

STUDIES IN FIRST SAMUEL

We are happy to present lessons in First Samuel. For years, there have been numerous requests for such a study; and the Holy Spirit has quickened the book to some searching souls.

These lessons have been assembled from notes taken at various times from sermons by A.S. Copley and Mary M. Bodie. These two warriors of faith never found the time to publish such a book; but now, after their departure, we are glad to see it in print. This book is a collaboration; and, therefore, we cannot credit this work to any one author. We would like to give mention, however, to Faith Neidholt Evans and Jack W. Bannister who contributed some timely thoughts which have been added to ours.

Paul N. Smith

INTRODUCTION

The book of I Samuel presents the history of the lives of Samuel, the last of the judges, and Saul, Israel's first king, and the early part of David's career. It is a transition book, and forms an important bridge between the judges and the kings. The change from a theocratic to a monarchical form of government is also seen; and, in this respect, it could be called the "Acts" of the Old Testament.

We are studying the book in its historical, typical, and personal aspects; and, we must look for all these features in the book, in order to derive the greatest spiritual profit from our study. The Bible student will find sparkling nuggets of typical truth. The "times of the Gentiles" are viewed in type, all through the book. I Samuel falls easily into three divisions -

The Birth and Ministry of Samuel Chapters 1-9

Anointing of Saul, and his Reign in God's Will Chapters 10-15

Anointing of David, and his Waiting to Reign Chapters 16-31

STUDIES IN SECOND SAMUEL

Because of the many requests for lessons on this book we obeyed, and have attempted to portray the life of David as king of Israel. We pray that the Holy Spirit will speak to you through the life of one of the great men of Bible history. He was more than a historical figure: he was also a type and forerunner of the Lord Jesus Christ. Along with Joseph, he most aptly figures the life and ministry of Christ. The outline of the second book of Samuel will be found in the Introduction of that section. P.N.S.

Chapter One

SAMUEL'S MOTHER

"Now there was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim, of mount Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephrathite" - 1:1. It is wise and necessary that the genealogy of great leaders be known. The questions arise - "Who is he?" "Where did he come from?" This is true in the case of Abraham (Genesis 11) and Moses (Exodus 6). The paternal and maternal genealogies of Jesus are given (Matthew and Luke).

"Ramathaim-zophim" means "double height of the watchers" and speaks of the lofty place, spiritually, where the faithful remnant was dwelling. "Ephraim," meaning "fruitfulness," tells us that God could find some fruit from that remnant because they dwelt "in the secret place of the most High." "Elkanah" means "purchased of God," and denotes his relationship to the true and faithful God of Israel. His lineage also bears this out - "Jeroham," "he shall find mercy"; "Elihu," "my God is Jehovah"; "Tohu," "humble"; and "Zuph," "honeycomb." Then we have the added information that he was an Ephrathite, or "one who dwelt in the fruitful place."

God would teach us by the meanings of these names that, even in times of great spiritual declension, He has a faithful people though they are few in number. God always has had, and always will have, a remnant who will love Him and do His will. In each age such people overcome the apostasy and unbelief. Jehovah is about to bring a reviving to the nation of Israel, and the characters in chapter one are the connecting link. The book of Judges ends with Israel divided, and with the testimony that "every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

"And he had two wives; the name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah: and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children ... the Lord had shut up her womb. And her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the Lord had shut up her womb" - 1:2, 5, 6. This was a source of irritation to the tender heart of Hannah. But she knew the way of comfort. She took her petition to the Lord. Her prayer is one of the most unselfish in all the Bible. Let us listen in - "... look on the affliction of Thine handmaid, and remember me, and not

forget Thine handmaid, but wilt give unto Thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life ..." She peered beyond her own longing for a child and saw how much the nation needed a man who would be wholly separated unto the Lord at this time of spiritual declension. How refreshing the request must have been to the heart of God. He delights to see the contrite and humble spirit. Yes, He does condescend to dwell with such a one - Isaiah 57:15.

Hannah did not air her grievances to her neighbors and friends, but went to the Lord. This is a good lesson for us to heed. Evidently few came to pray, because Hannah's mode of prayer seemed unusual to Eli. It seems that drunkenness was not uncommon during the feasts at Shiloh, as suggested by Eli's remarks to her. If he had been the spiritual priest that he should have been, he would have known that Hannah was seeking the face of the Lord. This is another fact that reveals the unspiritual condition of Israel. It shows how much this prayer was needed. "I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord." She was melted in her attitude to God; which condition is fertile ground for sowing, and is in the path of fruitfulness. "And the Lord remembered her." What gracious words! The barren time was over. God is on the scene. In due time "she bare a son, and called his name Samuel" - "asked of God" - which name bore testimony to her conflict, and to the answer to her prayer.

In verses 24-28, Hannah commits her dearest treasure to the Lord. This expresses the great faith which she possessed. She knew that Eli was not spiritual, and yet she took her only child and gave him to minister with Eli. She had given Samuel to the Lord before his birth, and was assured that he was in God's hands.

She testifies to the priest Eli, that God had answered her petition. She brings bullocks and flour and wine. The bullock typifies Christ as the burnt offering. In this phase, He is seen as surrendered absolutely to His Father's will and purpose. Thus, Samuel's life adhered to this same principle of yieldedness. The flour, or meal, speaks of the excellency of Christ's humanity. He was the holy Man, free of any sin. Samuel also figures Christ, in that he walked perfectly before the Children of Israel, day by day - Chapter 12. The wine speaks of joy - first of all the joyous satisfaction which God received from the life of His Son; and then from others, such as Samuel, who yield themselves unreservedly to God and His will. Samuel was dedicated to the Lord in the worth of Calvary. Think of the joy and satisfaction which Hannah had in later years, when her firstborn son had grown to manhood and was honoured by the nation for his spiritual leadership.

