception, it was only a small step further on into a full-fledged lie. Though it was veiled to mortal men, before the eyes of the Heart Searcher it was an outright lie for Saul to say that his motive was to seek “the Lord’s favor.” But again, the Saul heart is oblivious to the unseen, and slavishly cognizant of the eyes of men.

“You acted foolishly,” Samuel said. “You have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time. But now your kingdom will not endure; the LORD has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him leader of his people, because you have not kept the LORD’s command.”
(1 Samuel 13:13-14)

Saul had not at this point lost the kingship. And there was nothing here that said he could not have a dynasty. He had only disqualified himself from having an eternal dynasty, something that he probably never had on his radar to begin with. In 2 Samuel 7, King David was lovingly blundering toward building God a house, when he was jerked up short by the Lord, who said, basically, “No, no, David, I’m going to build YOU a house!” He was then promised an eternal dynasty. His throne would receive the Messiah, the eternal God Man. The foundation of Saul’s throne was herein shown

Tale of Two Hearts

to be based on the sand of what is seen, which is temporary, and not on the Rock of the Unseen One. Thus, Samuel prophesied that Saul's "kingdom will not endure."

What was "the command the Lord gave you" that Saul had not "kept"? We don't read anywhere that God told Saul, "Wait about offering the sacrifice till the old guy gets there – even if he is a mite tardy." The book of Samuel is replete with instances where David tramples the letter of the law, and yet is guiltless. Even Jesus referred to him eating the holy bread, and yet being innocent. And yet Saul is "only" breaking a law that can only be known by being sensitive to God's Spirit. Saul should have asked himself, "If I do this sacrifice to keep the men from scattering – to whom am I really offering it? Who would I in effect be worshipping?"

"Then Samuel left Gilgal and went up to Gibeah in Benjamin, and Saul counted the men who were with him. They numbered about six hundred." (1 Samuel 13:15)

Ahh...the Saul heart! Suppose the Lord rebukes someone for the love of money, and that person was truly contrite for committing this sin. Obviously the last thing that person would want to do would be to go get their moneybags and sit around and count cash. Likewise, Saul had been rebuked for caring more about how many supporters he had with him than about what the Lord Himself desired. That he immediately turned around and counted the troops tells us that the rebuke of the Lord went right "over his heart." Tragically, he was in fact worse off for the Gilgal experience. Because he refused to be broken and repent, this trial took him away from the Lord instead of toward the Lord. The action he had taken to preserve his position in the eyes of his men caused him to get rebuked before his men by the foremost spiritual leader in the land. Thus, trying to prevent what he was trying to prevent made it happen.

Saul's fear of losing status caused him to lose status. Sinning exacerbates sinning. A David heart would throw himself before the Lord who is administering the discipline and repent deeply.

But here, Saul decided to be a Saul, for his heart said, "I couldn't bear to be abandoned by the people, so I did something to keep it from happening, (he offered the sacrifice). What I did didn't work, and the thing I greatly feared came upon me! So now I will have to try even harder next time to keep it from happening." He was drawing into himself, and trying to "save his own life," instead of trusting the "God Who justifies the wicked." This was the defining moment in Saul's life.

"Not a blacksmith could be found in the whole land of Israel, because the Philistines had said, "Otherwise the Hebrews will make swords or spears!" So all Israel went down to the Philistines to have their plowshares, mattocks, axes and sickles sharpened. The price was two thirds of a shekel for sharpening plowshares and mattocks, and a third of a shekel for sharpening forks and axes and for repointing goads. So on the day of the battle not a soldier with Saul and Jonathan had a sword or spear in his hand; only Saul and his son Jonathan had them. Now a detachment of Philistines had gone out to the pass at Micmash." (1 Samuel 13:19-23)

For the moment, all I want to point out in the above Scripture is the strong emphasis on the fact that only Saul and Jonathan had swords. This will be important as we move through the coming chapters.

Chapter 2

The Son of Saul with the Heart of David

(1 Samuel 14)

“One day Jonathan son of Saul said to the young man bearing His armor, “Come, let’s go over to the Philistine outpost on the other side.” But he did not tell his father.” (1 Samuel 14:1)

Jonathan had a very Davidic heart. Like Noah’s sons, Shem and Japheth, who refused to gaze on their father’s nakedness Jonathan did not focus on his father’s very public failures. Instead, he was focusing on the fact that the assault he had mounted against the Philistines, (in chapter 13), had “rattled their cage” and put his father and Israel in the place of trial. Since Jonathan knew well the ways of the Lord, he presumed rightly that it was not lost on the Searcher of All Hearts that what he had done, he had done in good faith. His knowledge of the Lord further taught him that his father’s blunder had not changed God’s great love for Israel. As an act of huge faith in the character of the Lord he headed for the Philistines, presuming God would show him what to do on the way there. Keep in mind, he was as aware as his father was of Samuel’s rebukes. Nonetheless, he was totally confident of the Lord’s faithful love, a concept his father seemed not to grasp.

“Saul was staying on the outskirts of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree in Migron. With him were about six hundred men...” (1 Samuel 14:2)

By way of a comparative reference, in the ninth verse of the first chapter of this book it says:

...”Hannah stood up. Now Eli the priest was sitting on a chair by the doorpost ...” (1 Samuel 1:9)

In First Samuel the Holy Spirit subtly paints a pattern of Saulish hearts being spiritually passive, stationary, even frozen. At the same time the Davidic hearts are moving, flexing, interfacing and co-laboring with God. (“I run in the path of your commands, for you have set my heart free!” (Psalm 119:32) Jonathan was aggressively going out on what seemed to be a suicide mission, while his father seemed anchored to a tree, even as Hannah stood while Eli was sitting by a doorpost. Jonathan was NOT going out because he had faith in a word he had received from the Lord, for he had received none. Instead, he went out in faith in God Himself and His faithful character.

Now, back to 1 Samuel 14:

“With him [Saul] were about six hundred men among whom was Ahijah, who was wearing an ephod. He was a son of Ichabod’s brother Ahitub son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the Lord’s priest in Shiloh. No one was aware that Jonathan had left.” (1 Samuel 14: 3)

First, notice that Saul and those descended from Eli, (who had a Saul heart), were huddled together.

Second, remember that Ahijah had the ephod. [The ephod, containing the Urim and the Thummim, was the official instrument by which God communicated with the High Priest. The ephod was made into his special garment].

Tale of Two Hearts

Third, note that such a small group (two) had left Saul's camp that even Saul, who was a compulsive head counter, had not missed them.

“On each side of the pass that Jonathan intended to cross to reach the Philistine outpost was a cliff; one was called Bozez, and the other Seneh. One cliff stood to the north toward Micmash, the other to the south toward Geba.”

(1 Samuel 14: 4-5)

There were two cliffs dramatically facing each other across a gap, (a pass).

“Jonathan said to his young armor-bearer, “Come, let's go over to the outpost of those uncircumcised fellows. Perhaps the Lord will act in our behalf.” (1 Samuel 14:6)

Again, notice, Jonathan had no specific word from the Lord.

“Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving, whether by many or by few.” (1 Samuel 14:6)

This son of Saul didn't have a shred of a Saul heart! He had no faith in numbers (outward appearance) and COMPLETE faith in the Invisible God.

“Do all that you have in mind,” his armor-bearer said. Go ahead; I am with you heart and soul.” (1 Samuel 14:7)

This kid had seen something in Jonathan that made him say, “I believe in your heart-vision. I'd rather die with you than live without you!” This certifies that Jonathan was a great leader, for only great leaders can inspire such bravery and loyalty.

“Jonathan said, “Come, then; we will cross over toward the men and let them see us. If they say to us, ‘Wait there until we come to you,’ we will stay where we are and not go up to them. But if they say, ‘Come up to us,’ we will climb up, because that

will be our sign that the Lord has given them into our hands.”
(1 Samuel 14:8-10)

Remember that back in camp, Saul had immediate access to the High Priest and his ephod: Israel’s official hotline to heaven. Why then did Saul not ask God if he should attack? Because he didn’t want to know what God wanted him to do!

Jonathan had more trust in God and what He would speak to him **THROUGH THE MOUTHS OF THE PHILISTINES THAN HIS FATHER HAD IN WHAT GOD COULD HAVE SPOKEN THROUGH THE HIGH PRIEST OF ISRAEL!** Jonathan’s heart would hear God better than his father Saul could hear, though he had a hundred High Priests and ephods with him. Similarly, in our day, a pure hearted person will ultimately find the will of God more surely than a prophetically gifted person will.

In a sense, Jonathan was “pouring water on the altar” like Elijah did on Mount Carmel as he prepared to call down God’s fire. Jonathan was, as an act of faith, making it hard on his flesh and not easy. It would have made more military sense for Jonathan to have said, “If those guys say, ‘you Israelites stay up there on that cliff—we’re coming up after you,’ hey, that will mean God is saying we can take them!” This would seem right because outward appearance would suggest that obviously they might have had some chance of success against these twenty men if they had the strategic advantage of the high ground. But if the two of them had to climb straight up a cliff in order to attack a band of twenty men, they would have been facing a virtual firing squad!

Jonathan was totally devoid of any spiritual manipulation, for he said...” if they say, ‘Come up to us,’ we will climb up, because that will be our sign that the Lord has given them into our hands.” He made himself and his partner even **MORE** vulnerable than Joshua’s circumcised army; thus he became **INVULNERABLE**. Notice that not only was no one watching them, no one even knew where they were, except the Lord.

Tale of Two Hearts

There was no “go out in a blaze of glory” mindset here. This was pure devotion, pure worship.

“So both of them showed themselves to the Philistine outpost. “Look!” said the Philistines: “The Hebrews are crawling out of the holes they were hiding in.” The men of the outpost shouted to Jonathan and his armor-bearer, “Come up to us and we’ll teach you a lesson.” So Jonathan said to his armor-bearer, “Climb up after me; the Lord has given them into the hand of Israel.” (1 Samuel 14:12)

Jonathan didn’t even say “into our hands,” he said, “...into the hand of Israel.” He saw the bigness of God’s age-old covenant and focused very little on the size of his truly stupendous faith. He didn’t seem to be trying to work up “faith in his faith.”

“Jonathan climbed up, using his hands and feet, with his armor-bearer right behind him.” (1 Samuel 14:13a)

“... using his hands and feet...”? What else would he be climbing with? This is subtly saying that Jonathan had no sword in his hand. We will soon see that he had given it to the “young man” with him, even as he later gave his weapons to David, which is a pattern with the David hearts. Saul hearts desperately cling to their weapons, as we will see. This was also saying that he had made himself a human shield for his armor bearer! Jonathan was NOT saying, “I have so much faith in this high-wire walker’s skill that I am going to have my SERVANT get into the wheel barrow he’s pushing!” No. Jonathan jumped into the wheel barrow FIRST! He was truly a servant leader, laying down his life for the sheep. No wonder his armor bearer could say, “I’m with you heart and soul.”

“The Philistines fell before Jonathan, and his armor-bearer followed and killed behind him.” (1 Samuel 14:13b)

There are many references in Samuel to persons falling physically in the presence of the Lord, from the idol Dagon to a murderous Saul. In every case they were the bad guys.

Jonathan was not knocking these Philistines down with a sword, for he was killing none of them. Think about it: his armor bearer certainly was not coming behind him, finishing off those Jonathan was wounding with a sword, by beating them to death with a shield! Instead, the armor bearer was the only one with a lethal weapon – Jonathan’s sword! The Presence of God was on Jonathan to the extent that when he got near the Philistines, they fainted!

[Notice: the armor bearer was initiating no encounters of his own; he merely finished off what Jonathan started.]

Both up the cliff and on the plateau, Jonathan had become the shield, and his armor bearer had become the swordsman. Every witch wants to wield spiritual power without submitting to the Source of All Power. Manipulation by carnal leaders in God’s camp has as its goal the acquisition of power without having to give up lordship of one’s life. Saul had not entrusted himself to the Lord at all. His son has entrusted himself to the Lord so much that God actually allowed Jonathan to use his Presence as a portable “weapon” if you will. But Jonathan’s physical hands were not totally empty. He held, as we will see, the same thing David held in his hand when he went up against Goliath: a staff.

“In that first attack Jonathan and his armor-bearer killed some twenty men in an area of about half an acre. Then panic struck the whole army - those in the camp and field, and those in the outposts and raiding parties - and the ground shook. It was a panic sent by God.” (1 Samuel 14:14-15)

At this point this miracle was way past all possibility of it being the product of some psychological effect of Jonathan’s boldness. It was a full-fledged move of the Sovereign God! None of the twenty Philistines being attacked escaped to tell the other Philistines, which is a peculiar way for such a battle to turn out ... unless they are frozen in place by God’s presence! Jonathan’s faith had become a sight that even the faithless could see AND FEEL, and from a distance!

Tale of Two Hearts

“Saul’s lookouts at Gibeah in Benjamin saw the army melting away in all directions. Then Saul said to the men who were with him, “Muster the forces and see who has left us. When they did, it was Jonathan and his armor-bearer who were not there.” (1 Samuel 14-17)

God sometimes rubs our faces in what we refuse to see. Saul, the chief of nose counters, was finding that God was moving through a detachment from his army that was so small that even his paranoid eye for deserters had not noticed them when they left. However, Saul still missed the point. Though he didn’t really have a clue why the Philistines were fleeing, even he could see from “outward appearance” that they were. In view of these new circumstances, he was eager to attack because it is a logical thing for a carnal man to trust in what he can see, and what he saw was a golden opportunity to seize a moment of psychological momentum.

“Saul said to Ahijah, “Bring the ark of God.” (At that time it was with the Israelites.) While Saul was talking to the priest, the tumult in the Philistine camp increased more and more. So Saul said to the priest, “Withdraw your hand.””
(1 Samuel 14:18-19)

Ironically, Saul had prepared extensively for this moment. He had been hoping that a time would come when he would see with his natural eyes an advantage in attacking. He had no inclination to determine when that moment had arrived by asking God. The preparations he had made for this moment had to do with his supreme concern for outward appearance. He had prepared, when such a moment did arrive, to perform a very special ritual in the sight of his men that would make it clear to them that he was getting Divine direction. Thus he planned to regain some of the status he lost when Samuel had so publicly rebuked him.

Saul’s plan was to keep the priest with the Ephod handy in case the golden moment presented itself. He had planned to inquire of the Lord at just the moment when he could see by natural

mind that it was the right time to attack. He thought that when that moment arrived, the Lord would say, (through the High Priest) “Yeah, go get ’em Saul! We have a carnal advantage now, so maybe I can muster enough power to tip the scales in your favor and make your side win!” (He didn’t really believe in an omnipotent, omniscient God)

Further, Saul had also anticipated that, if after several days he suddenly walked up to the priest and asked him to inquire of God for him, his men might not see what he was doing until it was all over. His troops were scattered over the camp, and sound does not carry far outside. He thought they might not notice him talking to the High Priest at all, and if they did, they might think he was just over there talking to the High Priest about the weather or some such thing. For this reason, Saul, for the first and only time in his life, had the Ark of the Covenant brought to his camp. He knew if he suddenly summoned the Levites to bring the Ark to his personal tent, and at the same time summoned the High Priest, what he was doing would be seen by all his men and lost on no one. Even though they were outside, the movement of the Ark would be a dead giveaway that something big was about to transpire. He believed that then, when he inquired of the Lord, and all his men saw him doing it, he would be thought to be very spiritual. And of course God would have to cooperate, he thought, for God would surely not be able to afford to miss a good chance to beat his enemies!

Sadly, Saul had no idea that his heart was wide open before God. He didn’t know that he was the original Pharisee, blowing a trumpet as he gave his alms and milking a scenario for all it was worth. He did not know the Living God very well at all. And he didn’t know he was about to get the same scathing treatment that Jesus would later give the Pharisees.

Scholars have puzzled over why, in this one instance, the Ark was deemed necessary to inquire of the Lord. If you will indulge me as I say this ... I believe I KNOW it was only a prop to Saul, an instrument he had brought to his camp for the

purpose of good “STAGING.” Further, I believe that the key to understanding the book of Samuel is the Book of Samuel itself – that it is written in wonderful Divine cycles of repetition. The Ark of the Covenant had never made it back to the tabernacle at Shiloh. It had been removed when the Israelites, led by Eli’s evil sons had said, “If we take this holy box thing that God sits on with us into battle, the Lord will have to fight for us! We’ll have Him cornered!” They were as disappointed then as Saul was about to be here. In both cases, their error was that they couldn’t discern between witchcraft and the true Knowledge of the Holy One of Israel.

Saul’s situation when he inquired of the Lord was similar to that of “Bre’r Rabbit” when he hit “ol’ tar baby.” When God refused to answer him, Saul could not gracefully get loose from his situation, (which he set up to make himself look good), without making himself look a lot worse than he did to start with.

All his troops could see him acting “religiously,” inquiring of the Lord, when common sense alone would tell any half-wit to go ahead and attack, before the fleeing enemy got completely away! They could see that their king had brought the Ark just so they would be cued as to what he was doing. They were thinking, “There is nothing less cool than someone who is trying that hard to look cool!” And Saul knew they knew. We, who sometimes have Saul hearts, always know that people know that we are trying to impress them, don’t we? We’ve all been there. That’s what made high school so rough!

God did not answer because He would not let Himself be reduced to a mere force to be manipulated by men for their own designs and purposes. The Heart God, Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel relentlessly pursues relationship with us, whether we want Him or not! Ahh ... the Humility of the Lord!!! As the Apostle James said:

“When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives...” (James 4:3)

“Then Saul and all his men assembled and went to the battle. They found the Philistines in total confusion, striking each other with their swords.” (1 Samuel 14:20)

The Saul heart, which is the Philistine heart, always trusts in, and therefore lives by, the sword of the flesh. Consequently it dies by the same sword, of a self-inflicted wound. Saul, in his extreme unfaith, had found a way to take his wonderful prerogative to inquire of the God of heaven, and had managed to injure himself with it. Saul was also “in total confusion,” for he was seeing an awesome move of God and at the same time he was being totally humiliated by his abject failure to win the favor of his real “god,” which was the approval of his men. Saul and the Philistines were of the same spirit.

“Those Hebrews, who had previously been with the Philistines and had gone up with them to their camp, went over to the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan.” (1 Samuel 14:21)

This is a nice way of saying that totally disloyal Israelite traitors could see by outward appearance that the tide was turning, and so they began supporting the side that seemed most promising at the moment.

“When all the Israelites who had hidden in the hill country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines were on the run, they joined the battle in hot pursuit.” (1 Samuel 14:22)

These were the deserters of the day turning into “sunshine patriots.”

“So the Lord rescued Israel that day, and the battle moved on beyond Beth Aven. Now the men of Israel were in distress that day, because Saul had bound the people under an oath, saying, “Cursed be any man who eats food before evening comes, before I have avenged myself on my enemies!” So none of the troops tasted food.” (1 Samuel 14:24)

Tale of Two Hearts

In his “total confusion” and extreme embarrassment Saul used his God-given authority not only to injure himself, but to strike his men a blow that would weaken them considerably. The fast he called was a badly embarrassed man’s effort to regain some measure of dignity, poise, and credibility. The fear and selfishness in Saul’s statement: “Cursed be any man who eats food before evening comes, before I have avenged myself on my enemies” stands in dark contrast to Jonathan’s secure, generous, selfless words: “The Lord has given them [the Philistines] into the hand of Israel.” Saul was all about Saul. Jonathan was all about God. Saul’s tireless efforts to look good before his men severely shortened the power and duration of the revival God had granted Israel. So much so that Satan almost managed to kill his greatest human enemy in the land and extinguish the brightest lamp in Israel, none other than Jonathan himself.

“The entire army entered the woods, and there was honey on the ground.” (1 Samuel 14:25)

One of God’s promises to Israel was that if they would be faithful, they would inherit “a land that flowed with ... honey.”

“When they went into the woods, they saw the honey oozing out, yet no one put his hand to his mouth, because they feared the oath.” (1 Samuel 14:26)

These warriors were very aware that they could be judged by “outward appearance” so they were careful to protect themselves from even appearing to be eating. People know instinctively that a powerful paranoid is a dangerous man. Jonathan’s courage became a climate of courage, even sweeping up traitors and deserters. Saul’s fear became a whole climate of fear among his men. Legalistic compliance ascended the throne, displacing the freedom of Spirit-led obedience.

“But Jonathan had not heard that his father had bound the people with the oath, so he reached out the end of the staff that

was in his hand and dipped it into the honeycomb. He raised his hand to his mouth, and his eyes brightened.”
(1 Samuel 14:27)

Why had Jonathan not heard about his father’s ridiculous rule? Because instead of watching things happen, or trying to figure out how to manipulate what was happening, Jonathan was out front MAKING things happen! He was out pioneering the frontiers of the will of God, running in free abandonment to the Spirit instead of hovering in the huddle of arbitrary rule makers, contending for credit for a move of God. His father, who did not know the ways of God, soon considered Jonathan worthy of death for not obeying a rule he could not have known about! And the reason he did not know about it was that he was one of only two men in the whole army in the perfect logistical will of God. As surely as Ishmael persecuted Isaac, the flesh man will inevitably try to murder the Spirit man, even if he is his own firstborn son AND his greatest benefactor.

And Jonathan, staff in hand, was a true Davidic shepherd, laying down his life for the sheep. I believe that the presence of God was on him so much that he had what his father hoped he could manipulate God and obtain: an irresistible power he could “operate” almost at will!

As I said earlier, I believe that any Philistine soldier he could get close to “fainted” under the power of the Spirit. I further believe, (bear with me for a moment), that he may well have run by some of the Philistine livestock, and they fell out too! I think that when this happened he may then have thought, “I wonder if this will work on bees?” If you think I’m wrong, try jabbing a stick into a honey comb and see what happens to you! Jonathan was running through the woods in a free abandonment to God. Because of his faith filled vulnerability, he was at that moment totally INVULNERABLE! In that moment of supreme godliness he was virtually the master of all of God’s creation, even causing bees to faint!