TYPICAL VIEW
Right on the threshold of this book, we find typified the condition of Israel just before the birth of Christ. From the last prophet of the Old Testament (Malachi) to Matthew, nearly four hundred years had passed with no word from God to the nation. There is a parallel in the first chapter of Samuel with the first two chapters of Luke. In those two chapters we find a faithful remnant of Israel (Hannah is the type) that "looked for redemption." They were asking for a Son (the Messiah). Elisabeth and Hannah were not the only barren women to have sons in answer to prayer. Remember Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, and Samson's mother. These all peered down the corridors of prophecy, and viewed by faith the coming of the promised Son - Christ. Samuel's dedication is a foreview of the presentation of Christ in the temple - Luke 2:22. He is a figure of the Son of God in His birth, and later in His ministry. He is a child of faith, and arrives at a crucial time in Israel's history. Hannah's bitterness of soul portrays the attitude of the faithful Jews at the time when the heel of the Roman boot was securely on the neck of the nation. They were longing for the Messiah to come and deliver them from this galling yoke, and restore the golden age of the throne of David.

Eli figures the ceremonial law at the time of Christ's first advent. It could only point to His arrival, but could do nothing to bring it to pass. He also stands for the religious element that, although they knew the Scriptures, yet their spiritual senses were dull. This is borne out in Matthew two. When the wise men came to worship the King of the Jews, Herod "was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him" - Matthew 2:3. He gathered all the religious leaders together and demanded where Christ should be born. They quoted to him Micah 5:2. They did not know it, but Jesus was almost two years old at this time. Nine times He is called the "young child." They came into "the house" - Matthew 2:11. Notice, also, verse sixteen. Senses dull indeed! God had again sought out the little insignificant people to bring His purposes to pass. It was the faith of Simeon and Anna, and perhaps of others, that brought Jesus in due time. He put that to their account. God always honours faith, and will show respect to anyone who dares to believe His Word. Yes, God

works on scheduled time, and He uses whom He chooses to fulfill His Word. How wonderful is God!

PERSONAL VIEW

Returning to the first chapter of Samuel - these two women in verses two to seven stand for two classes of Christians. Peninnah, "glittering," represents those who seem to be very fruitful, but whose fruit never brings much glory to God. This group has more visible success. They have the crowds and approbation. They have a critical spirit toward those who are taken up with the fervent study of the Word. They accuse these bookworms of not loving the sinner, and of doing nothing to make this a better world in which to live. Hannah - "gracious" - on the other hand, figures those who realize that God alone is able to make them fruitful. They are shut up to God. Saints who are not "Hannahs" cannot understand the wholeheartedness of the ones who are. God shuts up our spiritual womb, and it seems we will always be barren. But He always has a purpose in withholding from us. John fifteen is a wonderful sidelight here. Notice verses five and eight -

"He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without Me ye can do nothing. Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." What is fruit? It is not what many think. It does not refer to service but to character. Read Galatians 5:22, 23. This ninefold fruit is what a spiritual Christian is. It is Christ reproduced in us. There are degrees of fruitbearing. The Greek word translated "much" not only means quantity, but also quality. It is not necessarily how much work we are doing, nor how big a crowd we have, neither how many sinners have been saved by our ministry. But it is how much of Christ is developed in us! This is the fruit that refreshes the heart of God, and cheers the soul of man. Oh, let us be like Hannah, and be cast on God; and He will enable us to bear much fruit to His eternal glory.

Chapter Two

HANNAH'S TRIUMPHANT SONG OF PRAISE

GOD'S OMNIPOTENCE

"And Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoiceth in the Lord, mine horn is exalted in the Lord: my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in Thy salvation. There is none holy as the Lord: for there is none beside Thee: neither is there any rock like our God. Talk no more so exceedingly proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by Him actions are weighed" - I Samuel 2:1-3.

This song of praise and adoration is unique. It is not only a song from Hannah's grateful heart; but it is the heart cry of God's saints of all the ages. It contains four sublime stanzas, of which the verses quoted above are the first. The songstress rejoices because of deliverance from her enemies. God is praised for His holiness - "none holy as the Lord"; for His sovereignty - "none beside Thee"; for His strength - no "rock like our God"; for His wisdom - "God of knowledge"; and for His judgment - "by Him actions are weighed." Hannah's song can be compared with the song of Moses and Miriam (Exodus 15), which depicts the triumph of Calvary; also, Deborah's stirring eulogy in Judges chapter five, which pictures Christ's coming in power and great glory at the end of this age. And who could forget Mary's psalm of praise and prophetic utterances (Luke 1), that embrace events reaching to the end of the Millennium! These songs all combine into a grand symphony of praise to the God of glory. Everywhere in the Scriptures, when the saints sing or are instructed to sing, it is always to the Lord.

GOD'S SALVATION

"The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength. They that were full have hired out themselves for bread; and they that were hungry ceased: so that the barren hath born seven; and she that hath many children is waxed feeble" - I Samuel 2:4, 5.

The mighty men speak of Satan and his religious agents, whose power was provisionally broken at Calvary by the efficacious sacrifice of Christ. Their influence will be destroyed at the return of the Lord - 2:10. Notice that they have bows, but no arrows, indicating that they deal in a bloodless religion. They are diplomatic and graceful, and use moral suasion to mislead the uninstructed. They are full of self-righteousness, and do not know what it is to be weak and needy. Therefore, they are feeble regarding spiritual truth. On the other hand, they who stumble through weakness, and are hungry for heavenly food, and realize that without Christ they are "nothing" are girded with strength. They find rest and assurance in the finished work of Calvary.

GOD OF RESURRECTION

"The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The Lord

maketh poor, and maketh rich: He bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and He hath set the world upon them" - I Samuel 2:6-8.

These deliverances of Hannah are simply specimen deliverances, and must go further to find the full thought - that resurrection is a principle of the Lord's ways. He is the God of resurrection. That He should abase pride, and destroy the wicked, that is easy to understand; but resurrection means that, for the righteous also, the way of life must be first of all a way of death. Pride in us, also, must be abased. We must learn in ourselves, what man is. Through the limitations of human strength, we learn the power and grace of God's salvation. He has lifted us out of the dunghill of fallen humanity, and imported a princely life to us. The world does not realize that the saints are, in a sense, the pillars of the earth. They are in close touch with the Creator of this little earthball, and are associated with Him in His purposes concerning it. Their faith is the only restraining force in the world today, against the powers of darkness; and, when the overcomers are taken out of this world, ungodliness will reign. The overcomers out of the Church will be pillars in the temple of God on high, and will be displayed in the Millennial age and throughout eternity.

DAY OF THE LORD

"The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall He thunder upon them: the Lord shall judge the ends of the earth; and He shall give strength unto His King, and exalt the horn of His anointed" - I Samuel 2:10. Here the song looks forward to the last part of the "day of the Lord." Heaven will no longer be silent. God's purposes for humanity will be approaching the climax. "The Lord's day" speaks of the time when Christ will take the reins of God's government and direct the affairs of the world. He will begin by putting down all rule, power, and authority. All the pride of man shall be abased, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. The book of Revelation is a forceful description of His steps of triumph.

In the remainder of this chapter we have before us contrasting paragraphs, showing the degradation of the priesthood and the rise of the prophet that is soon to be. Verses twelve and seventeen show the decline of Israel, pictured by the wickedness of the priests. The priests' custom was out of Divine order. In Leviticus (the priests' guidebook), the instructions concerning the offerings were explicit - "burn all the fat." The fat speaks of the intrinsic holiness of Christ, which only God could appreciate. Taking the flesh from the kettle by force or demanding it raw, showed that the priests did not have any comprehension of the typical sacrifices in relation to the true Sacrifice. Eli's sons refused to admit that they were sinners. Their worship was outward only. External approach to God without any knowledge of Him has always been the occasion of the worst departures from Him. These men were thus practicers of a godlessness which at first shocks, and then communicates itself to the people around. A holiness that is but external is the worst unholiness.

Here, nothing but the rites remained to speak of God; but even these were impiously violated by the rude hands of those whose duty it was to lead men to obedience. Shamelessly and openly they made themselves fat with the offerings of the Lord's people; and that with violence which defied Him to His face. But notice verse eighteen. In the midst of the religious defilement was God's choice person who was soon to be the prophet and judge in Israel. Six times in chapters two and three, reference is made to Samuel, and each shows a gradation in his relationship with God; until, in 3:19, we read that God "let none of his words fall to the ground." Samuel here is a type of Christ, as He grew "in favor with God and man" - Luke 2:51, 52. While the religious leaders were failing in their allegiance to God and duty to man, Christ was being trained to accomplish the will of God, in making an end of transgression and bringing to the fore everlasting redemption through the Cross of Calvary.

In 2:22-25 we find Eli's feeble reprimand to his sons. Their actions had created a public scandal (verse 22), and this was a cause of stumbling to the people (verse 24); but worst of all, it was a sin against God (verse 25), which only judgment could correct.

Judgment is announced in 2:27-36. Eli's sons and his "arm" (ministry for the Lord) are to be cut off. In verse twenty-nine, God tells us why - "honourest thy sons above Me?" Isn't that deplorable? If any semblance of His holiness and love is to be proclaimed, it is plain that He is going to have to find others to do it. God says He will raise up a faithful priest. Verse thirty-five is a reference to Christ. The priesthood had failed to maintain the link between God and His people.

Now the priest is to be the link to the (anointed - verse 35) King - Psalm 2:2. Only the threefold cord of prophet, priest, and king, as relating to Christ, will not be broken; and power put into His hand cannot fail or be forfeited any more. Toward this end, all these types point, though Christ is not directly spoken of here.

HANNAH AND ELI CONTRASTED

Hannah is humble and obscure; her child grew up noble, useful, honored, and blessed of God. She communed with God; offered praise, and thanksgiving. She was blessed by the Lord and given more children. Eli was a prominent man in the priestly office. He had the pain of seeing his children disgrace the name they bore, and the office they occupied. He was rebuked by the Lord, and heard the sentence of death pronounced upon his children. Why the difference? Let verse twenty-nine answer once more - "honourest thou sons above Me?" Hannah honoured God, and He honoured her - 2:30. This is an irrevocable principle in God's dealings with man. He is interested, not so much in people's religious endeavors, but whether they are honouring Him. To give God the place that belongs to Him, pleases Him to the uttermost. It seems that the majority of God's people are interested in big things - the crowd, popularity, and acceptance in the community. But God concerns Himself with what is little. There is nothing that is too little for Him. This is contrary to the widely accepted religious opinion concerning God's dealing with humanity. But think of Christ - a lowly Man, who lived and ministered in a little country, dying alone on a rugged Cross situated on a little hill outside Jerusalem; but He brought the greatest glory to God. Let us lose our identity, and honor God in all ways; thus we will be found clothed with Christ's honor - Philippians 3:9.

Chapter Three

SAMUEL'S CALL

"And the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli. And the Word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision. And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see; and ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was ..." - I Samuel 3:1-3.

This was a time in Israel's history, when the nation was in a spiritual drought. Apostasy had set in, and there was no public vision concerning Divine things. Eli's dim eyesight speaks of this. The priesthood had degenerated to such an extent, that God could not speak His will to the people. If the leaders, who should have known the Lord, declined from that precious place of communion - what could be expected of the others? The situation is the same among God's people today. There is a laxity among the leaders that is heart-rending; consequently, the vision some saints had, is dimming. The lamp in the temple is diminishing. Notice Paul's instruction in I Corinthians 6:19, 20 - "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." Our body is a temple, and the Word is the light.

In Leviticus 24:1-4 we find that the responsibility was on the priestly line as to the light in the temple, and it was to burn continually. Jesus was the Light of the world, when He was here. Now that He is in heaven, we are the only luminaries that can dispel the darkness. Christ shines through us, and there is a responsibility that is laid upon our shoulders - "glorify God in your body." We do this by yielding to God and to those appointed by God to be over us in the Lord, as was Samuel.