Tale of Two Hearts

“Then one of the soldiers told him, “Your father bound the army under a strict oath, saying, ‘Cursed be any man who eats food today!’ That is why the men are faint.” Jonathan said, “My father has made trouble for the country. See how my eyes brightened when I tasted a little of this honey. How much better it would have been if the men had eaten today some of the plunder they took from their enemies. Would not the slaughter of the Philistines have been even greater?”
(1 Samuel 14:28-30)

Yes it would have. But Saul has snatched mediocrity from the jaws of total victory. The extreme irony is that while God was making the Philistines faint before Jonathan, Saul was doing his level best to make the Israelite soldiers faint! The power of Jonathan’s faith, as great as it was, was being superseded by Saul’s unbelief.

“That day, after the Israelites had struck down the Philistines from Micmash to Aijalon, they were exhausted. They pounced on the plunder and, taking sheep, cattle and calves, they butchered them on the ground and ate them, together with the blood.” (1 Samuel 14:31-32)

For Hebrews, the day ends at sunset, so they were free of Saul’s curse at that point. But killing an animal in the customary kosher fashion takes some time and strength. Its throat is cut while it hangs by its heels, and then time is taken to wait for its blood to drain completely out before the meat is cut up. Seemingly, their fast combined with their great exertion had made these guys too weak to do all that. Thus, they came to be in violation of the first ceremonial law, the one that predates Moses and goes all the way back to the Noahic covenant. God had told Noah, basically, “Don’t eat blood.” They were indeed guilty of this breach, but Saul, their shepherd, had tempted them (“caused” them) to fall to this sin.

“Then someone said to Saul, “Look, the men are sinning against the Lord by eating meat that has blood in it.” “You have broken faith,” he said. “Roll a large stone over here at

once.” Then he said, “Go out among the men and tell them, ‘Each of you bring me your cattle and sheep, and slaughter them here and eat them. Do not sin against the Lord by eating meat with blood still in it.’ ” So everyone brought his ox that night and slaughtered it there. Then Saul built an altar to the Lord; it was the first time he had done this.” (1 Samuel 14:35)

Notice that Saul became really zealous when it was time to enforcing the CEREMONIAL portion of the law. He was very particular about the externals, about “outward appearances.” Jesus was pressed by the Saul hearts of His day who were concerned with ceremony. Jesus told them, “It’s not what goes into a man’s body that defiles him, it’s what comes out that defiles him.”

There is an interesting juxtaposition of the ceremonial law and the Spirit law in Leviticus 19:26.

It reads:

“Do not eat any meat with the blood still in it. Do not practice divination or sorcery.”

The first part is about the external man. The second is about his heart. Divination, witchcraft, and sorcery are all matters of trying to BE a god by USING God, and His power, rather than be used by God. Saul practiced the former, (he was zealous about not eating blood), but he left the latter undone. Soon after this scene we will see Samuel pinning Saul down and charging him with divination, and rightly so, for he was headlong into it.

“Saul said, “Let us go down after the Philistines by night and plunder them till dawn, and let us not leave one of them alive.” “Do whatever seems best to you,” they replied. But the priest said, “Let us inquire of God here.” (1 Samuel 14:36)

Saul had no rest, for he knew, and he knew his men knew, they had lost their divinely given edge because of his carnal fast. By suggesting a night attack, he was trying to recover the

momentum they had enjoyed earlier, for momentum is something even the natural man can appreciate.

There are a great many interesting parallels in this Divine book. Contrast this scene with the time when Jonathan proposed an attack on the Philistines to his armor bearer. The young man gave a heart-felt reply, “Do all that you have in mind. Go ahead, I am with you heart and soul.” Then Jonathan told him how they were going to determine God’s direction for them. He said they could hear from God **THROUGH THE PHILISTINES!** Here Saul proposed an attack and the men concede they will back him. At this point the priest, a descendant of Eli, had to coerce Saul into seeking God’s strategy. The priest said let’s “inquire of God here.” Notice how anemic is the shadow of what Saul did compared to what Jonathan did.

Why did the priest have to insist on inquiring of the Lord? Saul had become a burned child who feared (and resented) the fire. Because of his self-focus, every time he tried to approach God, he got burned. His real god was the praise of men, and when he tried to manipulate the Living One for the benefit of his “god,” God purposely embarrassed him. The priest embarrassed him into inquiring of the Lord by suggesting it in front of the men. The Lord was about to further embarrass him by refusing to speak to him, also in front of the men!

“So Saul asked God, “Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will you give them into Israel’s hand?” But God did not answer him that day.” (1 Samuel 14:37)

And why didn’t God answer? If God had said, “No, don’t go,” Saul would have said, “Yeah, I guess Jehovah’s right. We are a little on the tired side, slaughtering Philistines under the anointing is hard work! Yes sir, Jehovah and I, we’re tight! He’s directing this whole show because he approves of me and thinks I’m the stuff. Picked me out of the whole kingdom, remember?”

And if God had said “Yes, go,” Saul would have said, “See there, God and I think alike! He’s endorsing my kingship and approves of the way I’ve led us in this battle! Ya’ll stick with me cause I’ve got God in my shirt pocket!”

So God was silent. Again. Anything God could have said would have made Him a party to Saul’s own self-promotion and witchcraft. By trying to paint God into a corner and force Him to endorse his own kingship, Saul had in fact forced the God of Truth not to speak at all. Had God spoken, either “go” or “stay” He would have violated his own nature.

And God’s silence, under these particular circumstances, screamed that something or someone was WAY out of line! God had never refused to speak before. Israel had to either attack or not attack. Why would God not give them direction at such a crucial moment?

“Saul therefore said, “Come here, all you who are leaders of the army, and let us find out what sin has been committed today. As surely as the Lord who rescues Israel lives, even if it lies with my son Jonathan, he must die.” But not one of the men said a word.” (1 Samuel 14:39)

God refused to speak through His designated medium of the Urim and Thummim, and when God is silent and still, then men should be too. However, the theology of the Saul heart does not have a concept of waiting quietly with trusting dependence when God is silent. Saul was too nervous about **WHAT THE MEN THOUGHT** to do this. He thought he should make God speak. Worse, he thought he **COULD** make God speak. He decided to cast lots declaring he was going to execute as the guilty party whoever the lot fell on! This Saul mentality was really trying to extort God; it seemed to Saul that God **HAD** to speak through the lots, or else an innocent man would be killed. Saul was going to do something, even if it was wrong! He was so embarrassed that he could not quietly endure it, for the praise of men and the fear of their rejection

had become his whole purpose in life. And God had made him look pretty sorry, so far.

Saul's problem was, God would not be manipulated, even by extortion. God is God. There are times when men refuse to listen to The Heart of God whose vocabulary is trust and relationship. The price is too high for their fearful, self-protecting hearts. Sometimes they insist on hearing from God, or at least "a god" of some kind, but they want it on their own stingy terms. Saul, in casting the lots to choose whom should be killed, was doing that here. In the dark vacuum between God's refusal and man's insistence Satan has authority to speak. Sometimes people refuse God's prerequisite of seeking His Face, and yet they insist on receiving direction. If that person then goes to a spiritualist, (even a spiritualist that doesn't believe in his own craft), Satan will come through the cracks and speak to you ...to your great detriment! This, by the way, is how a ouija board works and why they should be avoided like the plague.

In this light we can understand the following very enigmatic verse:

"The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord." – Proverbs 16:33

This is true because if a person tries to force God to speak through lots or other media, the Lord will permit the enemy of our souls to injure us greatly

I believe there is more insight into how to hear from God in Samuel than in any other book in the Bible. Also, there is much insight into how NOT to hear from the Lord.

"Saul then said to all the Israelites, "You stand over there; I and Jonathan my son will stand over here." "Do what seems best to you," the men replied. Then Saul prayed to the Lord, the God of Israel, "Give me the right answer." And Jonathan

and Saul were taken by lot, and the men were cleared.”
(1 Samuel 14:41)

The text of the prayer was as right as his enforcement of the law against eating blood. But his heart was wrong, and thus he was about to err as greatly as he did when he enforced the law against eating blood. His error was in fact carrying him to the brink of murder. First Samuel repeatedly shows us David hearts violating the letter of the law, and yet still being accepted. This book also shows us Saul hearts upholding the law, for impure motives, and being rejected by God.

This was the moment Saul made the first reckless steps toward the tragic day when his self-focus would cause he and Jonathan to fall by the sword, side by side on Mt. Gilboa. Consider the dangerous potential scenarios Saul was embracing: If hard justice was directing the lots, Saul was doomed. If Satan was directing them, Jonathan was doomed. And if random chance was directing them, there was a 50% chance that the lot would fall on Saul or Jonathan, and the house of Saul was about to be bereaved either way.

“Saul said, “Cast the lot between me and Jonathan my son.” And Jonathan was taken. Then Saul said to Jonathan, “Tell me what you have done.” So Jonathan told him, “I merely tasted a little honey with the end of my staff. And now must I die?” Saul said, “May God deal with me, be it ever so severely, if you do not die, Jonathan.” (1 Samuel 14:44)

When Saul tried to use a religious sacrifice to manipulate his soldiers at Gilgal, Samuel prophesied to Saul that his kingdom would not endure. It's not that a petty God got mad at Saul for breaking His arbitrary rules and He wanted to get back at Saul for it. The very sin Saul had committed at Gilgal, witchcraft, which on that day took the form of an unauthorized sacrifice motivated by the fear of men ... this same sin was about to cause him to offer another unauthorized sacrifice: the life of his son, and thus extinguish the brightest hope for the future of the house of Saul! Saul was desperately attempting to “save his

own life” in the sense Jesus warned against, which was about to cause him to snuff out his own life, that is, Jonathan’s life, and with him any hope for Saul’s household!

You may have read the above Scripture and thought that God was mad at Jonathan for eating the honey. Trust me on this – God was not mad at Jonathan for breaking a rule he had not been told about, that he could not have known about because he was in the EXACT center of God’s geographical will ... perhaps more than anyone in history! And the pronouncing of the curse by Saul was a pure act of witchcraft by a “Philistine heart” who, like the other Philistines at the moment in question, was “in total confusion, striking each other with their swords” – almost! It was a sorry effort by Saul to appear to his men to be leading a “move of God.” As you may remember, Saul eventually committed suicide – that is, he died by striking himself with his own sword, the same way most of the Philistines died in this chapter.

In the Noahic Covenant, God only gave two prohibitions: one a spiritual law, the other a ceremonial law. The ceremonial law, as I said before, was basically, “Don’t eat blood,” which Saul seemed eager to uphold. But the spiritual law given to Noah was “Don’t commit murder” (Genesis 9). This law Saul was willing to trample without a second thought. It is built into the very nature of the Saul heart that, given enough time, its fear will beget envy, its envy ambition, and its ambition, murder. The New Testament gospels detail such a process in the murder of Jesus.

“But the men said to Saul, “Should Jonathan die - he who has brought about this great deliverance in Israel? Never! As surely as the Lord lives, not a hair of his head will fall to the ground, for he did this today with God’s help.” So the men rescued Jonathan, and he was not put to death.” (1 Samuel 14:45)

Thankfully, God often rescues us by dividing Satan against his own house. Saul’s fear of rejection by men, which was what was endangering Jonathan to begin with, also rescued Jonathan

from Saul. In reality, Saul was not leading his men, for he was not a shepherd. They were leading him, and both he and they knew it.

Verse 44 is more literally, “May God do so to me, and more also, if you do not die, Jonathan!” The oaths in this book are often fulfilled in an ironic way not intended by the oath maker. Saul had said, basically, “May God kill me if I don’t kill you, Jonathan.” The day of his actual death, Saul was in one sense killed by a Philistine arrow, and in another sense he killed himself with his sword. In another sense, he was also killed by the Lord. If you sin against the nature of the One Who made everything vibrate to His frequency, you will shake yourself apart. Said another way, The I AM will kill you. He is God. He can’t not be God.

On the other hand, and even more ironically, Saul really did kill Jonathan. Though Saul’s physical spear “missed” Jonathan that day, and, would later miss Jonathan again, his spiritual spear of manipulation pinned Jonathan to the walls of Saul’s own prison, a prison of fear.

Later, because of his father, Jonathan was not free to leave Saul and go strengthen the fugitive David. David was the nemesis of all Philistines, and since David was weakened by Jonathan’s absence, the Philistines were consequently less restrained. And since the Philistines were less restrained, they were able to kill Saul and Jonathan. Truly Saul spoke more than he knew when he said, “May God do so to me, and more also, if you do not die, Jonathan!” His curse was fulfilled, even though it was pure witchcraft. Saul’s vain declaration of a fast in the middle of a battle weakened his men. This was a prophetic foreshadowing of his weakening the mighty Jonathan and David to his own eventual destruction.

“Then Saul stopped pursuing the Philistines, and they withdrew to their own land.” (1 Samuel 14:46)

Tale of Two Hearts

Saul, by relentlessly pursuing his own “god,” had first slowed, and then stopped a move of God in its tracks. Was one of these escaping Philistine soldiers whom Saul was unable to pursue on this day the very one who would later shoot the arrow that mortally wounded him?

“After Saul had assumed rule over Israel, he fought against their enemies on every side: Moab, the Ammonites, Edom, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines. Wherever he turned, he inflicted punishment on them. He fought valiantly and defeated the Amalekites, delivering Israel from the hands of those who had plundered them.” (1 Samuel 14:48)

Saul was at once a mighty man of God, and at the same time he was a small soul with a terminal case of unbelief. As painful as it is to read of David’s sin, somehow reading of Saul’s times of valor and zeal are even sadder, knowing his final end.

“Saul’s sons were Jonathan, Ishvi and Malki-Shua. The name of his older daughter was Merab, and that of the younger was Michal. His wife’s name was Ahinoam daughter of Ahimaaz. The name of the commander of Saul’s army was Abner son of Ner, and Ner was Saul’s uncle. Saul’s father Kish and Abner’s father Ner were sons of Abiel. All the days of Saul there was bitter war with the Philistines, and whenever Saul saw a mighty or brave man, he took him into his service.” (1 Samuel 14:52)

Most of the above family members will figure into our coming story.

Chapter 3

Return to Gilgal (1 Samuel 15)

It seems to me that many chapters in First Samuel were written in pairs or triads. Generally the first and third of a triad are reflections of each other. The middle of the three usually presents a contrasting theme. We have come to the third chapter of such a triad. Notice how this chapter of First Samuel parallels chapter thirteen and brings us a sense of “deja vu.”

“Samuel said to Saul, “I am the one the Lord sent to anoint you king over his people Israel; so listen now to the message from the Lord.” (1 Samuel 15:1)

Samuel was leaving no possibility that Saul would misunderstand. He was almost saying, “Hey, Saul, read my lips!” It is probable that when Saul thought of how he became king, he focused on the demands of the people for a King, rather than on God’s sovereign choice to make him the anointed of the Lord. David’s heart never failed to remember that Saul was the anointed of the Lord, but tragically, Saul’s heart sometimes forgot. Samuel was encouraging Saul to remember that God chose him.

“This is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘I will punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they waylaid them as they came up from Egypt. Now go, attack the Amalekites

and totally destroy everything that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys.” (1 Samuel 15:3)

Many kinds of miracles are common to both the Old and New Testaments, but the forceful driving out of demons is unique to Christ and His Church. In the Old Testament, the only way of forcefully separating a demonized man from his tormentor was to separate his body from his spirit by killing him. Interesting isn't it that the same age that saw the Church authorized to cast out demons, also saw them thenceforth forbidden to take up the sword lest they “die by the sword.” (Matthew 26:52)

The whole of Israelite experience and history was for the purpose of providing a place, a context, and a framework for the coming of Christ. Part of what was necessary to providing a “landing strip” for the Messiah was the preparation of the land we call Israel. God told Abraham that his seed would be given Canaan after the sins of its then present population had “reached full measure.” (Genesis 15:16)

This seems to mean that Canaan would come to a critical mass in the spirit realm where the peoples who lived there became so saturated with demons that they were incorrigible. Even their children and animals were overwhelmingly given over to evil spirits. As I said, in the era before the cross, the only way to “drive out” evil spirits was with the sword. (This becomes very important later). This was the situation when God told his people to “totally destroy” a nation. Also, the Amalekites had been guilty of an outright attack on Israel.

“So Saul summoned the men and mustered them at Telaim - two hundred thousand foot soldiers and ten thousand men from Judah. Saul went to the city of Amalek and set an ambush in the ravine. Then he said to the Kenites, “Go away, leave the Amalekites so that I do not destroy you along with them; for you showed kindness to all the Israelites when they came up out of Egypt.” So the Kenites moved away from the Amalekites. Then Saul attacked the Amalekites all the way

from Havilah to Shur, to the east of Egypt. He took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and all his people he totally destroyed with the sword. But Saul and the army spared Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves and lambs - everything that was good. These they were unwilling to destroy completely, but everything that was despised and weak they totally destroyed.” (1 Samuel 15:9)

The Hebrew word for “totally destroy” means irrevocably giving as a sacrifice a particular thing to Jehovah. It is, in the truest sense, a priestly act. All the men of Israel were not just eligible to enter in to this act of worship, but were actually commanded to participate in it. However, Saul and his men declined to perform this act of sacrifice, though they had clearly been commanded to carry it out. In chapter thirteen Saul offered a sacrifice he was supposed to leave alone. His motive was to control the people. Here he refused to offer a sacrifice, but his motive was the same – he wanted to win the favor of the people.

And notice the “outward appearance” theme to what Saul did. The motive for saving the notorious Agag, King of Amelek, was Saul’s desire to show him off like a trophy buck to the Israelite crowds. Triumphant monarchs treating defeated kings in this manner has been common practice throughout the ages. “The best of the sheep and cattle” were not saved to be sacrificed to the Lord. Saul had allowed the men, who were by and large professional stockmen, to take them as booty, which he doubtless believed would build him up in the eyes of his men. In other words, Saul was making his “sacrifice” to the “god” he really adored, the approval of his men.

[Faithless manipulations for and with livestock abound in the history of Israel previous to Saul, making it a generational issue to be overcome by their first king: Jacob and Laban in Genesis 30; Jacob and Esau in Genesis 32; Simeon, Levi and the men of Shechem in Genesis 34; Moses and the Israelites in both Exodus 16 and 17]

Tale of Two Hearts

“Then the word of the Lord came to Samuel: “I am grieved that I have made Saul king, because he has turned away from me and has not carried out my instructions.” Samuel was troubled, and he cried out to the Lord all that night.” (1 Samuel 15:11)

Whatever grieves God always grieves his true friends, the prophets. Also, Samuel knew with certainty that this turn of events spelled disaster for Israel.

“Early in the morning Samuel got up and went to meet Saul, but he was told, “Saul has gone to Carmel. There he has set up a monument in his own honor and has turned and gone on down to Gilgal.” (1 Samuel 15:12)

Saul’s construction of an altar in chapter fourteen appears on the surface to be an act of true worship. Really, it was an altar to commemorate what a “good job” he had done leading the troops into victory and then keeping them straight with the Law of Moses. But, sin has a way of becoming less subtle with time. Setting up a regular monument to himself was flaming, flagrant PRIDE! He did not know that his return to Gilgal would bring him to the place where the uncircumcision of his heart would become glaringly evident.

“When Samuel reached him, Saul said, “The Lord bless you! I have carried out the Lord’s instructions.” But Samuel said, “What then is this bleating of sheep in my ears? What is this lowing of cattle that I hear?” (1 Samuel 15:14)

If Saul had “carried out the Lord’s instructions,” then why was he having to yell (my inference) to make himself heard? Sometimes “the more words, the less meaning!” He was obviously self-conscious of his disobedience, but instead of running toward the truth, he was trying to make a preemptive strike against the truth.

“Saul answered, “The soldiers brought them from the Amalekites; they spared the best of the sheep and cattle to

sacrifice to the Lord your God, but we totally destroyed the rest.” (1 Samuel 15:15)

“The soldiers...they...” said Saul. “The woman You gave me,” said Adam to God when God asked why he disobeyed. Saul was at once saying that it was those guys who committed this sin, but really it was not a sin because of their supposed intentions. “Yes, uh, and ‘we totally destroyed the rest.” But you can’t “totally destroy” part of something. Also, ... “the Lord your God” Tragically, Saul’s heart did not know that he belonged to God and God belonged to Him.

“Stop!” Samuel said to Saul. “Let me tell you what the Lord said to me last night.” [I believe there was a pause of several seconds between the above statement, and Saul’s reply below] “Tell me,” Saul replied.” (1 Samuel 15:16)

[“Tell me”, may have been spoken in a hushed voice. “Let’s lower our voices a little bit here, Sam ol’ boy! Everybody doesn’t have to hear this ...”]

I believe a major priority for the Spirit of God in writing the Book of Samuel is giving insight into the ways of God with regard to what is required to hear from God. Watch for the “why” of various persons “inquiring of God” in this book, and how and when God does or does not answer them. Students of the prophetic, listen up: You can make some real progress by listening attentively to what God says about the prophetic in this book. Saul’s heart did not want to know what God was saying for fear he would have to give up lordship of his life. The David heart wanted to hear every heartbeat of God, and price was no object. Here, as Saul was being cornered by the truth of who he was, Samuel was in effect asking him, “Do you want to hear what God has to say?” Yes, I’m pretty sure there was a little pause before Saul replied.

“Samuel said, “Although you were once small in your own eyes, did you not become the head of the tribes of Israel? The Lord anointed you king over Israel. And he sent you on a

Tale of Two Hearts

mission, saying, ‘Go and completely destroy those wicked people, the Amalekites; make war on them until you have wiped them out.’ Why did you not obey the Lord? Why did you pounce on the plunder and do evil in the eyes of the Lord?” “But I did obey the Lord,” Saul said. “I went on the mission the Lord assigned me. I completely destroyed the Amalekites and brought back Agag their king. The soldiers took sheep and cattle from the plunder, the best of what was devoted to God, in order to sacrifice them to the Lord your God at Gilgal.” (1 Samuel 15:17-19)

Saul was still hoping against hope that he could pull off the salvation of his flesh. He was trying desperately to “save his life,” and, as Jesus said, he would therefore surely “lose his life.”