The priests had ignored the Lord so long, that it seemed He ignored their evil practices. But God never forgets His people, or their spiritual needs. He is always just behind the veil observing the situation, and waiting for the call to step out and set things in their proper order. This is borne out in 3:1-10. There, no doubt, were individuals throughout the nation who were obeying the Word of God; but they needed a leader and prophet who could receive the messages of the Lord and be able to commune with Him. Not only this, but they needed one to be their go-between, and Samuel was God's choice. Eli was being set aside. God does not hesitate to shelve that which no longer brings glory to His Name. God did not speak to Eli, showing that He was through with him and his progeny. He spoke to Samuel. Eli would not have obeyed anyway. His relationship with his sons proves that.

In 3:4-10, God reveals Himself to Samuel. This was a new experience for this young boy; but, in the years to come, this relationship grew. No doubt, God was pleased to have someone to whom He could convey His will, after so many years. How marvelous to meditate on this scene. It has

so many aspects pertaining to our personal dealings with the Lord. His patience with us is astounding. Though Samuel did not understand this Divine call, yet God continued until his understanding developed. The same is true with us. We do not recognize God's Voice right away; but, after some experience in communing with Him, we do not need to rely on an "Eli" for guidance. At first our "call" is not absolutely clear, but once we learn the sound of His Voice, we are never mistaken thereafter. Jesus illustrated this truth in John ten, in speaking of the Shepherd whose Voice the sheep know.

SAMUEL'S COMMISSION

"And the Lord said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end. For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever" - I Samuel 3:11-14.

God gave Samuel a message to deliver, which confirms the previously announced doom of Eli's house. But, what need was there to repeat again, what had already been fully said? Is not once said, enough for God? Does it not imply that God yet waits upon man's repentance, even though the thing is said? Why should He warn at all, if not for this reason? God does not delight in judgment - it is His "strange work" - Isaiah 28:21. Rather, He delights to show grace and mercy - qualities that abound in Him. But if people do not heed His word of warning, there is nothing He can do about it.

SAMUEL'S CONFESSION

"And Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of the Lord. And Samuel feared to shew Eli the vision. Then Eli called Samuel, and said, Samuel, my son. And he answered, Here am I. And he said, What is the thing that the Lord hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide it not from me: God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide any thing from me of all the things that He said unto thee. And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, It is the Lord: let Him do what seemeth Him good" - I Samuel 3:15-18.

Samuel is now given the first test of his faithfulness to God. Is he equal to the task? Will he relate all the message? Samuel, though with a natural fear of his elders and considering his tender age, yet proves himself able to stand for God and to tell all. His first message is of judgment, and to those with whom he has grown up. We can imagine how difficult this would be, but truth means more than friendship. And though he fears, he does not listen to his fears, nor refuse the burden laid upon him, but bears it faithfully. Samuel passed the test, and now was qualified to go on to greater responsibilities.

SAMUEL'S CONDUCT

"And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan even to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord. And the Lord appeared again in Shiloh: for the Lord revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the Lord" - I Samuel 3:19-21.

The Lord revealed Himself. This is the important thing, concerning Israel and Samuel also. Four hundred and fifty years had passed since Joshua, the last great prophet of the Lord, was on the scene. Samuel was becoming acquainted with God and His ways, which is a prerequisite for being a prophet of God; and as God's spokesman, he declared only the truth. The fact that none of his words fell to the ground, does not mean that he never made a mistake during his life, nor committed an error in personal judgment. It simply means that the words God gave him to convey to the people were delivered in faith, and they accomplished what God had sent them forth to do. Though Israel seldom heeded them, yet God was glorified - His grace was put on display.

Samuel was not infallible. Jesus was the only infallible Person that ever lived in this world.

This sequence in Samuel's life is a vivid type of Jesus' life from twelve years old to His anointing for service. Let us notice Luke 2:41-52. It was at this juncture in His young life, that Jesus was in the temple astonishing the doctors and religious leaders of that day. His Mother and Joseph, in seeking Him and upon finding Him, received a pertinent answer to their question: "How is it that ye sought Me? Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" It was at this time, no doubt, that the Holy Spirit revealed to Jesus that He was the Son of God. This episode unveils Him as truly human. He learned the Scriptures by having them taught to Him, and by reading them Himself; and He believed what the Holy Spirit showed Him.

Having this glorious revelation that He was the Son of the living God, yet "He went down." This phrase, in verse fifty-one, tells us the other side of the story. We read no more of Him for eighteen years. Many have attempted to probe these silent years in the life of Jesus, but without success. We will not endeavor to do so; but in passing we will note this: This was His training period - this was His life lived before God. It was hidden from man. If God wanted us to know about it, He would have had it written so we could know. Men have published book after book about these silent years; but it can only be based on supposition, and sometimes even becomes devilish. We had better stick to the Word as it is written, if we want to know the Truth. Samuel also is a type of the new creation life in us. That life is above reproach. It is "Christ in you." The Lord comes and stands and calls (verse ten) to us, and we gladly listen to His Voice. The Lord reveals Himself to us through the agency of the Holy Spirit. As we heed His Word, this holy Life is reproduced in us, and we become spiritual. The Lord is with us, and we speak the Truth of His Word that benefits mankind. Our words will not fall to the ground either. This is not dependent on whether others believe our message, we are responsible to speak the Truth and leave the resorts to God. He is trying the hearts of men through the "foolishness of preaching," and the world is being judged as to its attitude to the Gospel Message. Samuel's faith and obedience still exist today, in faithful prophets of God.

Chapter Four

THE ARK TAKEN

"And the word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and pitched beside Eben-ezer: and the Philistines pitched in Aphek. And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel: and when they joined battle, Israel was smitten before the Philistines: and they slew of the army in the field about four thousand men" - I Sam. 4:1, 2. Israel went out to battle the enemy, without asking counsel of God. They were acting in self-will. They were eager to add to their own glory, consequently they were humiliated in the face of their foes. This attitude of seeking self-glory has ever been the cause of defeat in the lives of God's people.