“But” Samuel replied: “Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has rejected you as king.” (1 Samuel 15:23)

Thus the ax fell. The sentence was officially pronounced. The public humiliation Saul feared had come upon him. It was at this point too late to humble himself voluntarily – someone else had done it for him! Samuel had said, “Whether you admit you were wrong or not, you were wrong and here are the full consequences of what you’ve done.” Repentance before this point would have ameliorated Saul’s sentence, but now it was too late. As Bob Dylan said, “When you aint got nothin’, you got nothin’ to lose!” Saul had nothing left to lose, so when he began to mouth the words of repentance in the following verses he was merely doing selfish damage control. He was now pretending to repent for the same reason he had refused to admit he was wrong earlier: self-preservation.

“Then Saul said to Samuel, “I have sinned. I violated the Lord’s command and your instructions. I was afraid of the people and so I gave in to them.” (1 Samuel 15:24)

Full disclosure about his sin came rushing out in a torrent: “I did what I did because of the fear of man!” But he could not seem to muster the strength to see or admit that his overriding concern even at this point was damage control, which was why he said:

“Now I beg you, forgive my sin and come back with me, so that I may worship the Lord.” (1 Samuel 15:25)

He was saying, basically: “Well, I said I was sorry, so come back and re-endorse me before the people by doing the sacrifice with me so everybody will see that I’m ‘in good with God’ again. My men heard you say God has rejected me and that might make them REJECT me. I fear men more than God to such an extent that I am willing to admit that I fear men more than God! I’m willing to admit you’ve caught me red-handed, but I’m not willing to embrace the consequences of my sin.” He quailed at the thought of men’s rejection, but he didn’t even notice that Samuel had said that God had rejected him. This made it clear once again who his “god” really was: the people’s approval.

“But Samuel said to him, “I will not go back with you. You have rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected you as king over Israel!” As Samuel turned to leave, Saul caught hold of the hem of his robe, and it tore.” (1 Samuel 15:27)

I believe “push” had quite literally come to “shove” and “king size” Saul gave Samuel a really hard backward jerk, though as subtly as possible, for the people were watching. I believe he was saying with this action, “Samuel, get your wormy little carcass back over here with me before I break your scrawny neck! Play along with me or else!”

Tale of Two Hearts

“Samuel said to him, “The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to one of your neighbors - to one better than you. He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man, that He should change His mind.” (1 Samuel 15:29)

The fact that Saul’s arrogance increased while he was being charged by God with arrogance sealed his fate. As Saul was tearing the robe of Samuel, God was tearing the Kingdom from his hand. God was doing it, but He was doing it by Saul’s own hand. Saul’s sin had its own penalty built in. He who tore the hem of the prophet’s robe was “among the prophets.” His own robe would later have its hem cut clean off by David, symbolically signifying the final separation of Saul from his kingdom.

“Saul replied, “I have sinned. But please honor me before the elders of my people and before Israel; come back with me, so that I may worship the Lord your God.”” (1 Samuel 15:30)

Saul again made it clear where his heart was and who his “god” was. But beyond his words, I think that the tone of this interchange was: “come back Samuel, and make me look good, or die right here.” Otherwise Samuel would not have complied with his request.

“So Samuel went back with Saul, and Saul worshipped the Lord.” (1 Samuel 15:31)

The word for “Lord” here is generic. It can mean any god, not just Yahweh.

“Then Samuel said, “Bring me Agag king of the Amalekites.” Agag came to him confidently, thinking, “Surely the bitterness of death is past.” (1 Samuel 15:32)

Samuel was subtly saying to Saul, “You’ve made me come back and do a ritual, and now I’m going to make the sacrifice to Jehovah you were supposed to make.”

“But Samuel said, “As your sword has made women childless, so will your mother be childless among women.” And Samuel put Agag to death before the Lord at Gilgal. Then Samuel left for Ramah, but Saul went up to his home in Gibeah of Saul. Until the day Samuel died, he did not go to see Saul again, though Samuel mourned for him. And the Lord was grieved that he had made Saul king over Israel.” (1 Samuel 15:35)

It is important to know that when Saul and his men were slaying the Amelekites and their livestock, homeless demons were flying around everywhere looking for lodging. As long as Saul and his men were in obedience to the Creator of all spirits, they were immune to demonization. But Saul had at this point totally refused to obey God from his heart. He had also insisted that Samuel make a sacrifice. As far as Samuel was concerned, he was “sacrificing” Agag to the Yahweh; as far as Saul was concerned, Agag was being sacrificed to the spirit of the fear of men. When Agag’s demons left his corpse, you may be sure where they went: straight into Saul.

I already mentioned that Saul brought Agag home in order to show him off to the people. This is a very good picture of something the New Testament warns us against: rejoicing that the demons are subject to us (Luke 10:20). If you want to make Satan laugh, brag about the fact that you “eat demons for breakfast and walk on Ol’ Scratch like he’s dirt!”

Once I was in a very lively worship service in which we were singing “He’s under my feet, he’s under my feet, Satan is under my feet!” I turned to a fellow pastor who was enthusiastically singing this lyric over and over and said to him, “Praise the LORD! I’m rejoicing tonight that the demons are subject to me, aren’t you?” “I sure am!” was his immediate reply. A few minutes later he realized what he’d said and he looked at me like I’d hit him with a baseball bat! It’s enough that the scripture tells us not to rejoice that the demons are subject to us, but I believe we are also hearing the Spirit of God say this is a very important teaching in the present hour. We can’t

afford to pick up any demonic attachments at this late stage in the game, least of all a religious spirit.

Saul utterly failed his test. His opportunity to destroy Amelek was over. His positional anointing remained till his death, but the full legitimacy of his administration was past. Amelek means “toil.” It was foreknown in God that Israel’s first king would have to take on the task of settling accounts with the nation of Amelek. A detour to review the history that led to “war against Amelek from generation to generation” is in order here.

When Israel saw God’s triumph over Pharaoh at the Red Sea, she was jubilant and full of hope. Three days into their trip across the desert they were without water and having second thoughts about the wisdom of following Jehovah (Exodus 15). They began the “toil” of grumbling at God’s seeming lack of provision. Then Moses was empowered by God to purify the bitter waters of Marah, and Israel’s thirst was slacked. For these Israelites (in whom was much guile) this was a heart-hardening blessing. They got the idea that “blessing” followed grumbling.

Soon they were “hungry” or were saying they were hungry. They had plenty of livestock, and a walking goat was a rolling pantry to these people. Apparently, they thought they might try grumbling again and KEEP their livestock for breeding stock in the promised land, (a cowboy’s inference) (Exodus 16). They were ready to take advantage of God’s anointing in order to preserve their herds, just as Saul’s men wanted to use their God given success against Amelek to augment their herds. And, as a matter of fact, grumbling did get them manna and quail, plus, a stronger conviction that Jehovah is a God who can be manipulated for one’s own benefit.

In Exodus 17, they were again thirsty, so of course they grumbled even more bitterly. Though water was indeed forthcoming they had committed suicide of the heart. David later explained (in Psalm 95) that when they grumbled the third

time at “Massah Meribah,” (the Exodus 17 event), they had done an irreversible thing. “...they shall never enter my rest...” (Psalm 95:11)

Think about that. Their success ruined them. They were hardened into believing they could “operate God”. This is ultimate “toil,” for the spirit-covenant was never for the man who works (toils), but for the man who trusts God. (Romans 4:5)

It is immediately following Massah Meribah, where they had totally ruined themselves by toiling, that the Amelekites attacked them. Doubtless the Amelekites were a natural nation of men, but they profoundly signify man’s stubborn tendency to be self-reliant, when God is calling us to become as trusting and dependent on God as little children. Thus, being attacked by Amelek was being attacked by “toil.” It was the first fruit of trying to control God. Israel’s first king had to do war with Amelek, and though he won a military victory, he was profoundly defeated.

Chapter 4

A Davidic Heart

vs.

A Demonic Hold

(1 Samuel 16)

I see the next two chapters of First Samuel, (16 and 17), as a definite pair. They are mirror images of each other.

“The Lord said to Samuel, “How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king.”
(1 Samuel 16:1)

Samuel had anointed Saul with a “flask of oil,” (1 Samuel 10:1). A flask is a man-made thing that holds a God thing. In choosing to anoint Saul, God had consented to put His Spirit on a man, but the timing of the anointing was chosen by men. David was anointed from a hollowed-out horn. Only God can make a horn. David was both anointed and chosen by God.

The word “chosen” here is interesting. The Hebrew word it is translated from could also be rendered “seen.” God had been watching every heart in the land and he had “seen” a heart that was not driven by what men thought. Instead, it harkened to the thoughts of Yahweh. Jesse’s youngest son was a follower

of the Invisible God, and was therefore qualified to be in front of visible men. He could provide them with true leadership. He would not have to poll their ranks to see which way the political winds were currently blowing. This is a major difference in the “David heart” and the “Saul heart.”

The word for “chosen” could also have been rendered “provided.” God had had David under construction for a long time. A thousand years before this day, Jacob had prophesied that the King, the scepter holder, would come from his fourth son Judah. A century or so before this day, amazing prophetic words had been spoken over the union of Boaz and Ruth. If Israel could have rested in the Lord a little longer, they would have saved a whole generation from futility, for the Lord was in the process of PROVIDING Himself a King.

“But Samuel said, “How can I go? Saul will hear about it and kill me.” (1 Samuel 16:2)

This tells us something about the tone of voice Saul was speaking to Samuel in when he made him come back and “worship” with him. It was no accident that he tore Samuel’s robe.

“The Lord said, “Take a heifer with you and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.’ Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate.” Samuel did what the Lord said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. They asked, “Do you come in peace?” (1 Samuel 16:3-4)

This is a subtle reference to the fact that everybody knew that everybody knew that Saul was a very dangerous man. The threatening tone with which he spoke to Samuel at Gilgal was definitely what Israelite gossips were all abuzz about. Remember, the whole nation was painfully aware that Samuel had told them they would rue the day they insisted on having a king. They knew that Samuel was on bad terms with a

Tale of Two Hearts

dangerous, insecure man. Saul's paranoia eventually lived up to their worst fears.

“Samuel replied, “Yes, in peace; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me.” Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.” (1 Samuel 16:5)

This is also subtle. He had actually consecrated only part of Jesse's sons. The youngest son was not even considered important enough to be called in from the fields for this once in a life time family event. Thus, it is written between the lines that the shepherd boy had already been consecrated – BY GOD!

“When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, “Surely the Lord's anointed stands here before the Lord.” But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” (1 Samuel 16:6-7)

God was saying, “Hey, we've already done height. [Saul was VERY tall] Let's not go by height this time.”

As a matter of fact, when we get to the next chapter, Goliath is going to make all Israel sick of “height.” Eliab, the firstborn, was doubtless tall and handsome. But he was not only “not chosen,” as most of his brothers later proved to be, he was actually “rejected.” There is an important difference:

- 1.) First the people rejected God as their king.
(1 Samuel 8:7)
- 2.) Then God gave them a king in their timing.
- 3.) Then the king rejected the word of the Lord.
(1 Samuel 15:23 & 26;)

- 4.) Then God rejected their king.
(1 Samuel 15:23 & 26)
- 5.) Now Eliab, who has a heart like Saul, as we soon shall see, is rejected.

His rejection is followed by what I believe is one of the three most important statements in this book: “Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” Outward appearance is a Saul thing; heart is a God thing.

“Then Jesse called Abinadab and had him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, “The Lord has not chosen this one either.” Jesse then had Shammah pass by, but Samuel said, “Nor has the Lord chosen this one.” Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, “The Lord has not chosen these.” So he asked Jesse, “Are these all the sons you have?” “There is still the youngest,” Jesse answered, “but he is tending the sheep.” Samuel said, “Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives.” So he sent and had him brought in. He was ruddy, with a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the Lord said, “Rise and anoint him; he is the one.” So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power. Samuel then went to Ramah.” (1 Samuel 16:8-13)

Here is the first example of another theme in this book. We will see that David was not legally a priest, but he was far more priestly than the current priests. Later on, though he was not yet anointed as king of Israel, he did what only kings were allowed to do: he went to the tabernacle to inquire of the Lord as though he were the king. In this instance, he has not been ritually consecrated, yet he was more consecrated than those who were officially consecrated. He was a New Covenant man before there was a New Covenant!

“Now the Spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord tormented him.” (1 Samuel 16:14)

In the following verses the phrase “evil spirit from the Lord” is oft repeated. If it were not stated so many times, many of us wouldn’t believe it. Some don’t anyway. “Tormented” here is more literally translated “terrified.” Saul’s fear of men had at this point grown into a full fledged demonization. His toilsome efforts to control people’s opinions of him had failed him completely, and, clearly, he was aware in his heart that everybody knew he was a fearful man-pleaser. There’s no one less cool than the guy who has figured out that everybody has figured out he’s trying to be cool and yet he’s blowing it. That this “evil spirit” was from “the Lord,” (literally, “Yahweh”), gives us a hint as to the nature of the Lord.

One facet of God’s Immutability is that if you spit into the spiritual wind, spit blows back into your face. Saul’s fear of men caused him to bring back Agag to show him off to cheering crowds of Israelites. Agag was a demonized man, as were the animals Saul brought back. They were supposed to be destroyed because they were full of the evil spirits of the Amelekites. The Amelekites represented the toil of those who would try to manipulate God rather than trust God. (Being your own god is very hard; it makes you paranoid)

But also Saul, I believe, had literally “caught” a demon from Agag when he forced Samuel to offer a sacrifice. The “sacrifice” Samuel chose to offer was cutting off Agag’s head! Remember, demons tend to leave corpses and go to whoever is handy and undefended.

Obviously, if he could, Satan would kill us all, saints and sinners alike. But he is on a leash, as it were, restrained by the Hand of the Lord. When Saul and his men were sent into the demonically saturated land of the Amelekites, they were immune to “catching” demons, because they were exactly in the Lord’s will. But when they stepped OUT of His will in such a place, it was like opening a door on a submarine! Thus, we get to see a very rare thing, a clear case of demonization in the Old Testament, and how it was dealt with.

“Saul’s attendants said to him, “See, an evil spirit from God is tormenting you. Let our lord command his servants here to search for someone who can play the harp. He will play when the evil spirit from God comes upon you, and you will feel better.” So Saul said to his attendants, “Find someone who plays well and bring him to me.” One of the servants answered, “I have seen a son of Jesse of Bethlehem who knows how to play the harp. He is a brave man and a warrior. He speaks well and is a fine-looking man. And the Lord is with him.” (1 Samuel 16:18)

This sounds to me like his servants were “in cahoots” about how to handle their shepherd. There had been an undertone for some time that Saul’s men knew that sometimes they had to kind of, “manage their master,” so to speak.

“Then Saul sent messengers to Jesse and said, “Send me your son David, who is with the sheep.” So Jesse took a donkey loaded with bread, a skin of wine and a young goat and sent them with his son David to Saul.” (1 Samuel 16:19-20)

The day Samuel arrived in Bethlehem, the elders trembled in fear of getting on the wrong side of Saul. (Saul’s fear had fostered their fear) But if anyone in Israel had ever had a “logical” reason to be paranoid, it would have been David. He had just been anointed king in the presence of several pairs of eyes, some of which were envious of him. Saul gave no explanation for his sudden call for David to come to his house, and this summons was an extremely unusual, a once-in-a-lifetime type thing. Any odds maker would have said David was being called in because Samuel had anointed him to be king. But David knew “the odds can become gods,” and he went straight to Saul’s house, without a moment’s hesitation. The contrast between the paranoid heart of Saul and the totally trusting heart of David could hardly have been greater.

On the other hand, David would probably have said to us, “God had just promised me I would be king. How could I be so faithless as to fear that He wouldn’t preserve my life?” To a

Tale of Two Hearts

Saul mind, the king's summons meant David was doomed. As far as David was concerned, he was invulnerable! God often puts us in situations where we have to decide who we are. The choice may be so narrow that we will either be a "hero or a heel," depending on what we choose.

Notice also the phrase: "who is with the sheep." Saul made it a habit of thinking of David in terms of the fact he was a shepherd, which, in that day, was a very lowly occupation. We will see that Saul was unconsciously considering David to be a person of very little significance.

"David came to Saul and entered his service. Saul liked him very much, and David became one of his armor-bearers. Then Saul sent word to Jesse, saying, "Allow David to remain in my service, for I am pleased with him." (1 Samuel 16:21-22)

"Remain" implied David was to have a permanent job. This would have been appropriate, for he was indeed Saul's spiritual armor-bearer, keeping enemies away from him that he could not fight on his own. A lowly shepherd of sheep had become the de facto shepherd of the shepherd of Israel.

"Whenever the spirit from God came upon Saul, David would take his harp and play. Then relief would come to Saul; he would feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him." (1 Samuel 16:23)

David could not "cast out" a demon in the New Testament sense. He could, however, sit down with his harp in the presence of his earthly king, and cast his cares and heap his praises on his Heavenly King as though no one else existed. Saul's demon was a spirit of the fear of man, and it simply could not tolerate the atmosphere of complete confidence and selflessness that was generated by David's full throttle worship. There was just no place for it. So it fled every time David picked up his harp.

Chapter 5

A Rockin' Worship Service (1 Samuel 17)

As I said before, I see First Samuel chapters sixteen and seventeen as a pair.

In chapter sixteen we saw the David heart drive a demon out of a man. In this chapter we will see the same heart drive out the physical manifestation of a demon from a nation. For all practical purposes, David shepherded the king in the previous chapter; he shepherded the nation in this one.

“Now the Philistines gathered their forces for war and assembled at Socoh in Judah. They pitched camp at Ephes Dammim, between Socoh and Azekah. Saul and the Israelites assembled and camped in the Valley of Elah and drew up their battle line to meet the Philistines. The Philistines occupied one hill and the Israelites another, with the valley between them. A champion named Goliath, who was from Gath, came out of the Philistine camp. He was over nine feet tall. He had a bronze helmet on his head and wore a coat of scale armor of bronze weighing five thousand shekels; on his legs he wore bronze greaves, and a bronze javelin was slung on his back. His spear shaft was like a weaver’s rod, and its iron point weighed six hundred shekels. His shield bearer went ahead of him. Goliath stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, “Why do you come out and line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you

Tale of Two Hearts

not the servants of Saul? Choose a man and have him come down to me. If he is able to fight and kill me, we will become your subjects; but if I overcome him and kill him, you will become our subjects and serve us.” Then the Philistine said, “This day I defy the ranks of Israel! Give me a man and let us fight each other.” On hearing the Philistine’s words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified.”

(1 Samuel 17:1-11)

Previously Saul was terrified by a supernatural spirit; in this chapter both he and the nation he rules were terrified by ... a natural man? Maybe not ...

Genesis chapter six begins with the following verses:

“When men began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose. Then the Lord said, “My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years.” The Nephilim [giants] were on the earth in those days - and also afterward - when the sons of God went to the daughters of men and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown.” (Genesis 6:1-4)

Since well before the Christian era, the term “sons of God” has been considered by the Jewish rabbis to refer to angels. The first chapter of Job is one of the places this is corroborated. Jesus made it clear that angels do not marry. However, many people, myself included, believe that, from time to time throughout history, rebelling spirits have taken natural bodies in a type of antichrist incarnation. Note the phrase above: “and also afterward...” which implies this was not a one-time event. Though the “Nephilim” mentioned in Genesis chapter six were doubtless drowned in Noah’s flood, this phrase implies that this was not the last time an event of this kind has occurred.

Before I go on to some more scriptures, let me say that it appears to me that a nation’s sins can reach the place of “full

measure,” (Genesis 15:16). I believe the last straws before judgment are:

1. rampant homosexuality,
2. child sacrifice,
3. and finally, full fledge sexual relations with demonic spirits.

In Genesis chapter 15, the Lord told Abraham that his descendants would re-enter the land only when the sins of its occupants had reached “full measure.” I believe the above three steps into the pit constitute this full measure. Joshua’s generation, 500 years after Abraham, had the call to receive the land Abraham had been promised, and, as part of that call, to slay the giants in the land. Realize that David lived about 400 years after Joshua. I believe the following passage implies that Goliath was some of Joshua’s “unfinished business” left to be cleaned up when the first king finally came to power.

“At that time Joshua went and destroyed the Anakites from the hill country: from Hebron, Debir and Anab, from all the hill country of Judah, and from all the hill country of Israel. Joshua totally destroyed them and their towns. No Anakites were left in Israelite territory; only in Gaza, GATH and Ashdod did any survive. So Joshua took the entire land, just as the Lord had directed Moses [now dead], and he gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal divisions. Then the land had rest from war.” (Joshua 1:21-23)

As you can see, at the beginning of the time of the judges, (which was right after Joshua and four centuries immediately prior to Saul’s kingship), the Anakite/Nephilim giants were left only in the three Philistine strongholds of: ”Gaza, Gath and Ashdod.” Then it follows that the first king to follow the era of the judges would inherit the business of confronting these beings. Goliath, as we read before, was from Gath. And you may remember that Second Samuel details several more encounters David’s men had with Philistine giants, all related to Goliath.

Thus, if my conclusions are correct, the Spirit has followed the chapter where the Saul heart is helpless before an invisible evil spirit with a chapter that shows him helpless before an incarnated evil spirit – Goliath! With this in mind, read on:

“Now David was the son of an Ephrathite named Jesse, who was from Bethlehem in Judah. Jesse had eight sons, and in Saul’s time he was old and well advanced in years. Jesse’s three oldest sons had followed Saul to the war: The firstborn was Eliab; the second, Abinadab; and the third, Shammah. David was the youngest. The three oldest followed Saul, but David went back and forth from Saul to tend his father’s sheep at Bethlehem.” (1 Samuel 17:12-15)

It is said twice that the “three oldest followed Saul.” As we go a little further into our story it will seem that Eliab followed both the Saul heart, as well as the material man. Also, though Saul had awarded David a full time job for “delivering” him, he had forgotten to be true to his word. He had seen fit to change the lowly shepherd boys duties back to part time. The Saul heart had a hard time rightly valuing David’s services, since they were in the invisible realm. But that was about to change. The “demon” at hand was very, very visible!