They pitched camp beside Eben-ezer which means "stone of help," but it did not help them. This represents anything that saints depend upon rather than God - organization, tact, wisdom, and personality. The Lord is not interested in our abilities apart from Him. He wants to fight for us and show His power and glory in our behalf.

In this chapter, we have before us a word picture of the last phase of the Church Age. Israel is the Old Testament type of the Church. Their victories, their defeats, and their captivities are all instruction for us "upon whom the ends of the ages are come." The Church is depending on her own strength and wisdom today. She sees herself as increased with riches and honor. We read of this attitude in Revelation 3:17 which was spoken of the Laodicean assembly locally, but has its fulfillment in the Church at the end-time. "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

In Israel's day, the people heard the word of Samuel, but evidently did not heed him. They had been defrauded and robbed spiritually for so many years, that they had ceased to listen to the leaders. Today we have a parallel. The leaders in the Church have failed to teach the Truth; and there is such a state of spiritual chaos, that no one seems to know what is the Truth. This has brought an independence of God and His Word. The Church is substituting program for the power of God - II Timothy 3:5.

"Wherefore hath the Lord smitten us ...?" They blamed the Lord because they were defeated; just like people say today, "Why does God do this? Why does God allow that?" Jehovah is often accused of many things of which He is not guilty. It is very easy to take the credit for our victories, and blame God or someone else for our failures. The Church as a whole, has not remained true to the Scriptures; that is the reason for all the infidelity and unbelief in its ranks. Disobedience to the Word always results in confusion. All Israel had to do was read Deuteronomy twenty-eight and they would have known the cause of their dire calamity.

"Let us fetch the ark ..." The ark of the covenant was the most important piece of furniture in the tabernacle. It was the symbol of God's Presence; and without it the tabernacle was, as it were, a body without life. They were looking on the ark only as a symbol, and were without faith. It had become only an idol to them to serve their own selfish purposes. When the ark entered the camp, Israel shouted, but it was only hollow pretense. Without faith, shouts are only sounding brass and

tinkling cymbals.

The Philistines were listening, and a momentary fear enveloped them, because they knew the story of the exodus from Egypt. That had happened over four hundred years before. They knew how God had fought for Israel; and now they were urged to fight the more. Satan and his forces are never caught napping and unawares. They are mighty, and never give up easily. Israel were depending upon the article of furniture, instead of the God of heaven and earth. The Church has similarly adopted idols and inanimate things which bring no power or victory whatever. Faith lays hold of eternal things and makes them real now. Had Israel been in the place spiritually in which they were at one time, God's Presence would have been around the ark of the covenant; and no enemy, whatever, could have defeated them. Israel, because of their sin of unbelief, were again defeated and the ark was taken; also the two sons of Eli were slain. God sometimes lets the enemy take vengeance on His people, when they do not walk in the light. Eli, the spiritual leader, did not judge his sons as God had instructed Aaron in the beginning; and so God had to take a hand in the judgment. Another lesson is taught here that if we do not judge the flesh, no matter how close, the flesh will slay us.

"And when he came, lo, Eli sat upon a seat by the wayside watching: for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city, and told it, all the city cried out. And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken. And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years" - I Samuel 4:13, 17, 18.

Eli knew the ark was the last semblance of fellowship with God. What a dark day for Israel! The blow was too much, but it was too late for Eli to intercede. He had failed; and his opportunity was gone. He represents the leaders in Christendom who have failed. Their hearts tremble at the terrible things taking place in religious ranks; but they do not have the spiritual strength to stand against them. If there is any long standing failure in Christendom, it can be traced to the leaders. In the early days, when they enjoyed the truth of spiritual things, they turned their backs on reality and embraced legality which brought carnality; and now they are captive to formality, symbolized by the Philistines.

Today, unregenerate men are in the pulpits. Paul describes them in II Corinthians 11:13-15. They disguise themselves with a cloke of religious pretension, and deceive the people. There is very little activity in religious circles today that is of God. In fact, God does not even identify Himself with their folly. Satan has his throne in the midst of Christendom (Revelation 2:13); and he rules over their councils of unity and pretense. This is only religious flesh claiming the blessings that belong to the new creation. They do not ask any more, "What saith the Scripture?" They are only concerned about what this man says, or that one says; and God is left out of their reckoning. They are profane and, like Esau, are selling their birthright for a pottage of unity. They laud the Babe in the manger, but reject the Christ of the Cross. They admire Him as a good Man, but ignore the real work of salvation. Their worldly dead churchanity will eventually give place to the anti-Christ and his harlot companion, the false church. This illicit and world-defiling union will bring upon the world the greatest calamity it has ever witnessed. Yes, Ichabod ("the glory has departed") has been born. The wife of Phinehas had more spiritual discernment than anyone else of that family. Without the ark, Israel was destitute. Christ is the glory of God, but He is outside of Christendom (Revelation 3:20) calling to any man that will hear His Voice. The Philistine (formality) is firmly entrenched, and only Divine judgment can dislodge him. But we do not despair, with God still on His throne. He knew what was taking place in that day; and His judgment on Israel was sure and effectual. Today, the Judge is searching Christendom with His eyes of fire, and the sword is going forth from His mouth. Whether the Church listens to the Word of God or not, they will be judged by the message for this age - Paul's Gospel. Samuel was on the scene then, and it was he who had brought the message of judgment on Israel and on the house of Eli.

Chapter Five

THE ARK AND IDOLS

"And the Philistines took the ark of God, and brought it from Eben-ezer unto Ashdod. When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon. And when they of Ashdod arose early on the morrow, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the

earth before the ark of the Lord. And they took Dagon, and set him in his place again. And when they arose early on the morrow morning, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord; and the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold; only the stump of Dagon was left to him" - I Samuel 5:1-4.

The Lord accomplished two purposes by allowing the ark to be captured - the discipline of Israel, and the vindication of His greatness over all the gods of the nations.