“For forty days the Philistine came forward every morning and evening and took his stand. Now Jesse said to his son David, “Take this ephah of roasted grain and these ten loaves of bread for your brothers and hurry to their camp. Take along these ten cheeses to the commander of their unit. See how your brothers are and bring back some assurance from them. They are with Saul and all the men of Israel in the Valley of Elah, fighting against the Philistines.”” (1 Samuel 17:16-19)

(Well... they were sort of ...”fighting against the Philistines.”)

“Early in the morning David left the flock with a shepherd, loaded up and set out, as Jesse had directed. He reached the camp as the army was going out to its battle positions, shouting the war cry.” (1 Samuel 17:20)

Though Saul had not been faithful in keeping David in the prestigious position he had earned by “delivering” the king, David’s heart was not embittered. He had the best of attitudes when his father assigned him to “deliver pizza” to his brothers. He rose early, and diligently made sure that in his absence his little flock would be cared for.

“Israel and the Philistines were drawing up their lines facing each other. David left his things with the keeper of supplies, ran to the battle lines and greeted his brothers. As he was talking with them, Goliath, the Philistine champion from Gath, stepped out from his lines and shouted his usual defiance, and David heard it.” (1 Samuel 17:21-23)

Had it not been for David’s diligence in rising and leaving home early, he would have missed this moment. Had he not passed the test of diligence, defeating the small imp of sloth, he would not have been given the honor of being tested in a grander arena and facing a much larger demon – GOLIATH! You did know that the reward for passing eighth grade tests is the opportunity to later be tested on ninth grade stuff, didn’t you? (As an aside, David’s catastrophic sin with Bathsheba twenty years later had as its forerunner the sin of sloth)

“When the Israelites saw the man, they all ran from him in great fear.” (1 Samuel 17:24)

I believe that over the forty days Goliath had been taunting the Israelite troops, he had been foraying further and further into their camp. I think they were running from him because he was coming in so close. If this is the case, and I believe it is, it confirms something else: Goliath was quite LITERALLY covered with metal, right down to a face shield as part of the “bronze helmet on his head.” Otherwise, one of the many Israelites archers would have put an arrow in his eye! They certainly had the motivation to do so with the reward offered by the king! This also fits two other themes I have found in this book:

Tale of Two Hearts

1.) The official god of the Philistines was Dagon, a demonic statue that was also covered with metal! Dagon had already suffered the fate that lay in store for Goliath: decapitation!

2.) In a practical sense the god of the Philistines was their military might, which derived from their advanced technology – metal working. Remember First Samuel 13:19-20:

“Not a blacksmith could be found in the whole land of Israel, because the Philistines had said, “Otherwise the Hebrews will make swords or spears!” So all Israel went down to the Philistines to have their plowshares, mattocks, axes and sickles sharpened.”

The Philistine “Messiah” Goliath, in whom they trusted, was covered with their technological might: metal. King Saul, who had a Philistine heart, was very attached to his sword, his armor and particularly, his spear. Jonathan and David were marked by their tendency to give away their metal weapons. God used them mightily when they did. With the exception of one Davidic moment, Saul clung to his. Ultimately, he wound up falling on his own sword.

“Now the Israelites had been saying, “Do you see how this man keeps coming out? He comes out to defy Israel. The king will give great wealth to the man who kills him. He will also give him his daughter in marriage and will exempt his father’s family from taxes in Israel.” David asked the men standing near him, “What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel? Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?” They repeated to him what they had been saying and told him, “This is what will be done for the man who kills him.” (1 Samuel 17:25)

David confirmed every word in the mouths of at least two witnesses.

“When Eliab, David’s oldest brother, heard him speaking with the men, he burned with anger at him and asked, “Why have you come down here? And with whom did you leave those few sheep in the desert? I know how conceited you are and how wicked your heart is; you came down only to watch the battle.” (1 Samuel 17:28)

David was completely innocent of every accusation. He had been ultimately faithful in every arena in which he was accused. But the Saul heart in Eliab was afraid and angry because of its very nature. Saul knew that the fleshly people enthusiastically hailed him as king partly because of his height. They wanted someone TALL to go out in front of them and fight their battles. At this point, while Goliath is asking for a volunteer to fight him, it’s no fun to be a tall Israelite with a Saul heart.

“Now what have I done?” said David. “Can’t I even speak?” He then turned away to someone else and brought up the same matter, and the men answered him as before.” (1 Samuel 17:29-30)

It is obvious that the giant killer did not fear Eliab; he turned away because he was confident in who he was, not because he was afraid.

“What David said was overheard and reported to Saul, and Saul sent for him. David said to Saul, “Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him.” (1 Samuel 17:31-32)

David’s shepherd heart caused him to immediately begin shepherding someone needing his help, even if it was the king, the official shepherd of Israel. Many of us are called to pastor our pastors, or father our fathers, and yet be effectively unaware that we are doing so. David had the utmost esteem and respect for Saul, even though he had reason to be tempted to resent him. This is part of what it means to be “after God’s heart.”

Tale of Two Hearts

“Saul replied, “You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a boy, and he has been a fighting man from his youth.” But David said to Saul, “Your servant has been keeping his father’s sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God.” (1 Samuel 17:33-36)

The David heart is humble; therefore David was not humiliated or embittered by being sent back, again and again, to the lowliest job in Israel: shepherding. Since he fully trusted God, he knew the details of his life were ordered by the Lord. Consequently, he was content in the place assigned to him, and he was able to be blessed by God in that position.

He knew that God had called him to be king, so he knew he couldn’t die till he fulfilled his assignment. When he had seen beasts attacking Jesse’s sheep, he in turn attacked the beasts. He fully believed God had placed him where he was, so God would surely enable him to do a good job there. Consider this in light of the fact that Jesse had probably been less than fair in his treatment of his youngest son. Yet, no place on earth could have better prepared David for his show down with Goliath. Alone with God in the sheep pastures, doing exploits against bears of resentment and lions of fear – and all without an ounce of vainglory because no one was watching – put him way ahead of all those guys that were up on that hill trying to pump one another up, “shouting the war cry.”

“The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.” Saul said to David, “Go, and the Lord be with you.” (1 Samuel 17:37)

In the first chapter of this book, Hannah, the original “David heart,” was blessed by Eli, the original “Saul heart.” Both she

and David had to convince their respective “Sauls” of the rightness of their faith. When they were blessed by their “Sauls,” God honored the blessing in both cases. If you are at this moment in your life in some measure a “David,” know that it is a good thing to seek your “Saul’s” blessing.

“Then Saul dressed David in his own tunic. He put a coat of armor on him and a bronze helmet on his head. David fastened on his sword over the tunic and tried walking around, because he was not used to them. “I cannot go in these,” he said to Saul, “because I am not used to them.” So he took them off.” (1 Samuel 17:38-39)

The teenage David indulged the extremely tall Saul by trying on his prized equipment. It must have looked ridiculous on him. Saul, for his part, was having a semi-Davidic moment. He was touched by the simple faith and the pure heart of the shepherd boy. Surely Saul was convicted by his awareness that he was the most responsible, qualified, and equipped person to do what David was volunteering to do. The description of his effort to equip David in his own extra-large armor has a real pathos about it. This is the only time he ever offered anyone any of his armaments other than the business end of a spear.

“Then he took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd’s bag and, with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine.” (1 Samuel 17:40)

The beginning of the end for Saul was Gilgal where he in effect worshipped man at the altar of God. His course eventually carried him to full fledged torment by a demon of fear. Being in the presence of the pure worship of a David heart gave him an immediate deliverance, though it was both borrowed and temporary. The demonic spirit of the fear of men could not abide the Presence of the Spirit of the Love of God. David politely turned down Saul’s armor, and took up five stones, his staff, and his sling.

Tale of Two Hearts

An altar is a place where trust is placed in God. In Old Testament times, an altar was generally constructed of unhewn stones. Wood was then piled onto it, (a staff is made of wood). Then an animal was placed on top, (a sling is made of leather, which is an animal skin). David was carrying an altar into battle! He had “worshipped” a demon out of Saul, and he was about to “worship” a demonic manifestation out of Israel! Contrast the forged metallic weapons of men, which must be mined out of the dark earth, heated, beaten, and shaped by man’s might, with the things only God can make: stones, wood, and animal skin!

“Meanwhile, the Philistine, with his shield bearer in front of him, kept coming closer to David.” (1 Samuel 17:41)

Goliath and his armor bearer were Satan’s answer to Jonathan and his armor bearer showing themselves to the Philistines in chapter 14. But when Jonathan attacked the detachment of Philistines, he put himself in front of his armor bearer. Goliath, however, hid behind his armor bearer.

“He looked David over and saw that he was only a boy, ruddy and handsome, and he despised him.” (1 Samuel 17:42)

Ahh... “he despised him.” A Saul heart always despises a David heart, and Goliath was a caricature of Saul. Saul’s daughter would later despise David, and her reward was barrenness (2 Samuel 6:16-23). Goliath despised David, and it cost him his life!

“He said to David, “Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?” And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. “Come here,” he said, “and I’ll give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field!” (1 Samuel 17:43-44)

Jonathan attacked a Philistine detachment without any strategy other than pure faith. David, by contrast, approached the giant with a strategy, and yet, this too was pure faith. He, like Jonathan, had his staff in one hand, and I believe he was

shaking it menacingly at Goliath as though he were about to give him a good “whopping”! He was enraging and distracting the proud giant. He didn’t want him to notice that rolled up in his other hand was his sling, with its pocket outermost, ready to have a stone placed in it. He was trying to infuriate the giant, and make him so indignant that he would have to stop and look David over.

I believe when Goliath stopped to check out this obviously foolish child they had sent out to fight him, he raised his face shield, the thing that had protected him from Israelite missiles heretofore. And I believe that in the heat of his rage, he forgot to lower it again! Thus, Goliath was fooled into forgetting to cover his head fully. Saul had left himself uncovered on his last trip to Gilgal by his disobedience. And a scrawny old prophet had knocked a demon right out of Agag’s head into Saul’s own heart – using his own sword! I also believe that David was deliberately acting like a mentally defective person. You will see why later.

“David said to the Philistine, “You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.” (1 Samuel 17:45)

The... “sword and spear and javelin,” represented an unholy trinity of the real god of Philistia, their advanced metallurgy. “Lord Almighty, the God...” is the English rendering of three names for the Triune God: “Yahweh Saba Elohim.” David boiled the conflict down to its true essence!

“This day the Lord will hand you over to me, and I’ll strike you down and cut off your head. Today I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord’s, and he will give all of you into our hands.” As the Philistine moved

Tale of Two Hearts

closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him.” (1 Samuel 17:46-48)

[With David in motion, it was hard for Goliath to see that he had dropped his staff, and ...]

“Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell face down on the ground. So David triumphed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone; without a sword in his hand he struck down the Philistine and killed him. David ran and stood over him. He took hold of the Philistine’s sword and drew it from the scabbard. After he killed him, he cut off his head with the sword.”

(1 Samuel 17:49-51a)

The Divine Author emphasized that it wasn’t a sword that killed Goliath. He made it plain that it wasn’t Philistine technology, but a Jewish “altar stone” that killed the monster. At the same time, the giant’s sword was used to carve up his carcass. There was Divine poetic, prophetic justice in this. “The Philistine,” who was a caricature of Saul, had his javelin on his back and his sword still in its scabbard when he was killed. Therefore, we can deduce that Goliath was going to try to kill David with his spear. This was also the weapon of choice of Saul. And tragically, Saul hurled it at a David heart four times. By God’s grace, his aim was no better than the giant’s. Also, unlike most of the pictures you see painted of this legendary scene, the giant “fell facedown.” This was the same stance Dagon took before the Ark of the Covenant.

“When the Philistines saw that their hero was dead, they turned and ran.” (1 Samuel 17:51b)

It seems that none of the Saul hearts kept their promises to David! Goliath had promised that if he was defeated, his army would surrender.

“Then the men of Israel and Judah surged forward with a shout and pursued the Philistines to the entrance of Gath and to the gates of Ekron. Their dead were strewn along the Shaaraim road to Gath and Ekron. When the Israelites returned from chasing the Philistines, they plundered their camp. David took the Philistine’s head and brought it to Jerusalem, and he put the Philistine’s weapons in his own tent.” (1 Samuel 17:52-54)

Jerusalem was, at this time, a fortress city under the control of the Jebusites. They were hostile to the Israelites, especially warriors carrying giant’s heads. Their watchmen would certainly have closed their gates when they saw David coming. Quite possibly, David, being as prophetic as he was, may have had inside information that one day Jerusalem would be his. Possibly he carried the head of Goliath to them as if to serve them notice, and say, “you’re next!!” If they wouldn’t let him in the city, maybe he threw the Philistine’s head down on a hill just outside the gates. Maybe they were superstitious and feared to move it. Maybe that hill became known as “the place of the skull.” Maybe... Maybe the demonic spirit in Goliath hated being tricked by David and his staff at Ephes Dammim. Maybe the same spirit that was in Goliath wanted to exact a particular kind of vengeance on David’s Greater Son, Jesus Christ. A staff was thrust into the Son of Davids’ hands and then jerked back, and used to beat the crown of thorns down into His scalp. Maybe there is a connection here. Maybe ... (Matthew 27:29-30)

In the last verses of this chapter the Divine Author wrote in something similar to an “instant replay” after the plunder of the Philistines. It lets us see what was happening with Saul as David attacked Goliath.

“As Saul watched David going out to meet the Philistine, he said to Abner, commander of the army, “Abner, whose son is that young man?” Abner replied, “As surely as you live, O king, I don’t know.” The king said, “Find out whose son this young man is.” As soon as David returned from killing the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul, with

Tale of Two Hearts

David still holding the Philistine's head. "Whose son are you, young man?" Saul asked him. David said, "I am the son of your servant Jesse of Bethlehem."

(1 Samuel 17:55-58)

Saul had actually forgotten David's name. He had "despised" him in the passive sense of the word. Heretofore, he really could not see David, for David did not rank in his economy of things. But we may be confident Saul found it a lot easier to remember the kid holding the fifty pound giant's head!

Before we leave this wonderful chapter, let me point out something really neat God dropped in this passage: In chapter 16, David was anointed with oil in the presence of his father and of one prophet. Then he drove a demon out of Saul that no one else could handle. Then, in chapter 17 he ascertained, (twice), that his whole family would be free from taxation if he kills the giant.

In Matthew 17 Jesus was anointed with light in the presence of His Father and two prophets. Then He drove out a demon no one else could handle. Lastly, in this same chapter 17, Jesus ascertained that he didn't really owe the temple tax. In His perfect humility, He conceded to pay it anyway.

God is amazing.

Chapter 6

Two Spears and Two Daughters (1 Samuel 18)

Chapters eighteen, nineteen and twenty constitute another triad of chapters. They are the “Spears of Saul” triad.

“After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself.”
(1 Samuel 18:1)

Saul talked. Jonathan became one in spirit.

A question presents itself: If Jonathan had been willing to climb a cliff with a virtual “firing squad” of twenty Philistines at the top, why didn’t he take on Goliath?

I believe Jonathan had made the connection in his spirit that every time he trusted God, and God really moved, something weird would happen to his father. In chapter thirteen, Jonathan attacked the Philistines, and his father was rebuked by Samuel shortly thereafter. Jonathan then tried to fix things by taking his armor bearer with him and attacking the Philistines again. The result was that his father spoke a death curse that was supposed to result in the death of either Saul or Jonathan. I don’t think it was clear in Jonathan’s mind, but the presence of the Lord was consistently bringing Saul to a place of judgment

that was painful for his loving and loyal son to see. I believe he hesitated when Goliath challenged Israel because he couldn't bear to see a re-run of the kind of fiascos that had transpired in chapters thirteen and fourteen.

Jonathan was extremely courageous. He did not, however, fully understand a concept that Jesus later spelled out for us. It goes something like this: "if you're going to love God, you will have to be ready to do some things that will make it appear that you hate some of your family members," (my translation). If Jonathan could have mustered the faith to "hate" his father, he would have been able to save him, as we will see. He would also have saved himself.

"From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return to his father's house." (1 Samuel 18:2)

(This was supposed to have been David's reward when he got rid of Saul's demon)

"And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt." (1 Samuel 18:3)

Jonathan again gave away his sword. He would have given David his position as heir to the throne, had he that option. Jonathan's "David heart" guided him faithfully.

"Whatever Saul sent him to do, David did it so successfully that Saul gave him a high rank in the army. This pleased all the people, and Saul's officers as well. When the men were returning home after David had killed the Philistine, the women came out from all the towns of Israel to meet King Saul with singing and dancing, with joyful songs and with tambourines and lutes. As they danced, they sang: "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands." Saul was very angry; this refrain galled him. "They have credited David with tens of thousands," he thought, "but me with only thousands. What more can he get but the kingdom?" And

from that time on Saul kept a jealous eye on David.”
(1 Samuel 18:5-9)

Again, Saul’s god was the praise of man, (in this case, of women!). The kingship for Saul was only a means to the end of receiving the adulation of the masses.

“The next day an evil spirit from God came forcefully upon Saul. He was prophesying in his house, while David was playing the harp, as he usually did. Saul had a spear in his hand.” (1 Samuel 18:10)

Most commentators say “prophesying” in contexts like this has reference to an ecstatic utterance of praise. (See First Samuel 10:5). This seems to fit. Saul was “prophesying” while David was playing. “As he usually did” means this was not the first time this had happened. I believe Saul got free from the evil spirit that was “terrifying” him by worshipping God with David, but Saul wasn’t able to worship the Lord when a sacrifice of his own flesh was being called for. He desired more than anything else to be praised by his men. Though David’s ratings with the singers put murder in Saul’s heart, somehow this didn’t stop Saul from “prophesying.” Sadly, the one thing that was delivering him from fear before (the worship of God) had now become something he was faking in order to try to “rub out” his main competition for the people’s praise! Thus, his fear of man had cut off his only avenue of deliverance from the fear of man.

Consequently, the “evil spirit” (an intelligent, though diabolical entity) came on him forcefully. The spirit was “from God” because it was coming because of Who God Is. (At the same time, because of “Who God Is,” it was thwarted in its effort to kill David!) The original Hebrew here is something like: “David was playing the harp with his hand, while Saul held a spear in his hand.” The contrast is dramatic. The thing in their hands was also in their hearts.

“And he hurled it, saying to himself, ‘I’ll pin David to the wall.’ But David eluded him twice.” (1 Samuel 18:11)

Pinning someone to the wall is an extreme picture of ultimate control, which is witchcraft. Saul was trying to control his perceived problems by his carnal strength. Also, he was attacking David with a spear while the boy was worshipping Jehovah. This was Tall Goliath's mistake. The giant intended to skewer the boy carrying an altar, (wood, stones, and an animal skin). All the confidence of Philistia was vested in Goliath.

Similarly, Israel had asked for a king... "such as all the other nations have..." Enter Tall Saul, the one in whom they had vested all their hopes. The "wrath of God" on Israel was to give them what they asked for. Goliath was the logical end of a road on which a Saul is the beginning. By insisting on a king... "such as all the other nations have..." Israel, God's Covenant people, got a king who persecuted the king God had intended to give them. If Abraham and Sarah could have stood being childless a little longer, Isaac would not have had to grow up in the dark shadow of "tall Ishmael." The Nation Israel in Saul's day bumped its head on the same rock that their forbearers had when they refused to wait for a king. At this point in Israel's history they were being confronted with the consequences of their impatience.

"David eluded him twice."

David believed that if God had promised him something that was as yet unfulfilled, then he couldn't die till it happened. David was totally aware that he had been promised the kingship, insofar as being unafraid of death was concerned. On another level, David was oblivious to the fact that he was supposed to be king. He acted as though Saul was the best thing since sliced bread! He was continually trying to shepherd Saul from a stance of total meekness. Though Saul threw the spear twice, David didn't even leave the premises. He was totally devoid of fear. Saul, by contrast:

"Saul was afraid of David, because the Lord was with David but had left Saul." (1 Samuel 18:12)

David seemed to have much to fear, and feared nothing. Saul had nothing to fear, and feared the very one trying to help him most!

“So he sent David away from him and gave him command over a thousand men, and David led the troops in their campaigns.” (1 Samuel 18:13)

This verse confirms that David did not even leave Saul’s presence when he threw the spear at him a second time. David was still there for Saul to send out.

“In everything he did, he had great success, because the Lord was with him. When Saul saw how successful he was, he was afraid of him.” (1 Samuel 18:14-15)

David was destroying the thing that threatened Saul most, the Philistines, and yet this made Saul more afraid.

“But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he led them in their campaigns. Saul said to David, “Here is my older daughter Merab. I will give her to you in marriage; only serve me bravely and fight the battles of the Lord .” For Saul said to himself, “I will not raise a hand against him. Let the Philistines do that!” (1 Samuel 18:16-17)

Merab was supposed to have been given to David as part of his reward for killing Goliath. Saul did not have enough character to keep his word. David had too much character to remind him of his obligation, though he had twice confirmed what his reward was to be before he slew the giant. Saul was saying, “If you will keep killing lots of Philistines, I’ll give her to you. “Merab” means “increase.” Saul presumed David was like himself. He presumed he would jump at the chance to “increase” his status by marrying the king’s daughter. Saul also believed in odds. He thought that if he could keep David on the front lines, his luck would run out and eventually he’d be killed. David didn’t believe in odds. He believed in God.

Tale of Two Hearts

“But David said to Saul, ‘Who am I, and what is my family or my father’s clan in Israel, that I should become the king’s son-in-law?’” (1 Samuel 18:18)

It is clear that David knew Merab was owed to him, and yet his humility was so great that he did not let himself know what he knew too much. This was similar to his full awareness that he was to be king, and yet on another level, it was the furthest thing from his mind. The David heart is a pure heart. He considered himself and his family totally unqualified for royalty, and yet he, along with most of Israel, was aware that the first king was supposed to come from Judah, David’s tribe. (Genesis 49:10)

It is a good thing not to know what you know too much. The father of John the Baptist was told that John was the fulfillment of the one coming in the spirit of Elijah, (Luke 1:17). So John, doubtless, also knew. Yet when he was asked if he was the “Elijah,” he seemed to not know that he was, (John 1:21). Did you hear about the guy who received a medal for being humble, but he was wise enough not to wear it? Don’t know what you know too much.

“So when the time came for Merab, Saul’s daughter, to be given to David, she was given in marriage to Adriel of Meholah.” (1 Samuel 18:19)

David’s humility delivered him from a snare, (being married to Saul’s daughter), and it is implied that Saul agreed that, “Yeah, David’s right. He probably isn’t good enough to be my son-in-law.”

“Now Saul’s daughter Michal was in love with David, and when they told Saul about it, he was pleased. “I will give her to him,” he thought, “so that she may be a snare to him and so that the hand of the Philistines may be against him.” So Saul said to David, “Now you have a second opportunity to become my son-in-law.”” (1 Samuel 18:20-21)

Saul at this point set a new record for attempts at manipulation. His plan was to kill David by the Hand of Jehovah! His concept of God was so low that he didn't believe God knew what he, (Saul), was doing or why. He saw God as an angry, raging force to be controlled to one's own advantage. Though he surely wasn't thinking about it this way, he was trying to trick Jehovah like David tricked Goliath! He believed that if David became one flesh with a wicked woman, (Michal, his daughter, was a full-fledged idol worshipper, as we will see), that God would blindly pour out His wrath on him! This was extreme presumption! It is similar to the attitude of a person who might rub blood on someone and then throw them into a shark tank in order to kill them. Saul saw God as a mindless shark, an impersonal, unreasoning force! Wild as this mindset sounds, it's not so very far from the madness of the man who can praise God while taking aim at the worship leader!

Have you ever gone through the motions in a worship service while resenting, or lusting after, or envying someone on the worship team? I have. God help me! Saul was terribly and tragically wrong about Who God Is. And yet he had a basic insight in another area we would do well to partake of ourselves: Few of us understand how true it is that in marital union the souls of the partners are somehow mingled.

For example:

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.” (Genesis 2:24)

"Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, “The two will become one flesh.” (1 Corinthians 6:15-16)

Obviously these passages do not mean two people are physically grafted into one body. This means that somehow

the flesh minds, (the souls), of sex partners become one. The single most difficult concept in this book for you to accept will likely be this: God chose to let Saul succeed in doing something to David that was exceedingly useful in demonstrating His ways. Said differently, what happens to David will show us dramatically Who God Really Is, and what a heart that is after His Heart looks like.

The thing Saul succeeded in doing was this: he made David temporarily like himself. Sleeping with Michal caused David to temporarily believe in outward appearances. After he was away from her for a time, (maybe three days), David would suddenly wake up and revert to the David heart again. More on this later. Consider also the following verses where the marital relationship is compared to drinking water:

“Drink water from your own cistern, running water from your own well. Should your springs overflow in the streets, your streams of water in the public squares? Let them be yours alone, never to be shared with strangers. May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth.” (Proverbs 5:15-18)

An hour after you drink a glass of water, it is present in every cell of your body. You and the glass of water will have become one. Now, back to our story:

“Then Saul ordered his attendants: “Speak to David privately and say, ‘Look, the king is pleased with you, and his attendants all like you; now become his son-in-law.’ They repeated these words to David. But David said, “Do you think it is a small matter to become the king’s son-in-law? I’m only a poor man and little known.” (1 Samuel 18:22-23)

Insofar as David was “poor,” it was only so because the “great wealth” promised him for killing Goliath had not been forthcoming. However, the fact that Saul was his debtor was far from David’s mind. He was also well-known for his exploits by this time, though he desired man’s praise so little,

he had not noticed his new status. Also, he was again oblivious to the fact that Saul already owed him a daughter.

“When Saul’s servants told him what David had said, Saul replied, “Say to David, ‘The king wants no other price for the bride than a hundred Philistine foreskins, to take revenge on his enemies.’ Saul’s plan was to have David fall by the hands of the Philistines.” (1 Samuel 18:24-25)

Though David had already paid for Michal with Goliath’s head, Saul offered him a conditional sales contract whereby he could pay for her again. He believed that the odds would have to catch up with David, his luck would run out, and a Philistine spear would find the target his own spear had missed. We will see in verse 26 that in addition to these conditions, Saul actually put a time limit on his offer in order that David would be under time pressure.

In chapter fourteen Saul called a carnal fast in which he said: “Cursed be any man who eats food before evening comes, before I have avenged myself on my enemies!” He had spoken of his motive as holy vengeance, though it was really a hunger for status. The result was that a tremendous move of God was hobbled, partly because his troops were made physically weak. In this passage he was again giving holy vengeance as his motive and he was again actually working to shore up his status. The result this time was going to turn out to be similar to the previous time, for David, a living, walking, breathing “move of God,” was about to be made spiritually weak.

Before, the fast resulted in Saul pronouncing a death curse on himself. This time, the curse he is able to put into effect on David will weaken David’s ability to oppose the Philistines. Thus the Philistines were restrained less than they would have been, and they were ultimately able to kill Saul, which fulfilled the curse Saul had spoken on himself in chapter 14. This is how curses actually work. To defy the ways of the Giver of Life is to embrace death.

Tale of Two Hearts

“When the attendants told David these things, he was pleased to become the king’s son-in-law. So before the allotted time elapsed, David and his men went out and killed two hundred Philistines. He brought their foreskins and presented the full number to the king so that he might become the king’s son-in-law. Then Saul gave him his daughter Michal in marriage.”
(1 Samuel 18:26-27)

Saul must have been stunned that David’s luck had not run out, even when David killed twice as many Philistines as he had asked for, and within “the allotted time.” But he still had another card up his sleeve. He believed that when David actually began to sleep with Michal, he would become like her, and thus he would incur the wrath of Jehovah.

As an aside, I believe David taking 200 Philistines foreskins is a picture of the Son of David. The Christ had to be able to deal with the filth of the flesh in order to take a bride to His side. He will do twice as good a job as the flesh ever dared ask for, and He will do it... “before the allotted time [has] elapsed.” He will have a bride... “without spot or wrinkle.”

“When Saul realized that the Lord was with David and that his daughter Michal loved David, Saul became still more afraid of him, and he remained his enemy the rest of his days. The Philistine commanders continued to go out to battle, and as often as they did, David met with more success than the rest of Saul’s officers, and his name became well known.”
(1 Samuel 18:28-30)

Chapter 7

Deceiving and Being Deceived (1 Samuel 19)

Each chapter heretofore has laid the groundwork for the succeeding chapters. We now have enough background laid to get a feel for the size of the picture God is painting here.

“Saul told his son Jonathan and all the attendants to kill David. But Jonathan was very fond of David and warned him, “My father Saul is looking for a chance to kill you. Be on your guard tomorrow morning; go into hiding and stay there.”
(1 Samuel 19:1)

There was at this point a spirit of murder on Saul, but he was not as yet entangled in a spirit of deceit. He was trying to kill David, but he was not trying to hide it from anyone. By the end of this chapter, this has changed.

“I will go out and stand with my father in the field where you are. I’ll speak to him about you and will tell you what I find out.” Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father and said to him, “Let not the king do wrong to his servant David; he has not wronged you, and what he has done has benefited you greatly. He took his life in his hands when he killed the Philistine. The Lord won a great victory for all Israel, and you saw it and were glad. Why then would you do wrong to an innocent man like David by killing him for no reason?” Saul

listened to Jonathan and took this oath: “As surely as the Lord lives, David will not be put to death.” (1 Samuel 19:3-6)

At this moment Saul was not only without overt deceit, he was entreatable. His favorite son was able to bring logic and truth to bear and expose the obvious insanity of his intentions. Saul even swore an oath which was embedded with more truth than he knew: He swore David’s life was as safe as God’s.

“So Jonathan called David and told him the whole conversation. He brought him to Saul, and David was with Saul as before. Once more war broke out, and David went out and fought the Philistines. He struck them with such force that they fled before him.” (1 Samuel 19:7-8)

It seems that whenever David struck the Philistines, Saul yelled, “Ouch!” He wanted the Philistines killed, but he wanted even more to be the most honored man in the kingdom. This attention to outward appearances was a Philistine attitude. Therefore, because Saul had what was really a Philistine spirit, he unwittingly moved to preserve the Philistines.

“But an evil spirit from the Lord came upon Saul as he was sitting in his house with his spear in his hand. While David was playing the harp,” (1 Samuel 19:9)

This verse is intentionally similar to the tenth verse of the previous chapter. We are seeing a repetition of a previous scene, as scientists say, with only one “variable” changed: David’s heart.

“Saul tried to pin him to the wall with his spear, but David eluded him as Saul drove the spear into the wall. That night David made good his escape.” (1 Samuel 19:10)

“Made good his escape” is the Lord specifying that David did not stay around to give Saul a second shot this time. Saul did not re-commission him and send him off to the front lines as he did before. David was not around to send. David, who was

now married to Michal, had now received, temporarily, a Saul heart! He was no longer certain he could not die before he had become king.

“Saul sent men to David’s house to watch it and to kill him in the morning. But Michal, David’s wife, warned him, “If you don’t run for your life tonight, tomorrow you’ll be killed.” (1 Samuel 19:11)

Though this warning sounds like the words of a loving wife, it is much more than that. She was indeed doing her best to save David, but she was a true daughter of Saul. Her warning was saying that he had to protect himself, for God would not protect Him if he didn’t. The old David-heart-David would have stayed in Saul’s court, which would have cast brilliant light on Saul’s darkness. “The righteous are as bold (confident) as a lion,” but the Saul-heart David ran like a rabbit!

“So Michal let David down through a window, and he fled and escaped.” (1 Samuel 19:12)

Why would the Holy Spirit give us this seemingly inconsequential detail about the window? What difference does his route of escape make? Second Samuel 6:16 says that Michal watched David worshipping God “from a window,” and from that point despised him. The despising of the David-heart by the Saul-heart was, and is, pure witchcraft! In both of these cases Michal effected her power through a window. [I repeat, Michal here meant to save David’s life. But she was preaching Saulish unbelief.] The Lord linked the two “window scenes” together to cue us to their spiritual similarity! David has here been conned into trying to save his own life, a dangerous practice indeed. If you doubt me, read on. The plot thickens!

“Then Michal took an idol and laid it on the bed, covering it with a garment and putting some goats’ hair at the head.” (1 Samuel 19:13)

Tale of Two Hearts

A Hebrew word sometimes translated “demons” in the Old Testament is literally “goat idols.” With that in mind, we come to an amazing insight into Who God Is. Saul believed that his daughter would be “a snare” to David. (“The fear of man brings a snare”) He believed he should make arrangements for the holy shepherd boy to be immersed and enmeshed in a marriage to a demon worshipper. He thought that surely Jehovah would smite the polluted vessel that David would become. But God, of course, knew Saul was ignorantly operating as though the Lord knew nothing of his plans.

God’s response was the purest and most poetic justice. Though the Lord let Saul succeed in demonizing David, He made it look to Saul as though a demon (the idol) and Michal had worked together to save David from Saul’s hands! The Lord was going to ultimately frustrate Saul’s every attempt to manipulate Himself and His power. Unfortunately for Saul, he was slow to see what God was rubbing in his face!

Four centuries after Saul’s time, Ezekiel had an experience and a revelation that spoke to the heart of what was happening with certain idolaters in his day. It also applies to King Saul, the spiritual ancestor of the idolaters of Ezekiel’s time.

Ezekiel 14: 1-8

“Some of the elders of Israel came to me and sat down in front of me. Then the word of the Lord came to me: “Son of man, these men have set up idols in their hearts and have put wicked stumbling blocks before their faces. Should I let them inquire of me at all? Therefore speak to them and tell them, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: When any Israelite sets up idols in his heart and puts up a wicked stumbling block before his face and then goes to a prophet, I the Lord will answer him in keeping with his great idolatry. I will do this to recapture the hearts of the people of Israel, who have deserted me for their idols.’ “Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Repent! Turn from your idols and renounce all your detestable practices.’ ““When any Israelite or alien living in Israel separates himself from me and sets up

idols in his heart and puts a wicked stumbling block before his face and then goes to a prophet to inquire of me, I the Lord will answer him myself. I will set my face against that man and make him an example and a byword. I will cut him off from my people. Then you will know that I am the Lord. And if a prophet is enticed to utter a prophecy, I the Lord have enticed that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand against him and destroy him from among my people Israel.”

Because Saul’s heart did not really know or love the Lord, he was not “after His heart.” When he inquired of the Lord, it was only because he had some angle he was pursuing which made it advantageous to inquire of God, or at least to be thought by men to be inquiring of God. Thus, as it says above, he had “separate[d] himself from [God].” This was the very essence of idolatry, the very thing Samuel had charged him with at Gilgal. If you inquire of God for carnal advantage, bet on it: you will surely hear from God! And he will speak something to you that will surely break you, because His intent is “to recapture the hearts of the people of Israel.”

“When Saul sent the men to capture David, Michal said, “He is ill.”” (1 Samuel 19:14)

[It’s written between the lines that Michal took Saul’s men to a bedroom door and pointed to a bed that appeared to have an “ill man” in it. All they really saw was a form under some cover with some black goats hair sticking out where the head of the “ill man” should have been.]

“Then Saul sent the men back to see David and told them, “Bring him up to me in his bed so that I may kill him.” But when the men entered, there was the idol in the bed, and at the head was some goats’ hair. Saul said to Michal, “Why did you deceive me like this and send my enemy away so that he escaped?” Michal told him, “He said to me, ‘Let me get away. Why should I kill you?’”” (1 Samuel 19:15-17)

Those who do not love the truth will eventually love deceit. They will “go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.” Saul first put his daughter Michal in such a place so as to force her to deceive her father or see her husband killed. Then he put her in the place of having to choose between facing her own death at her father’s hands or deceiving him by vilifying David. She chose to lie to her father, knowing full well of David’s innocence. She also knew fully her father’s eagerness to be deceived into believing David had threatened his daughter, which he had “so graciously” given to the shepherd boy! Thus had Saul actually “witchcrafted” himself [through Michal] into a demonic stronghold of self-deceit. He could, from this point on, ignore what he knew with his heart, and focus on what his daughter had witnessed against David. This is what Ezekiel called “separating” from God. All the Saul hearts in the books of Samuel eventually were separated from their heads – they were decapitated or their necks broken. It goes without saying: God is our Head.

It was now Saul’s duty as a father to hunt down David and kill him! He who was trying to use witchcraft as a weapon was falling on his own sword. And he believed he was serving his own interests in doing so. Some advice that will serve you well: Don’t be surprised when persons in a panic or a rage lie to you. When those two war horses are loosed, truth is quickly trodden down in the streets.

This thinly veiled threat Saul made against Michal was followed by an increase in the strength of the stronghold in Saul’s soul. It was a sad sequel to the thinly veiled threat Saul made against Samuel at Gilgal, which was followed by an evil spirit being loosed on him.

“When David had fled and made his escape, he went to Samuel at Ramah and told him all that Saul had done to him. Then he and Samuel went to Naioth and stayed there.”
(1 Samuel 19:18)

Once David began running from Saul, he could find no place to stop. He could no longer muster the faith to abide in Jehovah in Saul's house, ignoring whizzing spears. Michal had said, "He is ill." He was indeed an "ill" man. He was "temporarily insane" with a Saul heart. For the first time in his life he had come to believe in outward appearance. This will be important later.

Think of this: Saul planned to use Michal, her demons, and her marriage bed to make David become one flesh, (and one soul), with his daughter, thus weakening him. Instead of Saul's plan succeeding, Jehovah saw to it that not only did it seem that David was saved from Saul's murderous intentions by one of Michal's idols/demons, he was also saved by Michal's bed!

"Word came to Saul: "David is in Naioth at Ramah," so he sent men to capture him. But when they saw a group of prophets prophesying, with Samuel standing there as their leader, the Spirit of God came upon Saul's men and they also prophesied." (1 Samuel 19:19-20)

Samuel, in his later years, had established a school of the prophets where worship was as strong as it had been when David worshiped God in Saul's house. Saul's men, who had been sent to arrest David, were paralyzed by the presence of God at this "school." But you can be sure, God was going to save the overwhelmed and confused David regardless of how He had to do it. The Judge of all the Earth is the only One who can know for sure when a person is an incorrigible Saul, and when they are a David temporarily overwhelmed by a Saul spirit.

"Saul was told about it, and he sent more men, and they prophesied too. Saul sent men a third time, and they also prophesied." (1 Samuel 19:21)

Saul believed very little in the invisible, though he had experienced it himself. He thought that if he kept throwing enough troops, (with enough spears), that David's luck would

Tale of Two Hearts

have to run out, and one of his men would manage to kill David. Finally he said to himself, “I CAN DO THIS! I can place one foot in front of the other and I can go kill David myself!”

“Finally, he himself left for Ramah and went to the great cistern at Secu. And he asked, “Where are Samuel and David?” “Over in Naioth at Ramah,” they said.”
(1 Samuel 19:22)

This is very important. Saul drank from “the great cistern at Secu.” “Secu” means “surmount.” I believe that surmount in this context means, “I can surmount anything I set my mind to. I can, by my own strength, be the master of my fate and the captain of my soul. I am my own lord and I will take care of me.” Which, of course, is the song of those who serve outward appearance. And Secu is a cistern. We will see later that it is significant that the word “cistern” is used here, and that a man’s wife is called his “cistern” (Proverbs 5:15). As a glass of water, once drunk, permeates your whole body, so this “secu spirit” had become the thing Saul was drinking and was “married to.” Also notice in the above verse that it says... “Samuel AND David.” This is important for what we will read in the first verses of the next chapter.

“So Saul went to Naioth at Ramah. But the Spirit of God came even upon him, and he walked along prophesying until he came to Naioth. He stripped off his robes and also prophesied in Samuel’s presence. He lay that way all that day and night. This is why people say, “Is Saul also among the prophets?””
(1 Samuel 19:23-24)

First Samuel is a tale of two hearts. It didn’t matter how much God did for Saul, if Saul refused to entrust himself to God, he was doomed to die by his own hand. Saul had seen and felt so many God-things you could hardly consider him to be an atheist. He had a certain kind of “belief.” He knew for sure God was there and He could do miracles. But there is a second

kind of belief he did not have, a kind of faith/belief/trust that only David-hearts have.

In the sixth chapter of John, Jesus fed the five thousand. Afterward, there was certainly not an unbeliever in the bunch! They were talking of making him king by force. When Jesus seemed to disappear, they even crossed the lake in search of him, just on an off chance of finding him in Capernaum. And they did this, even though they had ascertained that He had not been in any of the boats that had left their area. They were convinced He had the capacity to have transported himself across the lake without the benefit of a boat. When they did find him, they immediately started trying to induce him to open the chow lines again. They had absolutely no doubt of his power to do the miraculous, but He refused to feed them. He basically said that if they wouldn't follow Him without being fed by Him, then they didn't have what He called "belief."

This, the "Jesus kind of belief," says: "Lord, I have 'seen' you so I know you and love you. Therefore I will serve you for nothing, if need be." This kind of belief is the essential nature of the David heart. It is absolutely foreign to the Saul heart.

On the other hand, things happen to Davids. They seem to lapse into a Saul heart at times. But it isn't permanent; it passes. David had been conned into coming under a stronghold in the above chapter. But his Lord knew that when he was away from Michal long enough, he would revert to being who he really was. Furthermore, David was aware, at least part of the time, that he had been "snared" by Saul. Psalm 142, written by David in one of the caves he hid in while fleeing from Saul, says: "...men have hidden a snare for me." He seemed cognizant that his fear was hindering his ability to praise God, for he wrote in the last verse: "Set me free from my prison that I may praise your name." Thus, we see the originator of spiritual warfare with his most trusted spiritual weapon (praise) knocked from his hand. But he will recover. David will become David again.

Chapter 8

“Only a Step from Death”

(1 Samuel 20)

“Then David fled from Naioth at Ramah and went to Jonathan and asked, “What have I done? What is my crime? How have I wronged your father that he is trying to take my life?” (1 Samuel 20:1)

In chapter 19, Saul was looking for both Samuel and David. They were both potential targets of the paranoid Saul. When Saul was overcome by the presence of God at Naioth, he “prophesied in Samuel’s presence” (see 1 Samuel 19:24). David, by divine contrast, had fled. Saul did not harm Samuel. He couldn’t. Had David stayed in Naioth, he would have been as safe as Samuel—as safe as he had been when Saul missed him twice with his spear—as safe as he had been while facing lions, bears, and giants. But David had become enough like Saul that he was afraid for his life. This was not the old David who trusted the invisible God. Saul had successfully imposed his nature upon David.

“Never!” Jonathan replied. “You are not going to die! Look, my father doesn’t do anything, great or small, without confiding in me. Why would he hide this from me? It’s not so!” (1 Samuel 20:2)

Something new was going on with Saul. He was under a spirit of deceit, though Jonathan did not yet know it. He had never seen his father lie.

“But David took an oath and said, ‘Your father knows very well that I have found favor in your eyes, and he has said to himself, ‘Jonathan must not know this or he will be grieved.’ Yet as surely as the Lord lives, and as you live, there is only a step between me and death.’” (1 Samuel 20:3)

As I said, the oaths in Samuel are pregnant with meaning. David thought he was only a step from death, and yet the Lord kept him from swearing on God alone.

Before his marriage, David believed he was invulnerable because he was dwelling in God. Even a giant was not a problem to the boy who believed the omnipotent God had promised him something that was as yet unfulfilled. At this point, however, David believed that only the quickness of his feet had delivered him. He had begun to believe that staying alive was something he had to take care of himself.

It was not true that there was only a step between David and death. David was under the Lord’s sovereign love and care, although he didn’t know it. He had been moved from his simple faith, and the Lord had allowed him to be moved, but the Lord Himself had not moved an inch. Therefore David was as safe as ever. So God sovereignly changed David’s oath to make it true—terribly, ironically true. David, without realizing it, put a double condition on the oath: “as surely as the Lord lives and as you live.”