Ashdod, "the spoiler," was one of the five royal cities of the Philistines. Dagon was the national god of these people. The upper part of this idol resembled a man, and the lower part a fish. But their idol was found prostrate in the presence of the ark. The Philistines represent religious professors who call themselves Christians, but who have never been born again. The Philistines originally came from Egypt, but not by way of the Red Sea. There are many so-called Christians in the nominal churches, who do not come by the way of the death and resurrection of Jesus which is figured by the Red Sea (blood sacrifice). They are religious, but they reject Christ as the only means of salvation from sin. They are discerned by the fact that they worship men and symbols instead of God. To trust in anything or anyone other than Christ, to make us acceptable in the Presence of God, is simply idolatry. This, professors do. They elevate men's thoughts, writings, and exploits; and seek to put them on a par with the Scriptures.

God's place is never by anything else or on a level with anything else, but above everything and everyone else. Isaiah declares this emphatically in chapter forty-four. God will brook no rival; therefore, Dagon goes down. This is a hint of the judgment of God, that is going to come upon all idols and those that worship them; for men are no better than the gods they worship. At the dawn of creation, men did worship the true God; but, they soon severed from that holy privilege and made their own gods, as Paul tells us in Romans 1:21-23 - "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things." This is the spiritual genealogy of idolatry wherever it is found. And such is man.

The Philistines seem to have faith in acknowledging the God of Israel (notice how often they make mention of "the ark of the God of Israel"). But this is only superstition. The religious old creation has no faith Godward. The hand of God falls upon them in the form of a plague. This symbolizes and lays bare their inward condition - the corruption which consumes the sinner, and underlies all his departure from God. True Christian testimony convicts the professor; so his desire is to get rid of it as soon as possible.

Chapter Six

THE ARK RETURNED

"And the ark of the Lord was in the country of the Philistines seven months. And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying, What shall we do to the ark of the Lord? tell us wherewith we shall send it to his place. And they said, If ye send away the ark of the God of Israel, send it not empty; but in any wise return him a trespass offering: then ye shall be healed, and it shall be known to you why his hand is not removed from you" - I Samuel 6:1-3.

In chapter six we see the old man, typified in the Philistines, trying to be religious. They have their priests and prophets which they call in for counsel. Notice how they imitate God's ways. They seek to propitiate God with a trespass offering! They make golden images of their plagues and of the mice that were ravaging the countryside. Was this ordained by the Lord for a trespass offering? Absolutely not! According to Leviticus 5:15, 16 it was to be a ram without blemish, whose blood was shed. Men may be religious, and appear to be pious, but that does not mean that they know God in reality. The sinner may know ABOUT Jesus Christ, but not KNOW Him as his personal Savior.

The Philistines knew the story of the exodus from Egypt. They feared God, but not unto salvation; rather, they feared His judgment. Then they constructed a new cart to carry the ark and their offerings back to Israel. They did everything wrong.

The same things, in principle, are done in religious circles today. They are full of pomp and splendor. They are proud of their riches and rituals. The new cart tells us how men organize church activities to carry the testimony of Christ. Since when do we need such organization to preach Christ? The apostles were not organized, yet they went everywhere preaching the Word. God does not depend upon men's organizational ability to carry the message of the Cross. We

have Christ in us for wisdom, the Holy Spirit for our Guide, and the Scriptures for our counsel. The early Christian Church is an example of the simple yet effective way that God's work was accomplished through men.

Chapter Seven

REVIVAL AT MIZPEH

"And the men of Kidath-jea-rim came, and fetched up the ark of the Lord, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the Lord. And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kidath-jea-rim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord. And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve Him only: and He will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. Then the Children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the Lord only" - I Samuel 7:14.

A long discipline of sorrow was required, before the humbled people turned their heart toward God. During all this time, Samuel was patiently laboring for Him. He urged Israel to a wholehearted return and the absolute putting away of all strange gods, which were the hindrance to their deliverance. Ashtaroth was the goddess of the Zidonians (I Kings 11:33), and was worshiped by Israel in times of spiritual declension - Judges 2:13; 10:6.

When God's people are not in victory and His Presence is not manifest among them, He urges repentance and a yielding anew to Him in humility and helplessness. This is the only way of deliverance - whether Israel, the Church, or the individual. We find this principle in Acts 2:37, 38. Peter preached a magnificent sermon on the prophecies of Christ's resurrection and their fulfillment. Then he told them of their wickedness in crucifying the Lord Jesus. He made them feel their guilt. They were pricked in their hearts, and asked what they should do. The answer was, "Repent." Repentance has no pride. If people are truly sincere, they will do what God wants them to do, regardless of personal feelings or people. They obeyed God and profited thereby. So, at last, the Baals and Ashtaroths were forsaken; and, throughout the land, Jehovah alone was served. Revival began and continued as long as they judged righteously and sought the Lord.

"And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the Lord. And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before the Lord, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the Lord. And Samuel judged the Children of Israel in Mizpeh" - I Samuel 7:5, 6.

Samuel took the place of mediator. At this point he was, of course, distinctly the prophet and not the priest. In connection with the prophet who brings the message of God, the subjective side of salvation is emphasized - repentance and turning to God. But Samuel turned to God for the people, and offered the priestly sacrifice. A prophet is one who appears before men with God's Message. A priest is one who appears before God in behalf of the people. Samuel was a man of prayer. An outward manifestation of heart unity was now existing among the people, and he confidently took the place of intercessor. The word "Mizpeh" means "watchtower," and speaks to us of the place of prayer.

The pouring out of the water signifies the people confessing their vanity and nothingness. Here they owned that the dissolution of their lives in misery was the consequence of their sin.

Throughout Israel's history, we read of many defeats; but, they also had many victories, and this was one of them. We love to read of these deliverances of Israel. Oh, the lessons we can derive from them! How gracious is God! How wonderful His faithful saints!

"And when the Philistines heard that the Children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpeh, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the Children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines. And the Children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the Lord our God for us, that He will save us out of the hand of the Philistines" - 7:7, 8.