How secure was Jonathan’s life? David’s oath stated that as surely as Jonathan lived, David was a step from death. But Jonathan’s life was not secure, which meant that David was not a step from death.

“Jonathan said to David, “Whatever you want me to do, I’ll do for you.” So David said, “Look, tomorrow is the New Moon

festival, and I am supposed to dine with the king; but let me go and hide in the field until the evening of the day after tomorrow. “If your father misses me at all, tell him, ‘David earnestly asked my permission to hurry to Bethlehem, his hometown, because an annual sacrifice is being made there for his whole clan.’ “If he says, ‘Very well,’ then your servant is safe. But if he loses his temper, you can be sure that he is determined to harm me. As for you, show kindness to your servant, for you have brought him into a covenant with you before the Lord. If I am guilty, then kill me yourself! Why hand me over to your father?” “Never!” Jonathan said. “If I had the least inkling that my father was determined to harm you, wouldn’t I tell you?” David asked, “Who will tell me if your father answers you harshly?” “Come,” Jonathan said, “let’s go out into the field.” So they went there together. Then Jonathan said to David: “By the Lord, the God of Israel, I will surely sound out my father by this time the day after tomorrow! If he is favorably disposed toward you, will I not send you word and let you know? “But if my father is inclined to harm you, may the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if I do not let you know and send you away safely. May the Lord be with you as he has been with my father.” (1 Samuel 20:4-13)

Jonathan unwittingly put his finger on something: “May the Lord be with you as he has been with my father.” God was allowing the same demons that had ruined Saul to come against David. The purpose of this sequence in David’s life was to show us that a David heart may be manipulated into behaving like Saul for a time, but it will eventually revert back to its true Davidic nature. Likewise, though Saul came under God’s Spirit several times, he always reverted back to his fleshly nature.

“But show me unflinching kindness like that of the Lord as long as I live, so that I may not be killed, and do not ever cut off your kindness from my family — not even when the Lord has cut off every one of David’s enemies from the face of the earth.” So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, “May the Lord call David’s enemies to account.” And

Jonathan had David reaffirm his oath out of love for him, because he loved him as he loved himself. Then Jonathan said to David: “Tomorrow is the New Moon festival. You will be missed, because your seat will be empty. “The day after tomorrow, toward evening, go to the place where you hid when this trouble began, and wait by the stone Ezel. “I will shoot three arrows to the side of it, as though I were shooting at a target. “Then I will send a boy and say, ‘Go, find the arrows.’ If I say to him, ‘Look, the arrows are on this side of you; bring them here,’ then come, because, as surely as the Lord lives, you are safe; there is no danger. “But if I say to the boy, ‘Look, the arrows are beyond you,’ then you must go, because the Lord has sent you away.” (1 Samuel 20:14-22)

When Jonathan said, “because the Lord has sent you away,” he was verbalizing his and David’s belief that Yahweh was in charge of whatever happened, through good men or bad. And they were right.

“And about the matter you and I discussed—remember, the Lord is witness between you and me forever.” So David hid in the field, and when the New Moon festival came, the king sat down to eat. He sat in his customary place by the wall, opposite Jonathan, and Abner sat next to Saul, but David’s place was empty. Saul said nothing that day, for he thought, “Something must have happened to David to make him ceremonially unclean—surely he is unclean.” (1 Samuel 20: 23-25)

Notice that Saul was completely willing for David to be absent if it was a matter of his keeping the law. He was planning to murder David, but he didn’t mind postponing it if that was what was necessary for David to remain kosher!

Do you remember how the New Testament scribes would not go inside Pilate’s house in order to talk to him about murdering Jesus, the Son of David? Pilate had to come out to them. He was a Gentile, and they didn’t want to become unclean right

before Passover. They didn't mind murdering God's Son, but they didn't want to be technically unclean! (John 18:28)

The most common way for a married person to become unclean was through marital relations. It was not shameful to become unclean in this manner; it was expected of married Jews. Cleansing from this uncleanness required a twenty-four hour process, so Saul was not upset when newlywed David was missing for one day. Saul was zealous for the ceremonial side of the law. He was zealous for outward appearance.

The wonderful divine irony here is that David sleeping with Michal was in fact the real issue, though in a different way than Saul thought. Neither God nor man was really concerned with the technical uncleanness that came with the marriage bed. But Saul had succeeded in making David spiritually weak through Michal's bed. The hardest thing to accept in this little book is, as strange as it sounds, Saul's own fears had come upon David since he had "become one" with Michal. Saul thought when he arranged the marriage that God would be angry with David for marrying an idolatrous woman. Saul did not fully understand that Michal had influenced David to the extent that he now fervently believed he was "only a step from death." Saul also did not begin to understand the depth of God's unfailing love that was going to deliver David despite the demons of fear that had overtaken him.

Saul, and everyone else, was genuinely surprised that David hadn't come back into their circle. They had reserved his chair for him. Saul had a record of irrational behavior, and David had a record of dealing with it. But this was not the David they had known before.

"But the next day, the second day of the month, David's place was empty again. Then Saul said to his son Jonathan, "Why hasn't the son of Jesse come to the meal, either yesterday or today?" Jonathan answered, "David earnestly asked me for permission to go to Bethlehem. "He said, 'Let me go, because our family is observing a sacrifice in the town and my brother

has ordered me to be there. If I have found favor in your eyes, let me get away to see my brothers.’ That is why he has not come to the king’s table.” (1 Samuel 20: 27-29)

Jonathan was cringing inside as he defended David to Saul. He even went to the extent of throwing in the bit about David being ordered by Eliab to attend the feast. Jonathan didn’t fully know his father’s intentions, and yet he suspected them. And he strove mightily to pacify him.

“Saul’s anger flared up at Jonathan and he said to him, “You son of a perverse and rebellious woman! Don’t I know that you have sided with the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of the mother who bore you? “As long as the son of Jesse lives on this earth, neither you nor your kingdom will be established. Now send and bring him to me, for he must die!” “Why should he be put to death? What has he done?” Jonathan asked his father. But Saul hurled his spear at him to kill him. Then Jonathan knew that his father intended to kill David.” (1 Samuel 20: 30-33)

Sin is not sane. In order to insure Jonathan’s throne, Saul tried to kill him? Again he used the spear, the preferred weapon of both Saul and Goliath.

Let’s go further here: Saul was glad to see David keep the law with regard to ritual uncleanness, but he had murder in his heart. In chapter 14 Saul was zealous about insuring that the men didn’t eat meat with blood in it, and a few verses later he is about to kill Jonathan. It is beyond the scope of this book, but let me mention that in Second Samuel 12 David had become a Saul heart when he committed adultery and murder ... and yet he is very legalistic about assuring that the man in Nathan’s story who’d stolen a lamb pay back four fold to the man it was taken from. The Saul heart is all about the letter of the Law, but it cares little for the Spirit of the Law.

Tale of Two Hearts

“Jonathan got up from the table in fierce anger; on that second day of the month he did not eat, because he was grieved at his father’s shameful treatment of David.” (1 Samuel 20:34)

At the battle of Gilgal, Jonathan had been the only one not fasting, and his father had threatened his life. Here he was the only one who was fasting, and his father took a shot at him again. Have you gathered by now that there’s a pattern of Saul’s fear weakening even the strong?

“In the morning Jonathan went out to the field for his meeting with David. He had a small boy with him, and he said to the boy, “Run and find the arrows I shoot.” As the boy ran, he shot an arrow beyond him. When the boy came to the place where Jonathan’s arrow had fallen, Jonathan called out after him, “Isn’t the arrow beyond you?” Then he shouted, “Hurry! Go quickly! Don’t stop!” The boy picked up the arrow and returned to his master.” (1 Samuel 20:35-38)

This was not according to their planned set of signals. Jonathan was beside himself with grief. He was not able to send David away without talking to him one more time.

(The boy knew nothing of all this; only Jonathan and David knew) “Then Jonathan gave his weapons to the boy and said, “Go, carry them back to town.” (1 Samuel 20: 39-40)

Again, Jonathan gave his weapons away.

“After the boy had gone, David got up from the south side of the stone and bowed down before Jonathan three times, with his face to the ground...” (1 Samuel 20:41)

The stone had already been named Ezel, and Ezel means “departure.” It was predestined in God that David would have to depart. And I don’t believe this note that David was on the south side of this particular stone is there for nothing. The clan of the high priest was the Kohathite clan and they camped on the south side of the tabernacle in Numbers chapter three.

Clearly, David is pictured throughout Samuel as one who transcends the law, even as Christ did. Because of David’s heart, he was qualified to be even more intimate with God than the high priest’s family.

“Then they kissed each other and wept together—but David wept the most.” (1 Samuel 20:41)

Did David weep the most because he had a spiritual instinct that his friend was sliding toward a deadly precipice, and he was in no condition to rescue him?

“Jonathan said to David, “Go in peace, for we have sworn friendship with each other in the name of the Lord, saying, ‘The Lord is witness between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants forever.’” Then David left, and Jonathan went back to the town.”
(1 Samuel 20:42)

Chapter 9

A Fake Demon and A Real God (1 Samuel 21)

“David went to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest. Ahimelech trembled when he met him, and asked, “Why are you alone? Why is no one with you?” (1 Samuel 21:1)

Ahimelech trembled for the same reason the men of Bethlehem trembled when Samuel came to visit in First Samuel 16. The Bethlehemites knew that Samuel was on the wrong side of a dangerous man, King Saul. The High Priest also knew it was hazardous to be seen as David’s friend. Fugitives are often alone, which made David look all the more dangerous. But ultimately, David was alone because he was a David-heart in a Saul-kingdom.

David answered Ahimelech the priest, “The king charged me with a certain matter and said to me, ‘No one is to know anything about your mission and your instructions. As for my men, I have told them to meet me at a certain place.’” (1 Samuel 21:2)

David obviously lied about having instructions from the king. But the part about meeting up with his men must have been true because Jesus later made reference to it (see Matthew 12:3-4).

“Now then, what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever you can find.”

“But the priest answered David, “I don’t have any ordinary bread on hand; however, there is some consecrated bread here—provided the men have kept themselves from women.”
(1 Samuel 21:3-4)

A member of Eli’s family, Ahimelech, like Saul, was zealous for the ceremonial law. Amazingly, he was zealous for one law in particular, and it was the same one Saul seemed preoccupied with. He was ready to give David the consecrated bread as long as David and his men had not recently had marital relations.

David replied, “Indeed women have been kept from us, as usual whenever I set out. The men’s things are holy even on missions that are not holy. How much more so today!”
(1 Samuel 21:5)

Israelite warriors seemed to have a tradition of “fasting” marital relations during military campaigns. That is what David is alluding to here. (see also 2 Samuel 11:11)

“So the priest gave him the consecrated bread, since there was no bread there except the bread of the Presence that had been removed from before the Lord and replaced by hot bread on the day it was taken away.

“Now one of Saul’s servants was there that day, detained before the Lord; he was Doeg the Edomite, Saul’s head shepherd.” (1 Samuel 21:6-7)

Doeg was having some kind of powerful spiritual encounter, (he was “detained before the Lord”), that was keeping him immobilized in or near the tabernacle. This scene is reminiscent of Saul being knocked down by the Spirit of God at Naioth of Ramah. God was “tweaking” the unfolding events here to make things go according to His plan. Doeg was

Tale of Two Hearts

paralyzed in place so that he would overhear a certain conversation.

“David asked Ahimelech, “Don’t you have a spear or a sword here? I haven’t brought my sword or any other weapon, because the king’s business was urgent.”” (1 Samuel 21:8)

David lied to get bread because of his fear. He was also after the Philistine-like weapons.

“The priest replied, “The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the Valley of Elah, is here; it is wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod. If you want it, take it; there is no sword here but that one.” David said, “There is none like it; give it to me.” (1 Samuel 21:9)

David had sunk so low that he took the ultimate Philistine weapon: Goliath’s sword. He now eagerly grasped the very sword that he had previously described as useless against the God of Israel.

That day David fled from Saul and went to Achish king of Gath.

“But the servants of Achish said to him, “Isn’t this David, the king of the land? Isn’t he the one they sing about in their dances: ‘Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands’?” (1 Samuel 21:11)

Both Saul and the Philistines were very aware of David’s reputation.

“David took these words to heart and was very much afraid of Achish king of Gath.

“So he pretended to be insane in their presence; and while he was in their hands he acted like a madman, making marks on the doors of the gate and letting saliva run down his beard.” (1 Samuel 21:12-13)

David had now hit bottom. He was helpless, and yet rather than trust the Lord to deliver him, he stooped to the lowest of indignities. God let His champion taste what it felt like to be, literally, in the hands of the enemy. This was not the old David.

“Achish said to his servants, “Look at the man! He is insane! Why bring him to me?”

“Am I so short of madmen that you have to bring this fellow here to carry on like this in front of me? Must this man come into my house?” (1 Samuel 21:14-15)

Achish was a military man; why did he release David? Saul himself later said, “if a man finds his enemy, will he let him get away safely?” (see First Samuel 24:19 NKJV) I believe the reason is as follows:

Demon possession was fairly common at this time, even as it was in the days of Jesus. When God sent an army to destroy a group like the Amalekites, they were killing many demonized people. The demons could not go into the ones killing their hosts, for they did not have permission to afflict those who were about God’s business. But when Saul disobeyed and took Agag and some of the Amalekite livestock home, he stepped out of his divine hedge of protection, and, when Samuel executed Agag, Saul immediately “caught” his demon and was terrorized by an “evil spirit.”

I believe the Philistines were aware that killing a demon-possessed person caused the demon to leave them and look around for a warm body to inhabit! If Achish thought David had a demon, he could have foreseen the possibility that killing David might cause David’s demon to jump on him. God in His mercy was allowing David to again be saved by a fake demon, (David was FAKING insanity). And, just as Michal’s idol, (a fake demon) had saved him earlier, he is being saved by a “faked” demon now! This was the awesome degree of the love God had for David even while he was acting out of fear instead of trust.

Chapter 10

David the Original “Comeback Kid”

(1 Samuel 22)

“David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam. When his brothers and his father’s household heard about it, they went down to him there.” (1 Samuel 22:1)

David’s family had figured out that they were in danger. Saul’s homicidal tendencies were no longer in question, and when people’s lives are at stake, they tend to pay attention to such facts.

“All those who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered around him, and he became their leader. About four hundred men were with him.

“From there David went to Mizpah in Moab and said to the king of Moab, “Would you let my father and mother come and stay with you until I learn what God will do for me?””

(1 Samuel 22:2-3)

The main focus of much of First Samuel is hearing from God. At this point, David was out of touch with God. He could not tell what God was going to do, but he knew his parents were in danger, so he appealed to the king of Moab. Jesse’s grandmother was Ruth, a Moabitess, and David was appealing

to the strength of this kinship, for though it was distant, it was all he had. His parents were certainly too old to be on the run.

David's Path to Recovery:

"So he left them with the king of Moab, and they stayed with him as long as David was in the stronghold.

"But the prophet Gad said to David, "Do not stay in the stronghold. Go into the land of Judah." So David left and went to the forest of Hereth." (1 Samuel 22:4-5)

God had begun to speak to David again. God told him through the prophet Gad to do something typical of God's nature: leave a stronghold. When David obeyed this word from the Lord that required trusting Him, he was on his way toward total recovery. He would soon again be the man we so admire.

David had been away from Michal's influence almost long enough to be able to trust God rather than focusing on outward appearances. God's timing is perfect. He will not tell us to do something He has not given us the faith to carry out.

"Now Saul heard that David and his men had been discovered. And Saul, spear in hand, was seated under the tamarisk tree on the hill at Gibeah, with all his officials standing around him." (1 Samuel 22:6).

The paranoid Saul was still clinging to his spear, trying to keep his men close, lest they also desert him.

"Saul said to his servants, "Listen, men of Benjamin! Will the son of Jesse give all of you fields and vineyards? Will he make all of you commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds?

"Is that why you have all conspired against me? No one tells me when my son makes a covenant with the son of Jesse. None of you is concerned about me or tells me that my son has incited my servant to lie in wait for me, as he does today.'" (1 Samuel 22:7-8).

Was David offering them all bribes? Were Saul's men conspiring against him? Was the fugitive David lying in wait for him? Saul's men were not stupid. They knew he was tormented by his unreasonable fears. Since this passage says that all of Saul's officials were standing around him, we can presume that Jonathan his son was there. Would he accuse Jonathan of homicidal treason to his face? Yes. In fact, he accused every man there of conspiracy to depose him! I believe this sealed Jonathan's fate. He was mortally wounded by his father's accusation. Not long after this, he perished at his father's side, felled by false guilt, primarily because of what happened on this fateful day.

The tamarisk tree, mentioned in verse 6 above, has the peculiar ability to concentrate salt in its leaves. As the leaves fall off and are incorporated into the surrounding soil, the soil becomes increasingly salty. Salt is deadly to most other plants. Thus the tamarisk tree creates its own poverty, its own desert, and its own isolation. Saul was doing the same.

“But Doeg the Edomite, who was standing with Saul's officials, said, “I saw the son of Jesse come to Ahimelech son of Ahitub at Nob.

“Ahimelech inquired of the Lord for him; he also gave him provisions and the sword of Goliath the Philistine.

“Then the king sent for the priest Ahimelech son of Ahitub and his father's whole family, who were the priests at Nob, and they all came to the king.” (1 Samuel 22:9-11)

“Saul said, “Listen now, son of Ahitub.” “Yes, my lord,” he answered.

“Saul said to him, “Why have you conspired against me, you and the son of Jesse, giving him bread and a sword and inquiring of God for him, so that he has rebelled against me and lies in wait for me, as he does today?””

(1 Samuel 22:12-13)

Notice that Doeg listed inquiring of God first and Saul listed it last. Saul knew in his heart that if a man inquires of God, and God gives him His council, he is on good terms with God.

This was certainly bearing on Saul's mind, for his whole purpose in inquiring of God was to be seen by men. Saul played down the fact that Ahimelech inquired of the Lord for David. Saul presumed that God had given David His council. This angered and embarrassed Saul. He, the king, was supposed to have more access to God through the high priest than anyone in the kingdom, but at no time had Saul ever inquired of God and gotten an answer!

Chapter 20 told us that David asked for a sword and for bread, but it did not mention that he inquired of God. We know he did because of what Doeg said and because the doomed Ahimelech confirmed it in the next verses:

"Ahimelech answered the king, "Who of all your servants is as loyal as David, the king's son-in-law, captain of your bodyguard and highly respected in your household? "Was that day the first time I inquired of God for him? Of course not! Let not the king accuse your servant or any of his father's family, for your servant knows nothing at all about this whole affair.'" (1 Samuel 22:14-15)

Not only did Ahimelech confirm that he inquired of God for David, he made it plain that David had made a practice of going to the tabernacle for this very purpose.

When David inquired of God with the spirit of Saul on him, I don't believe he got a response. Saulish David couldn't hear from God any better than Saul. When David left the tabernacle he was more spiritually disoriented than ever. He went to Gath pretending to be a madman, which proved to be the most humiliating experience of his life. This was not the action of one who had just received the counsel of the Almighty. When he left Gath, he said he was still unable to learn what God would do for him.

More importantly, when he inquired of the Lord through Ahimelech, he was treating God like Saul treated God. David had selfish motives for inquiring of the Lord. He wanted to use God to get information with which he could save himself from

Tale of Two Hearts

supposed danger. He didn't think God would notice that he knew that inquiring of the Lord in Doeg's presence was greatly endangering Ahimelech and his family.

The greatest difference between the Saul heart and the David heart is as follows:

Saul's inability to manipulate God made him pull into himself. Because his predetermined goal, or god, was the approval of his men, there was a fierce pain in his heart when he was humiliated by his efforts to gain their favor. Instead of repenting and throwing himself on the God he had offended, Saul recoiled in his soul from God. He made Jehovah a lesser god than the approval of men. He did not trust the Lord to help him get what he wanted, so he withdrew from all trust in the Lord.

David found himself incredibly humiliated as well (the trip to Gath was a real low moment), but the rejection of men was not so sharp a pain to him. For him, the memory of the times he had spent in the presence of the Lord had "ruined" him in a good way. Though he found himself in the throes of the same demonic insanity Saul had suffered, when the heat of the battle cooled a little, his heart's compass made him run instinctively to Yahweh.

"But the king (Saul) said, "You will surely die, Ahimelech, you and your father's whole family."

"Then the king ordered the guards at his side: "Turn and kill the priests of the Lord, because they too have sided with David. They knew he was fleeing, yet they did not tell me."

(1 Samuel 22:16-17a)

Saul's madness is between the lines: if David was fleeing, who was persecuting whom?

"But the king's officials were not willing to raise a hand to strike the priests of the Lord."

"The king then ordered Doeg, "You turn and strike down the priests." So Doeg the Edomite turned and struck them down.

That day he killed eighty-five men who wore the linen ephod. "He also put to the sword Nob, the town of the priests, with its men and women, its children and infants, and its cattle, donkeys and sheep." (1 Samuel 22:16b-19)

What Saul was unwilling to do to the demonized Amalekites and their livestock, he did with swiftness to the priests of the Lord, their families, and even their livestock.

At this point I need to branch off and describe something that is relevant here. Saul was promised that his kingdom would not endure because he, "loved praise from men more than praise from God." (see John 12:43)

We saw how this "love," which was actually lust, gradually painted him into the corner of trying to exterminate the best and brightest hope for his kingdom—his son Jonathan. Eli, the high priest, was also promised that his family priesthood would not endure, and the reasons were similar to the reason for the curse on Saul's dynasty. Read about it with me:

"Why do you scorn my sacrifice and offering that I prescribed for my dwelling? Why do you honor your sons more than me by fattening yourselves on the choice parts of every offering made by my people Israel?"

"Therefore the Lord, the God of Israel, declares: 'I promised that your house and your father's house would minister before me forever.' But now the Lord declares: 'Far be it from me! Those who honor me I will honor, but those who despise me will be disdained.