Nothing more surely provoked the attack of the enemy than a united Israel, a suppliant before the Lord. But this was their strength. In Hebrews eleven we read of the mighty exploits of the Old Testament Israelites. Among all their great achievements, one phrase stands out in importance, "Out of weakness were made strong." This was their opportunity to watch Jehovah work in their behalf. And when did He fail to appear for those who called on Him? This chapter is in direct contrast with chapter four. They were not so self-confident. They went out against the Philistines once before in their own strength, and were humiliated. This time they wanted God to deliver

them. They were weaker, but wiser. Israel found out that God would fight their battles, after they acknowledged Him. Notice that they did not even mention the ark; but looked to God alone.

"And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt offering wholly unto the Lord: and Samuel cried unto the Lord for Israel; and the Lord heard him" - I Samuel 7:9.

Samuel's reliance was not on spear or shield. He took one sucking lamb, and offered it as a burnt offering to the Lord. This was his plea; and thus he cried to God for the people, and the Lord heard and answered. Notice, a spotless lamb was all that was necessary! How blessed a substitute for the tardy and spotted obedience of our best performances! It is Christ who is offered. He as the Lamb of God takes away our sins, and also keeps us in blessed victory. As Samuel offered, the Philistines drew near. Who could convert the crowd of feeble and frightened people into warriors? Their weakness, all the more, magnified the strength and glory of God. The Lord thundered, and the Philistines were routed and smitten. This was no great victory after all for Israel to boast of, except to boast in the Lord. It was a victory; therefore, safe and glorious, the very best that could be.

"And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath; and the coasts thereof did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites" - I Samuel 7:14.

Israel is seen now as identified with the lamb sacrificed in their behalf, housed, and happy. So Eben-ezer, "stone of help," at last gains its name. The cities were recaptured. All that was lost through unbelief, was restored by true repentance.

"And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. And he went from year to year in circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places. And his return was to Ramah; for there was his house; and there he judged Israel; and there he built an altar unto the Lord" - 7:15-17.

Samuel here is a type of Christ, as Head of the Church. Traveling in circuit typifies this age of continuous judging taking place in the Church. Each of these cities represents a different phase of truth.

Bethel, "house of God," suggests our body as His temple. "Christ as a Son over His own house" has a right to examine our walk and work - Hebrews 3:6. John, in Revelation chapter one, gives us a ninefold description of Jesus as the Judge walking "in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks." See also Revelation 2:1. The Father gave Him authority to judge all men, and that judgment is in progress now - John 5:22. He examines us by the Word. We learn by the Word whether we are carnal, soulish, or spiritual. Our actions, and even our thoughts and intents, are weighed by it - Hebrews 4:12. We discover what pleases or displeases the Lord. We may know whether to expect a reward or not.

Paul's testimony, at the end of his earthly career, is a witness to the judgment of Christ upon his ministry. This is found in II Timothy 4:6-8. Paul knew, when his end came, that the race was won. How did he know so much? Was he guessing? No. He wrote to the church in Corinth, "He that judgeth (present tense) me is the Lord." The Lord had watched his fighting and running and believing, and judged him blameless. Paul had yielded to the righteous judgment exercised on him and in him, by the Lord, day after day. The Judge had done His work. Then the verdict was given. All of this occurred on earth. We read of no judgment for Paul after his death; but we do read of a glorious reward. While yet in his earthly house, he knew what his reward would be. His testimony is on record to encourage all his followers. The reward is also for all those who run the race with Paul. The Lord, the righteous Judge, will deal justly with every saint. If we yield to the criticisms and corrections of our Head, given to us when we read or hear the Word, we will run safely and triumphantly. But, if we sit on the judgment seat against the Divinely appointed minister and teacher and against other saints, we will lose out and miss the Prize.

The next station Gilgal, "a rolling away," speaks of our death and resurrection with Christ. This is the city where Joshua circumcised the Children of Israel, and the reproach of Egypt was rolled away. We read of the spiritual cutting off in Colossians 2:11-13, the "putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision (cutting off) of Christ." Buried with Him and raised up with Him in newness of life is provisional truth. "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" - Philippians 3:3. This is the practical or positive side for the Christian; and, thus, the free holy happy service of love is maintained. To see this glorious liberty is one thing; but to appropriate it and live in the power of it is to see strife vanish and victory appear.

Mizpeh, "watchtower," is the next city on the circuit. This signifies that we see as God sees, and judge as He judges. This, of course, is by His Word and is emphasized in Romans 6:11 - "Likewise reckon ye also (God is reckoning with us) yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Many saints live below their privileges, because they view things from a natural standpoint. That is, in the things that happen to them or in the circumstances in which they are placed, they only see the effects. They blame others for their predicaments and trying situations. But, when we see all things that happen to us in our spiritual life as directed by our loving Father's hand, we are looking from a heavenly viewpoint. This brings us to the next city.

Ramah, "the height," speaks to us of taking our place in the heavenlies with Christ. What does it mean to take our place in the heavenlies? Briefly stated, it means we are associated with Christ in His present ministry. We sympathize with Him, and seek to advance His purposes, in His present dealings with His people. It is to see by faith that the work is finished already. It is to enjoy now, His fellowship in a Christ-rejecting world, in anticipation of eternal fellowship with Him. Ramah also represents the throne of intercession upon which Christ sits during this age. Yes, we have a Priest, a High Priest who is holy and sympathizes with our limitations. He cannot be bribed; and He will never be replaced, because He lives forevermore.

STOP! LOOK! LISTEN!

In a world of confusion that's heading for doom,
There is help to be found if for Christ we make room.
With problems a-many, the truth we must face -
One way to be saved, it is only by grace.
We have nothing new, the story is old;
And through it many have entered the fold.
My Friend! Are you still a wanderer on earth?
Or have you found Christ by way of "New Birth"?
All things are now ready, "Come ye" is the call;
A welcome awaits for one and for all.
The night is far spent, the day is at hand.
When Christ comes in glory - Now where do we stand?
Don't wait to get better, you never will be;
Come in faith believing, Christ makes you free.
The account has been settled - long, long ago,
For Christ is the "Victor" o'er every foe.