"The time is coming when I will cut short your strength and the strength of your father's house, so that there will not be an old man in your family line and you will see distress in my dwelling. Although good will be done to Israel, in your family line there will never be an old man.

“Every one of you that I do not cut off from my altar will be spared only to blind your eyes with tears and to grieve your heart, and all your descendants will die in the prime of life.

“And what happens to your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, will be a sign to you—they will both die on the same day.

‘I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who will do according to what is in my heart and mind. I will firmly establish his house, and he will minister before my anointed one always.

“Then everyone left in your family line will come and bow down before him for a piece of silver and a crust of bread and plead, “Appoint me to some priestly office so I can have food to eat.”” (1 Samuel 2:29-36)

Eli refused to discipline his sons. God promised that the result of this would be the end of his family’s priesthood. This kind of promise is more commonly called a curse. A curse from God is a prophecy of the realities that are present at the moment and how they will manifest themselves destructively in the future. Let’s see if we can discern the mechanics of how this curse worked itself out...

Eli spoiled his sons:

Eli was given the opportunity to raise Samuel, but since he had not repented, he raised Samuel the way he had raised his sons.

Because of Samuel’s heart, he did not turn out like Eli’s sons, but he learned his fathering skills from Eli. Consequently, Samuel’s sons turned out like Eli’s sons—corrupt.

Samuel dealt with his sons’ corruption very poorly. Apparently he tried to placate them by installing them as judges, though anyone could have seen this was a very foolish decision.

As a result, the people asked for a king. Judges were not supposed to name their sons as their successors. This was supposed to be the difference between judges and kings:

“When Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons as judges for Israel.

“The name of his firstborn was Joel and the name of his second was Abijah, and they served at Beersheba.

“But his sons did not walk in his ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice.

“So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah.

“They said to him, “You are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have.”” (1 Samuel 8:1-5)

Far from restraining his adult sons, Samuel tried to make them judges.

Because of this, the people gave in to their sinful desire for a king.

Since they insisted on having a fleshly king in their own timing, they got a carnal king while the spiritual king was still a boy.

The carnal king acted carnally, seeking man’s praise instead of God’s. He then was told that there was another king waiting in the wings:

“You acted foolishly,” Samuel said. “You have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time.

Tale of Two Hearts

“But now your kingdom will not endure; the Lord has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him leader of his people, because you have not kept the Lord’s command.” (1 Samuel 13:13-14)

Saul was insanely jealous of anyone who might be his rival or befriended his rival. His rival had to flee for help to the priests, the descendants of Eli.

The jealous king slaughtered the descendants of Eli, who helped his rival, thus fulfilling the curse on Eli’s house. Thus we see that God’s curses prophesy the result of sin that is not dealt with.

Let’s return to our main story line in First Samuel 22:

“But Abiathar, a son of Ahimelech son of Ahitub, escaped and fled to join David.

“He told David that Saul had killed the priests of the Lord. Then David said to Abiathar: “That day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, I knew he would be sure to tell Saul. I am responsible for the death of your father’s whole family.

“Stay with me; don’t be afraid; the man who is seeking your life is seeking mine also. You will be safe with me.”

(1 Samuel 22:20-23)

Our old David is back! He was the only person on earth who knew he was partly responsible for the massacre at Nob, and yet he confessed it openly. Saul would not admit his wrongdoing even with the world’s foremost prophet rebuking him to his face.

David was aware that he was an accessory to murder, and yet he was not overwhelmed by guilt. David knew his loving God very well. He felt so safe that he freely offered asylum to a wanted man, Abiathar.

Yes, David was making a major comeback!

Chapter 11

Reading Signs (1 Samuel 23)

“When David was told, “Look, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah and are looting the threshing floors,” he inquired of the Lord, saying, “Shall I go and attack these Philistines?” The Lord answered him, “Go, attack the Philistines and save Keilah.” (1 Samuel 23:1-2)

This battle was two-thirds won when David asked God if he should fight it. Do you remember why Saul would not inquire of the Lord? He didn’t want to know what the Lord wanted him to do if it meant he was going to have to trust God. David, (as a fugitive), had every reason not to even consider going out and attacking the Philistines. After all, wasn’t fighting those guys the responsibility of the king of Israel and his army? If David had been even slightly bitter, he would have refused to consider doing the job of the man who was persecuting him.

Also, he bravely ignored the indelicate situation that would likely arise when Saul learned where he was.

The David Heart—Faithful and Humble

“But David’s men said to him, “Here in Judah we are afraid. How much more, then, if we go to Keilah against the Philistine forces!”” (1 Samuel 23:3)

Tale of Two Hearts

These men were not yet “David hearts.” It took David a while to impart his heart to his men.

“Once again David inquired of the Lord, and the Lord answered him, “Go down to Keilah, for I am going to give the Philistines into your hand.” (1 Samuel 23:4)

Some teach that asking God for something twice is not faith. I believe at times God considers it VERY GREAT faith to ask twice. In Gethsemane, Jesus asked for something more than once, as did Paul when he prayed about his thorn. I believe God considered David such a hero for wanting to go rescue Keilah that David’s perseverance was not only inoffensive to Him, it pleased Him greatly! David was mustering the faith to overcome his men’s fear. Saul, on the other hand, always gave in to the least amount of pressure from his men. They often seemed to lead him more than he led them.

“So David and his men went to Keilah, fought the Philistines and carried off their livestock. He inflicted heavy losses on the Philistines and saved the people of Keilah. Now Abiathar son of Ahimelech had brought the ephod down with him when he fled to David at Keilah.” (1 Samuel 23:5-6)

God is good. The one who really desired to inquire of the Lord inherited access to the ephod with its Urim and Thummim. The one who refused to make use of his right to inquire of the Lord, (Saul), lost it.

But Saul still had official God-given authority as well as anointing. For this reason David was submissive toward him.

David was also anointed, but he had no official authority yet. He prized what he did have even more highly than official authority: He had God’s favor and His manifest presence. Saul had to make hard choices about what he really wanted most. He wanted authority and position before men, and he received it. He despised intimacy with the Lord, and he was stripped of it. God often judges us by giving us what we really want.

The actual event that brought the ephod to David was Saul's slaughter of almost all those even remotely qualified to hear from God through it. Saul exterminated the priests because they had given David bread and a sword, but even more because they talked to God for him. It appears that if Saul couldn't hear from God, he didn't want anyone to hear from Him either.

“Saul was told that David had gone to Keilah, and he said, “God has handed him over to me, for David has imprisoned himself by entering a town with gates and bars.” And Saul called up all his forces for battle, to go down to Keilah to besiege David and his men.” (1 Samuel 23:7-8)

Saul here prophesied his interpretation of the turn of events before him. He was saying basically that God had chosen to set David up so that it would be easy for Saul to trap him and kill him. Nothing could have been further from the truth! David was seeking and trusting the Lord with all his heart and God was pleased with his faith. A truer interpretation of the events that were transpiring would be that the official shepherd of Israel had become so much like the Philistines that he would not defend Israel from them. Because he would not do his job, the unofficial shepherd of Israel was defending Israel from the Philistines.

The Saul heart could not hear from God even when he had the Urim and Thummim in his possession. In this situation his conscience should have been screaming at him. It was obvious that David's rescue of Keilah was a rebuke to Saul and his administration.

Sin is not static. It takes more and more until it owns all of you. Saul was a good man when he began his kingship, but he allowed sin to feed on his flesh. On this sad day he called that which was dead wrong the will of God, and sin had him by the throat.

“When David learned that Saul was plotting against him, he said to Abiathar the priest, “Bring the ephod.”

Tale of Two Hearts

David said, “O Lord, God of Israel, your servant has heard definitely that Saul plans to come to Keilah and destroy the town on account of me. Will the citizens of Keilah surrender me to him? Will Saul come down, as your servant has heard? O Lord, God of Israel, tell your servant.” And the Lord said, “He will.”” (1 Samuel 23:9-11)

The way David asked for two things at once makes me think he was a little on edge. Maybe he was anticipating that the citizens of Keilah would not stand up for him. Regardless of what his emotions were, he poured them out to his best friend, Yahweh.

Again David asked, “Will the citizens of Keilah surrender me and my men to Saul?” And the Lord said, “They will.” So David and his men, about six hundred in number, left Keilah and kept moving from place to place. When Saul was told that David had escaped from Keilah, he did not go there.” (1 Samuel 23:12-13)

I’m sure it was not lost on Saul’s men that his prophecy had been false, both in motive and in result. We may well presume they were discreet enough not to point out this fact.

“David stayed in the desert strongholds and in the hills of the Desert of Ziph. Day after day Saul searched for him, but God did not give David into his hands.

“While David was at Horesh in the Desert of Ziph, he learned that Saul had come out to take his life.

“And Saul’s son Jonathan went to David at Horesh and helped him find strength in God.” (1 Samuel 23:14-16)

Jonathan knew his covenant brother might be feeling a little low at this point, so he encouraged him and helped him find faith. This from the man whose father and sister were the reason David was in this valley of trial. It seems that the spirit of prophecy came on Jonathan at this point and he heard from God in this chapter. Notice that he made three prophecies:

“Don’t be afraid,” he said. “My father Saul will not lay a hand on you. You will be king over Israel, and I will be second to you. Even my father Saul knows this.” (1 Samuel 23:17)

His first two prophecies were accurate. Tragically, Jonathan and David did not see the third prophecy fulfilled.

For some prophecies to be fulfilled, a certain response by the concerned parties must be forthcoming. The Lord greatly desired Jonathan to go over to David’s side. Had Jonathan been able to overcome the spell of manipulation-through-condemnation that his father had put on him, he would have indeed ruled at David’s right hand. David would have been given relief, and many years of bloodshed would have been prevented. What follows is possibly the saddest verse in this book.

“The two of them made a covenant before the Lord. Then Jonathan went home, but David remained at Horesh.” (1 Samuel 23:18).

David was alone. Jonathan was alone. They never saw each other again. Jonathan missed a great opportunity to both hear, and obey God.

“The Ziphites went up to Saul at Gibeah and said, “Is not David hiding among us in the strongholds at Horesh, on the hill of Hakilah, south of Jeshimon?”

“Now, O king, come down whenever it pleases you to do so, and we will be responsible for handing him over to the king.” (1 Samuel 23:19-20)

It seems there were whole clans of “Saul hearts” in Israel. And listen to how religious and fatherly Saul sounds in response to their self-serving manipulation:

“Saul replied, “The Lord bless you for your concern for me. Go and make further preparation. Find out where David usually goes and who has seen him there. They tell me he is very crafty.

Tale of Two Hearts

“Find out about all the hiding places he uses and come back to me with definite information. Then I will go with you; if he is in the area, I will track him down among all the clans of Judah.” (1 Samuel 23:21-23)

Second Timothy 3:12-13 says:

“In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.”

Saul was being willingly deceived. The Ziphites knew he was an insecure, paranoid despot and they were aware of David’s faithful character. They were cooperating with Saul in his self-deception to further their own status in the kingdom.

“So they set out and went to Ziph ahead of Saul. Now David and his men were in the Desert of Maon, in the Arabah south of Jeshimon.

“Saul and his men began the search, and when David was told about it, he went down to the rock and stayed in the Desert of Maon. When Saul heard this, he went into the Desert of Maon in pursuit of David.

“Saul was going along one side of the mountain [apparently the rock was this mountain], and David and his men were on the other side, hurrying to get away from Saul. As Saul and his forces were closing in on David and his men to capture them...” (1 Samuel 23:24-26)

At this point there was nothing between David and Saul but a rock. That rock, however, was a picture of Jehovah. David, by outward appearances, seemed to be “only a step from death,” as David himself had said while under the Saul spirit. Surely it seemed that God was saying through the circumstances and through the consensus of the Ziphites that David was a doomed criminal. But in reality, he was as safe and secure as he was innocent.

“... a messenger came to Saul, saying, “Come quickly! The Philistines are raiding the land.”

“Then Saul broke off his pursuit of David and went to meet the Philistines. That is why they call this place Sela Hammahlekoth (The Rock of Escaping).

“And David went up from there and lived in the strongholds of En Gedi.” (1 Samuel 23:27-29)

It was clear at this point that God had not handed David over to Saul. Even though God let Saul come tantalizingly close to capturing him, He delivered David at the last moment, *by the hand of the Philistines, no less.*

Our chapter ends as it began with two hearts interpreting an incursion by the Philistines in two polar opposite ways. One heart was thrashing blindly in fear and anger; the other was given renewed vision through trust and love.

Chapter 12

When God Shouts

(1 Samuel 24)

That Samuel is often inspired in triads of chapters is never more true than with chapters 24, 25, and 26. This chapter 24 and chapter 26 show David showing extreme mercy, extreme faith, and extreme wisdom toward Saul. Saul has the title of King but David is behaving as a beneficent sovereign toward an errant subject, even though he is officially powerless. His men surely came to realize that the giant killer was no ordinary champion – there was something truly royal about this son of Jesse.

Chapter 25 will show us the carnal side of David, and we will see that clearly in due time.

“After Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, “David is in the Desert of En Gedi.”

“So Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel and set out to look for David and his men near the Crags of the Wild Goats.

“He came to the sheep pens along the way; a cave was there, and Saul went in to relieve himself. David and his men were far back in the cave.

“The men said, “This is the day the Lord spoke of when he said to you, ‘I will give your enemy into your hands for you to deal with as you wish.’” Then David crept up unnoticed and cut off a corner of Saul’s robe.” (1 Samuel 24:1-4)

The footnote in the NIV offers an alternate rendering of the phrase, “This is the day the Lord spoke of when He said to you....”

It is:

“Today the Lord is saying ... I will give your enemy into your hands for you to deal with as you wish.”

I strongly believe the latter rendering accurately reflects what the Lord is saying in this book about how a David heart interprets revelation.

David’s men were interpreting the circumstances to mean God was saying for David to kill Saul while he had the chance. Initially, David must have agreed with them. Otherwise he would have just remained still and hidden. I think he crept up on Saul to do him in, but at the last second he changed the direction of Goliath’s sword to the hem of Saul’s robe instead of his neck. I don’t think he planned it that way, but the piece of the robe soon proved priceless. And that piece was possibly his tallit, which represented a Hebrew man’s relationship with God. (see Numbers 15:37-41)

“Afterward, David was conscience-stricken for having cut off a corner of his robe.

“He said to his men, “The Lord forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the Lord’s anointed, or lift my hand against him; for he is the anointed of the Lord.”

“With these words David rebuked his men and did not allow them to attack Saul. And Saul left the cave and went his way.” (1 Samuel 24:5-7)

David was genuinely grieved for what he had almost done. He was so incensed at them and at himself that he had to immediately address the breach in their integrity. David’s ability to discern the mind of God under those pressured circumstances is a splendid example of the David heart at its finest.

Tale of Two Hearts

When Saul interpreted that David out risking his neck to save Keilah meant that God was putting him in a walled city so he, (Saul), could kill him, his heart was corrupted and blinded by pride. A Saul heart will see any circumstance as indicating God is leading it to do something that will advance the cause of receiving increased status in the eyes of men.

Saul failed a “no brainer” test at the city of Keilah. David aced a very hard test in the cave of the wild goats. Only the purest, noblest, most faithful heart would not agree that God had set Saul up to reap the murder he had been sowing. This was the acid test, and sparing the very vulnerable Saul was a greater act of heroism than laying low Goliath in the Valley of Elah.

A David heart humbly notes unusual circumstances and listens for the peaceful quickening of the Spirit to cue it when God is speaking and what He is saying through what is transpiring. This is a very difficult thing to do under pressure.

God can and does speak through anything He wants to, but many times what He speaks *through* is offensive to our religious spirits. I try to listen – not just to people, but to the voice of God in them. God speaks through people all the time, often in spite of themselves. David’s men were not bringing David a word from God, and yet his error in listening to them momentarily WAS THE GRACE OF GOD! Though David was wrong to cut off a piece of Saul’s robe, he knew immediately what the Lord wanted him to do with it. David could be repenting deeply one minute, and the next minute be moving on to the business at hand. His concept of God’s sovereignty was so enormous that he had no problem believing God would readily use the consequences of his sin, the cloth in his hand.

“Then David went out of the cave and called out to Saul, “My lord the king!” When Saul looked behind him, David bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground. “He said to Saul, “Why do you listen when men say, ‘David is bent on harming you?’”

“This day you have seen with your own eyes how the Lord delivered you into my hands in the cave. Some urged me to kill you, but I spared you; I said, ‘I will not lift my hand against my master, because he is the Lord’s anointed.’

“See, my father, look at this piece of your robe in my hand! I cut off the corner of your robe but did not kill you. Now understand and recognize that I am not guilty of wrongdoing or rebellion. I have not wronged you, but you are hunting me down to take my life.

“May the Lord judge between you and me. And may the Lord avenge the wrongs you have done to me, but my hand will not touch you.

“As the old saying goes, ‘From evildoers come evil deeds,’ so my hand will not touch you.

“Against whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom are you pursuing? A dead dog? A flea?”

(1 Samuel 24:8-14)

When David confronted Goliath, he asked David if he considered him a dog.

“May the Lord be our judge and decide between us. May he consider my cause and uphold it; may he vindicate me by delivering me from your hand.”

“When David finished saying this, Saul asked, “Is that your voice, David my son?” And he wept aloud.

“You are more righteous than I,” he said. “You have treated me well, but I have treated you badly.

“You have just now told me of the good you did to me; the Lord delivered me into your hands, but you did not kill me.”

(1 Samuel 24:15-18)

Because of the dramatic extremity of these circumstances, even Saul could not fail to see that God had delivered him into David’s hands. He was having a temporary “fit of sanity,” and he could not deny the obvious.

The Judgment Seat will be the place where everything is ultimately open and laid bare before the eyes of God, men, and angels. God is merciful. He rebukes us by making the truth

Tale of Two Hearts

more and more obvious as our lives progress. If He has quit doing this for a person, they have been given over to a depraved mind. In such a case, judgment has already been pronounced.

Pray that God will always chastise you. He chastises those He loves (see Hebrews 12:6). The rest are under His wrath.

Saul was still being wooed and confronted by God's faithful love. To some extent, it is God's judgment if we are hearing Him infrequently. God speaks to us exactly as much as we will let Him. As Paul Cain said, "We are all as close to God as we want to be." If you want to hear God more, listen for Him to tell you to do something that involves doing something you dislike. Then do it. You will soon find that He is speaking more loudly.

"When a man finds his enemy, does he let him get away unharmed? May the Lord reward you well for the way you treated me today.

"I know that you will surely be king and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hands.

"Now swear to me by the Lord that you will not cut off my descendants or wipe out my name from my father's family."

"So David gave his oath to Saul. Then Saul returned home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold."

(1 Samuel 24:19-22).

Why was it impossible for David to go home at this point? Was trusting God not a practical, real-world option? Was it the fact that he had 400 fugitives with him? Was it because David's wife had been given to another man? What was God saying David should do? Did David ask?

I believe another event had transpired by this point that we are not yet ready to consider, an event that made it impossible for David to return home...

Chapter 13

Saul's Perfect Prototype (1 Samuel 25)

“Now Samuel died, and all Israel assembled and mourned for him; and they buried him at his home in Ramah. Then David moved down into the Desert of Maon.

“A certain man in Maon, who had property there at Carmel, was very wealthy. He had a thousand goats and three thousand sheep, which he was shearing in Carmel.

“His name was Nabal and his wife's name was Abigail. She was an intelligent and beautiful woman, but her husband, a Calebite, was surly and mean in his dealings.

“While David was in the desert, he heard that Nabal was shearing sheep.

“So he sent ten young men and said to them, “Go up to Nabal at Carmel and greet him in my name.”

“Say to him: ‘Long life to you! Good health to you and your household! And good health to all that is yours!’”

(1 Samuel 25:1-6)

The latter part of several of these chapters consistently tells us information that it seems we needed to know at the beginning. I think this is to see if we will reserve judgment until we know more. An example of this is when David sent his men to collect from Nabal. This might appear to be a strong-arm tactic. We learn later of the details of the considerable services already rendered to Nabal by David and his men.

Tale of Two Hearts

“Now I hear that it is sheep-shearing time. When your shepherds were with us, we did not mistreat them, and the whole time they were at Carmel nothing of theirs was missing. “Ask your own servants and they will tell you. Therefore be favorable toward my young men, since we come at a festive time. Please give your servants and your son David whatever you can find for them.””

“When David’s men arrived, they gave Nabal this message in David’s name. Then they waited.” (1 Samuel 25:7-9)

These were ten *young* men. David was deliberately trying not to be intimidating. He wanted what was owed him, but as a true shepherd, he didn’t want to be manipulative or forceful. He had operated in good faith toward Nabal and was presuming he would reciprocate. David was avoiding the sins of both witchcraft (manipulation) and paranoia.

Just a note from a stockman: Sheep are sheared of their wool in the spring when they no longer need their winter coats. Adult females, (ewes), also give birth in the spring. Sheep shearing time is when a shepherd finds that some of his ewes won’t be birthing this year. Those ewes are either eaten or sold to others for immediate slaughter. So sheep shearing time is when workers and friends and neighbors drop in for some fresh barbeque. It is harvest time for a shepherd – a time for feasting and merry making.

Nabal - Another Saul Heart

“Nabal answered David’s servants, “Who is this David? Who is this son of Jesse? Many servants are breaking away from their masters these days.

“Why should I take my bread and water, and the meat I have slaughtered for my shearers, and give it to men coming from who knows where?” (1 Samuel 25:10-11)

Nabal was the perfect picture of a Saul heart. David had protected Nabal’s flocks, and Nabal owed him for his services. True to his character, he was unwilling to pay up. David had shepherded Saul’s two-legged sheep at Keilah and, far from

being rewarded, he was threatened for doing so. The Philistines in chapter 17 didn't keep Goliath's promise to David when they didn't surrender after the giant was killed; David had to chase them down to collect a part of what he had been promised. In this case Nabal was about to fail to keep the implied bargain he'd made with David. To add insult to injury, Nabal despised him as a runaway servant.

“David's men turned around and went back. When they arrived, they reported every word.

“David said to his men, “Put on your swords!” So they put on their swords, and David put on his. About four hundred men went up with David, while two hundred stayed with the supplies.” (1 Samuel 25:12-13)

Saul had tried several times to murder David. He had also repeatedly dealt falsely with him. In spite of this, David would not lay a hand on Saul. Why did David plan to exterminate a whole household because Nabal had snubbed him? It was harder for David to be snubbed by a common man than by a king. Fortunately, God's grace was about to give David a second chance.

“One of the servants told Nabal's wife Abigail: “David sent messengers from the desert to give our master his greetings, but he hurled insults at them.

“Yet these men were very good to us. They did not mistreat us, and the whole time we were out in the fields near them nothing was missing.

“Night and day they were a wall around us all the time we were herding our sheep near them.

“Now think it over and see what you can do, because disaster is hanging over our master and his whole household. He is such a wicked man that no one can talk to him.”

(1 Samuel 25:14-17)

Just as Saul's men were always busy behind the scenes, quietly trying to keep Saul from messing up too badly, so Nabal's men were subtly shepherding their master.

Abigail - A David Heart

“Abigail lost no time. She took two hundred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five dressed sheep, five seahs of roasted grain, a hundred cakes of raisins and two hundred cakes of pressed figs, and loaded them on donkeys.

“Then she told her servants, “Go on ahead; I’ll follow you.” But she did not tell her husband Nabal.”

(1 Samuel 25:18-19)

Abigail, true to her David heart, was not passive for one second. All she had to do to be rid of a mean husband and become a rich widow was sit still and do nothing. This was what Eli and Saul had done at crucial moments. But her heart was pure, and she did not hesitate to do what she knew was right.

Jesus said, “It is written in the prophets: ‘They will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from Him comes to me.” (John 6:45)

Every man and woman hears from God all the time. Everyone is “taught” by the Father, the Spirit of Truth, but not everyone LEARNS from Him. Even before the incarnation, Jesus was the “true light that gives light to every man.” (see John 1:9)

No one is completely without light, except those who choose to be blind. Only the willfully ignorant don’t know what is right. The David heart “falls on the Rock and is broken,” admitting it is too weak to resist God’s great truth, as well as His love. Abigail was a David heart. Just as David got up and out early on the day he met Goliath, Abigail hustled out to meet David. And had she hesitated, she would have been too late to deliver David from having a Saul heart moment.

Abigail was the only one able and willing to confront an angry, hurt David. She was really trying to rescue David and Nabal, who were both acting like Sauls. Her actions would speak to their consciences and cause them to pause and consider what

God was saying. She was showing both men that their ways were reckless before the Lord.

“As she came riding her donkey into a mountain ravine, there were David and his men descending toward her, and she met them.” (1 Samuel 25:20)

Abigail and David were both running down-hill, building momentum for a clash at the bottom of the ravine. There David would have to decide who he was.

Abigail is the fourth David heart in our story after David, Hannah, and Jonathan. In fact, *she very nearly was David for a moment*, descending into the Valley of Elah, volunteering to do what no one else could do. She chose to face a man with the spirit of Saul – no, GOLIATH, for he carried the same blade as the giant, and David swore an oath similar to the one spoken by the behemoth against Israel! She even came to him in the Name of the Lord as David had come to Goliath! “David had just said, “It’s been useless—all my watching over this fellow’s property in the desert so that nothing of his was missing. He has paid me back evil for good.

“May God deal with David, be it ever so severely, if by morning I leave alive one male of all who belong to him!” (1 Samuel 25:21-22)

[More on this oath later.]

“When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off her donkey and bowed down before David with her face to the ground.” (1 Samuel 25:23)

She was on her face before a “Saulish” David even as David had been on his face before Saul with the corner of a robe in his hand.

“She fell at his feet and said: “My lord, let the blame be on me alone. Please let your servant speak to you; hear what your servant has to say.” (1 Samuel 25:24)

Tale of Two Hearts

She was imploring David not to be like Nabal who was described by one of his servants as “such a wicked man that no one can talk to him.” (see 1 Samuel 25:17)

“May my lord pay no attention to that wicked man Nabal. He is just like his name—his name is Fool, and folly goes with him. But as for me, your servant, I did not see the men my master sent.” (1 Samuel 25:25)

I believe this is one of the three most important verses in First Samuel. Davids have to choose to retain a Davidic heart. It is also by choice that Saul hearts abide in the darkness of their fear and wounded pride. I believe this is a summary of a chief theme in this tale of two hearts. Every man falls, but no man can say he can’t get up. The pure in heart can be “infected” by encounters with the folly that “goes with” a Saul heart. But by God’s grace, they can, and will, repent.

“Now since the Lord has kept you, my master, from bloodshed and from avenging yourself with your own hands, as surely as the Lord lives and as you live, may your enemies and all who intend to harm my master be like Nabal.”
(1 Samuel 25:26)

There was a general awareness in Israel of who and what Saul was and who and what David was. Somehow Abigail knew David had spared Saul in the cave. She also knew he might have a harder time being so merciful to Nabal. Indeed, she was a VERY intelligent woman.

“And let this gift, which your servant has brought to my master, be given to the men who follow you.”
(1 Samuel 25:27)

She was trying to appease his pride by offering the desperately needed supplies to his men, instead of to him, thus stroking his bruised dignity.

“Please forgive your servant’s offense, for the Lord will certainly make a lasting dynasty for my master, because he

fights the Lord's battles. Let no wrongdoing be found in you as long as you live." (1 Samuel 25:28)

“The Lord's battle” is avoiding wrongdoing and walking in relationship with Him. And this prophetic lady intercessor knew well that a lasting dynasty was at stake. Because of Saul's error at Gilgal, Samuel had told him his family's dynasty could not last.

“Even though someone is pursuing you to take your life, the life of my master will be bound securely in the bundle of the living by the Lord your God. But the lives of your enemies he will hurl away as from the pocket of a sling.”
(1 Samuel 25:29)

She was alluding to the fact that the shepherd boy knew he was invulnerable when he went up against Goliath with a sling.

“When the Lord has done for my master every good thing he promised concerning him and has appointed him leader over Israel,
“my master will not have on his conscience the staggering burden of needless bloodshed or of having avenged himself. And when the Lord has brought my master success, remember your servant.” (1 Samuel 25:30-31)

There is a prophetic overtone here of the era of Christ. The One who now sits on the throne of David inaugurated a covenant in which taking vengeance was wrong. Through David's rash oath God was saying: “May God do to all my enemies the thing I am about to do to every male in Nabal's house, if I leave one of them alive by the time the sun rises.”

When David said this, he did not know he was going to show mercy to Nabal and his house. So what he unwittingly swore was that if he spared Nabal, then he hoped that all his enemies would receive the same treatment—mercy! This was fulfilled by the Lion of Judah who has offered grace to all His enemies.

Tale of Two Hearts

“David said to Abigail, “Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, who has sent you today to meet me.

“May you be blessed for your good judgment and for keeping me from bloodshed this day and from avenging myself with my own hands.

“Otherwise, as surely as the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, who has kept me from harming you, if you had not come quickly to meet me, not one male belonging to Nabal would have been left alive by daybreak.”

“Then David accepted from her hand what she had brought him and said, “Go home in peace. I have heard your words and granted your request.”

“When Abigail went to Nabal, he was in the house holding a banquet like that of a king. He was in high spirits and very drunk. So she told him nothing until daybreak.”

(1 Samuel 25:32-36)

Abigail was just as ready to be silent and still as she was to speak and act.

“Then in the morning, when Nabal was sober, his wife told him all these things, and his heart failed him and he became like a stone.

“About ten days later, the Lord struck Nabal and he died.

“When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, “Praise be to the Lord, who has upheld my cause against Nabal for treating me with contempt. He has kept his servant from doing wrong and has brought Nabal’s wrongdoing down on his own head.”

“Then David sent word to Abigail, asking her to become his wife.”

“His servants went to Carmel and said to Abigail, “David has sent us to you to take you to become his wife.”

“She bowed down with her face to the ground and said, “Here is your maidservant, ready to serve you and wash the feet of my master’s servants.” (1 Samuel 25:37-41)

David had to wait only ten days to see God deal with Nabal. And Abigail, who tried to save her “surlly and mean” husband,

was delivered from having to endure him without using witchcraft.

“Abigail quickly got on a donkey and, attended by her five maids, went with David’s messengers and became his wife.”

“David had also married Ahinoam of Jezreel, and they both were his wives.”

“But Saul had given his daughter Michal, David’s wife, to Paltiel son of Laish, who was from Gallim.”

(1 Samuel 25:42-44)

It is common in Scripture that the most profound truths are hidden in lists and genealogies. David’s first three wives are named here. Abigail was a great blessing; Michal, a profound curse, and Ahinoam... Ahinoam will turn out to be the greatest mystery of the whole story.

Chapter 14

Saul's Waterjug (1 Samuel 26)

In this chapter David again spared Saul. Only this time David's faith was stronger. He didn't wait for an obviously handcrafted divine moment in the back of a cave. He rose up and went to Saul.

“The Ziphites went to Saul at Gibeah and said, “Is not David hiding on the hill of Hakilah, which faces Jeshimon?”
(1 Samuel 26:1)

Though Saul repented outside the cave in which David had spared his life, he didn't “stay repented,” which is a classic Saul heart trait. This provided David another even more dramatic opportunity to spare Saul and confront him with who he was.

“So Saul went down to the Desert of Ziph, with his three thousand chosen men of Israel, to search there for David. “Saul made his camp beside the road on the hill of Hakilah facing Jeshimon, but David stayed in the desert. When he saw that Saul had followed him there, “he sent out scouts and learned that Saul had definitely arrived. “Then David set out and went to the place where Saul had camped. He saw where Saul and Abner son of Ner, the commander of the army, had lain down. Saul was lying inside the camp, with the army encamped around him.

“David then asked Ahimelech the Hittite and Abishai son of Zeruiah, Joab’s brother, “Who will go down into the camp with me to Saul?” “I’ll go with you,” said Abishai.”
(1 Samuel 26:2-6)

David had become David again. Walking into the center of a camp of 3,000 hostile soldiers was suicidal madness ... unless God was on his side.

“So David and Abishai went to the army by night, and there was Saul, lying asleep inside the camp with his spear stuck in the ground near his head. Abner and the soldiers were lying around him.” (1 Samuel 26:7)

Saul always had his spear close by. In this scene it was “near his head,” suggesting, I believe, that he had it on his mind.

“Abishai said to David, “Today God has delivered your enemy into your hands. Now let me pin him to the ground with one thrust of my spear; I won’t strike him twice.””
(1 Samuel 26:8)

Abishai was amazed at their opportunity. Like David’s men in the back of the cave, he was sure God was saying to attack. He knew God was protecting them. After all, they had managed to sneak unnoticed into a camp of 3,000 men, so to him it was obvious that God was saying they should kill Saul.

“But David said to Abishai, “Don’t destroy him! Who can lay a hand on the Lord’s anointed and be guiltless?”
“As surely as the Lord lives,” he said, “the Lord himself will strike him; either his time will come and he will die, or he will go into battle and perish.” (1 Samuel 26:9-10)

David had just seen what the Lord had done to Nabal, so his faith was strong that God would deal with Saul in His own good time. In fact, without the near disaster of the Nabal episode, David might not have been wise enough to pass the test he faced in this chapter. Even the sin of cutting off the hem of Saul’s robe turned out to be something God used to

grow David. When David repented, he did it thoroughly, and then he never looked back. He even expected that God might well use his mistakes for His Glory. This is the David heart.

Also David discerned that the supernatural favor from God they were experiencing as they stood by Saul's bedroll was like they were walking on water. The only thing holding them up was their faith and God's faithfulness. To commit wrongdoing at this point could cause them to immediately sink.

As I said, one of the primary themes of First Samuel is hearing from God. The hardest part of hearing God is the interpretation of such things as prophetic events. What obviously meant one thing to Abishai meant another thing entirely to the heart of David.

"But the Lord forbid that I should lay a hand on the Lord's anointed. Now get the spear and water jug that are near his head, and let's go."

"So David took the spear and water jug near Saul's head, and they left. No one saw or knew about it, nor did anyone wake up. They were all sleeping, because the Lord had put them into a deep sleep.

"Then David crossed over to the other side and stood on top of the hill some distance away; there was a wide space between them." (1 Samuel 26:11-13)

Indeed there was a "wide space" between Saul and David, both physically and spiritually. Across this great divide David called to Saul. His carefully constructed appeal to Saul's conscience was designed to make the king's malignant madness obvious to all.

"He [David] called out to the army and to Abner son of Ner,

"Aren't you going to answer me, Abner?"

"Abner replied, "Who are you who calls to the king?"

"David said, "You're a man, aren't you? And who is like you in Israel? Why didn't you guard your lord the king? Someone came to destroy your lord the king. What you have done is not good. As surely as the Lord lives, you and your men must die,

because you did not guard your master, the Lord's anointed. Look around you. Where are the king's spear and water jug that were near his head?"

"Saul recognized David's voice and said, "Is that your voice, David my son?" David replied, "Yes it is, my lord the king."

"And he added, "Why is my lord pursuing his servant? What have I done, and what wrong am I guilty of?"

"Now let my lord the king listen to his servant's words. If the Lord has incited you against me, then may he accept an offering. If, however, people have done it, may they be cursed before the Lord! They have driven me today from my share in the Lord's inheritance and have said, 'Go, serve other gods.'

"Now do not let my blood fall to the ground far from the presence of the Lord. The king of Israel has come out to look for a flea—as one hunts a partridge in the mountains."

(1 Samuel 26:14-20)

David's innocence and harmlessness were shining bright and strong, shaming Saul in front of 3,000 of his finest troops. Implicit in David's words was the fact that any fool could see God was speaking through what had just transpired. Even Saul, who really didn't want to hear God's voice, was forced to hear Him in this event.

"Then Saul said, "I have sinned. Come back, David my son. Because you considered my life precious today, I will not try to harm you again. Surely I have acted like a fool and have erred greatly."

"Here is the king's spear," David answered. "Let one of your young men come over and get it."

"The Lord rewards every man for his righteousness and faithfulness. The Lord delivered you into my hands today, but I would not lay a hand on the Lord's anointed."

"As surely as I valued your life today, so may the Lord value my life and deliver me from all trouble."

"Then Saul said to David, "May you be blessed, my son David; you will do great things and surely triumph." So David went on his way, and Saul returned home." (1 Samuel 26:21-25)

Returning Saul's spear represented David disowning of the spirit of murder and manipulation that was on Saul.

But David kept Saul's water jug that was "near his head." What is the significance of this subtle fact, so quietly recorded here by the Spirit of God?

From the viewpoint of a man, a woman is compared in Scripture to a cistern, which is a water source (see Proverbs 5:15). When a man and a woman lie together, they become one. Whatever you drink permeates every cell in your body. (First Corinthians 6:16)

Well, so, what's your point, you may ask? David returned Saul's spear, but not his water jug. [Brace yourself for the most unsettling suggestion I will make in this book.] Perhaps David had Saul's wife, and returning her to Saul just wasn't feasible.

I believe Ahinoam, daughter of Ahimaaz, the wife of Saul, became Ahinoam of Jezreel, the wife of David. And I think that she had the same effect on David that Michal had: When he slept with her, David became like Saul for a season. (Substantiation of this wild idea will follow later)

The following verses are an example of David suddenly, and "randomly" returning to being a "Saul Heart."

From 1 Samuel 27:

"But David thought to himself, "One of these days I will be destroyed by the hand of Saul. The best thing I can do is to escape to the land of the Philistines. Then Saul will give up searching for me anywhere in Israel, and I will slip out of his hand." So David and the six hundred men with him left and went over to Achish son of Maach king of Gath."
(1 Samuel 27:1-2)

This hardly sounds like the mighty man of faith who strolled into the middle of Saul's camp! It is inconceivable to me that

David would ever return to Gath. When he went there before, “he was ill,” as Michal said. He had to act like a slobbering, demonized fool just to keep Achish from killing him! Not exactly his finest hour! Now he was returning to the place of his deepest humiliation? How could he stoop to the position of being King Achish’s lackey and pretend to be a loyal Philistine captain just to put a little more distance between himself and Saul? I think I know why the same man that could walk up to Saul’s bed roll in the midst of 3,000 hostile soldiers could not abide in the Desert of Ziph. But brace yourself. This may sting a little.

“David and his men settled in Gath with Achish. Each man had his family with him, and David had his two wives: Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail of Carmel, the widow of Nabal.” (1 Samuel 27:3)

As I said before, I believe Ahinoam, daughter of Ahimaaz, the wife of Saul, became Ahinoam of Jezreel, wife of David. And I think that she may have had the same effect on David that Michal, the daughter of Saul had. Here are eight reasons I believe this is true:

- 1.) Saul forcefully took away David’s wife, Michal, when David had to flee. I believe David responded by taking Saul’s wife. In Scripture, Ahinoam appears suddenly and without explanation at David’s side as he begins his flight. No details were offered. This seems a little odd, given the context.
- 2.) As I said before, a woman is compared in Scripture to a cistern (see Proverbs 5:15). When a man and a woman lie together, they become one. Whatever you drink permeates every cell in your body. David returned Saul’s spear, but not his “water jug.” Perhaps David had Saul’s wife and returning her to Saul just wasn’t feasible because the murderous king, embarrassed as he would have been, would likely have killed her. In any case, David never returned to Saul after Ahinoam is listed as his wife.

- 3.) When a king really wanted to supplant another king irreversibly, he slept with the former king's wives. David was exhibiting Saul-like behavior when he fled. He may have taken Ahinoam to supplant Saul in this way.
- 4.) Saul called Jonathan: "the son of a perverse and rebellious woman." There may have been a long running conflict between Saul and Ahinoam.
- 5.) When God rebuked David through Nathan for the Bathsheba affair, He said to David: "I gave . . . your master's wives into your arms." (see 2 Samuel 12:8)
- 6.) Nabal, the perfect reflection of Saul, had a wife who was as noble as he was base. Saul may have considered Ahinoam "perverse and rebellious" because she was Davidic. God judged Nabal and David took his wife. It's possible that this was a shadow of what had already happened to Saul and Ahinoam.
- 7.) After the deaths of Saul and Jonathan, Saul's son Ish-Bosheth became king. When Ish-Bosheth suspected Abner, leader of his army, of plotting to take the throne, he asked him, "Why did you sleep with Rizpah, my father's concubine?" (see 2 Samuel 3:7) Abner probably was indeed plotting to take the kingdom, but if so, why did he sleep with a lowly concubine, and not Saul's actual wife? Perhaps Ahinoam, Saul's wife, was not available for Abner to sleep with, because she had been in the house of David for years.
- 8.) There are only two people in the Bible named Ahinoam, the wife of Saul and the wife of David. Or maybe there is really only one.

Under the New Covenant we have a whole different dynamic in play, thank God.

"For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her

believing husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy.” (1 Corinthians 7:14)

If an Old Testament saint touched a leper he became unclean. If a New Testament believer lays hands on a leper, the leper, hopefully becomes clean. We have all been born and bred under the New Covenant. Like a fish in water, we hardly notice what surrounds and sustains us. We have no perspective of what it was like before the blood of Jesus was carried to the Mercy Seat in heaven. Even when only one parent is a believer, the children are born holy, blessed, and set apart for Christ. This does not mean they don't have to receive the new birth. It just means they are not considered unclean. As awesome as Moses, Elijah, David, and John the Baptist were, they were only born of women and were never born again.

I believe David was greatly weakened by Michal's unbelief. I also believe Ahinoam somehow caused David to be similarly plagued. Today, because of the blood of Jesus, married Christians are protected from “catching” such spirits from their spouses. The power that protects married Christians also makes it possible to be in the world without letting the world in us.

What are the implications of this teaching? Does this mean a New Covenant Christian can be equipped for spiritual warfare in such a fashion so as to make him or her even mightier than David?

“On that day the Lord will shield those who live in Jerusalem [New Covenant believers], so that the feeblest among them will be like David, and the House of David will be like God, like the Angel [Messenger] of the Lord going before them.” (Zechariah 12:8)

Because of our shields, we are enabled to go beyond what was possible for David. There were places where he wavered that we can, by the grace of God, walk through faithfully. We can be like Christ, the “Messenger of the Lord.” We can save the souls of our Sauls instead of being pulled down by them.

Tale of Two Hearts

“The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.” (2 Corinthians 10:4)

A spear of false guilt and witchcraft like the one Saul threw at Jonathan (First Samuel 22: 6-8), can be easily deflected by the shield of faith and the breastplate of righteousness. If Jonathan had had the sword of the Spirit he would have known that it's not about our righteousness but Christ's righteousness. And by dying to guilt and facing up to his father's wrath, Jonathan could have become strong enough to, ironically, save his father who was trying to weaken him.

David was tending sheep when he was called by God; Saul was herding donkeys. The sheep is a type of David, the donkey a type of Saul. The firstborn male of every animal was supposed to be sacrificed to the Lord. However, since the donkey was an unclean animal, it could not go on the altar. The owner of a firstborn male donkey foal was offered two options: He could let the donkey live if he could find a spotless lamb to sacrifice in its place. Otherwise, he would have to break the donkey's neck and bury it. (see Exodus 13:12-13, 34:19-20)

“The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again.” (John 10:17)

“As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”
(see John 20:21)

“As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”
(see John 13:34)

Reaching the lost, whether they be our closest friends or our worst enemies, will require giving up our lives. The alternative is for our Sauls to have their necks broken. Eli, Dagon, Goliath, Saul, and Ish-Bosheth all had their necks broken. The Lord is not saying that saving our brother's neck will be easy. He's just saying it will be worth it.

The time for the redemption of all things is very near; donkey foals included. The Lamb of God has come, meek and lowly and riding on a colt, the foal of a donkey. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. May He find redeemed donkeys to ride any time He needs one and so receive the full reward of His suffering.

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