D. J. Williams

Chapter Eight

ISRAEL DEMANDS A KING

"And it came to pass when Samuel was old that he made his sons judges over Israel. Now the name of his firstborn was Joel; and the name of his second, Abiah: they were judges in Beersheba. And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment. Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, and said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the Lord" - I Samuel 8:1-6.

As Samuel grew older, he made his sons judges over Israel. The meanings of their names stand for what they were responsible to maintain as judges. Joel means "Jehovah is God," and Abiah means "my father is Jah." In I Chronicles 6:28 Joel's name is Vashni, "Wherefore sleep thou." His actions correspond to his second name. They did not follow the Lord as Samuel their father did. Samuel lived a life of victory, but he could not make his sons do so. Following God is an individual matter. No one can live a victorious life by the faith of another. Each one must choose for himself whether he will go in the ways of the Lord or not. Many people dedicate their children to the Lord, and think that this act will insure that child's yieldedness to God later in life. This is not the case. The child can be taught the Scriptures, and trained in the ways of the Lord by his parents; but he must personally give an account of himself to the Lord.

Four things are mentioned that they did wrong - "his sons walked not in his ways, but turned

aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment." These immoral practices were surely not the characteristics of a spiritual judge.

The elders came together and gave three excuses for not continuing to follow Samuel: He was too old, his sons walked not in his ways, and a desire to be like the nations. Israel wanted to be in fashion. Other nations had kings, and Israel wished to be like them. Herein was their downfall. They were rejecting the Lord, who was already their King. Of the three excuses they used, only one displeased Samuel - they asked for a king. Samuel knew the attitude of their hearts. He was spiritual, and understood the motive behind their actions. "He that is spiritual discerneth (understands) all things" - I Cor. 2:15.

The evil was not in asking for a king, for it was part of God's plan and purpose that Israel should have one - Genesis 17:6; 35:11; Deut. 17:14-20. This purpose was anticipated in the prophetic song of Hannah - 2:10. The evil lay in the fact that Israel would not wait for God's time, or for the one of His choice. If they had waited, God would have given them a king in His perfect will, and "after His own heart." He had David in mind all along (Deut. 17:14-20), and more specifically - Christ. God's purposes can only be in full accord with the Divine throne, but will be the complete expression of it.

Israel had the rare privilege of leaning on the "arm of the Lord" - Isaiah 51:9. But we find that they were eager to leave that blessed place and to depend on the "arm of flesh" - II Chronicles 32:8. This showed a lack of faith in Him who had always helped them whenever they turned to Him. As they looked back into their history, they could indeed see many reverses and long captivities because of unbelief. The holiness of God had shown itself, as Joshua had declared it would. Doubtless, they would rather have something that they could cling to, other than this life of faith which involved the necessity of persistent obedience.

Christendom has been guilty of the same offense. They have turned away from the Lord Jesus Christ as Head, by organizing into separate systems. Though they say that it is wise and expedient, God calls it rebellion against Himself. Oh, how good to refuse all subterfuge and acknowledge the Lord alone, depending upon Him absolutely. He is just as able to hold His people together at the present time, as He did in the past. If the people today are taught the Word, they will be kept by its mighty power. The Truth will hold them and build them up, and they will need nothing else to draw them on in the ways of the Lord.

The Lord answered Samuel's cry and said, "Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them" - 8:9. There are prayers that have to be granted, but in judgment. So it is with this prayer for a king. However, care is taken that even self-deception could be hardly possible. They were to hear testimony from the Lord Himself, of what manner this king should be that they so desired. In verses eleven to seventeen we find the phrase, "he will take," six times. The nations around them could give ample proof of this witness. Israel surrendered their freedom when they asked for a king. Man, being what he is, cannot stand much honor; but will become proud and thereby debase himself. Put him in a place of service, and he will serve himself first of all. Combine these two, as in the case of a king, and self will shine out in him in the fullest way. This is nothing unusual, but the commonest experience. But here the people of God, with Himself as their King, deliberately accepted the yoke of another. Their king became their god.

Satan always seeks to corrupt what he cannot destroy. God had more than once manifest His own glory and established His purposes in grace even amid human failure which is so evident in the book of Judges. Now, Satan sought to offset God's purposes concerning the kingdom, by setting up a counterfeit regime. The kingdom of Saul in the symbolism of Scripture clearly foreshadows that kingdom which Satan is so energetically seeking to set up in the earth, based upon the throne of human selfishness and worldly pride. The evidences of this fact are obvious; namely, in the fact that the worldly and compromising church has linked arms with the present world system - the perverted powers that be. Together, they plan to reconstruct society, through the processes of so-called Christian education. They hope for world betterment through legislation. They propose to advance the Kingdom of Christ, and thus bring in the era of righteousness and peace - the Millennial Kingdom - apart from the Millennial King. But they are doomed to failure. Just as Israel chose the wrong king, they will choose the anti-King. That will be rejection of Christ, the rightful Ruler; and tribulation will be the lot of the world.

Dear Samuel! After his warning to them, they were more vehement in their clamor for a king. Their words were knives thrust into his tender heart. He was a true judge; and whatever hurt

God, hurt him. He remembered the times when the Lord had fought for Israel, and showed His grace and care for them. Their words, "... that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles," must have felt like the stones that were hurled at Stephen years later. When he rehearsed these things in the ears of the Lord, we know he must have wept. His obedient spirit could not understand their stubbornness and rejection.

Have their kind passed off the scene? Ah, no! Many of God's children are rejecting the Truth spoken by His ministers. They also refuse the Lord's right in their lives. They say in their hearts, "I will not have Him to reign over me; I am able to direct my way." Thus, the flesh steps up and usurps the authority that belongs to Christ. This hurts the hearts of true shepherds. When saints reject the Truth, a light seems to go out in their countenance. Their attitude of heart is finally manifested in their actions. It is sad. But, thank God, for the Samuels today. They take their stand for Christ, and react as he did in His day. They refuse to be led away with the error of independence and the habit of worldly imitation. They listen to the Voice of the Holy Spirit who constantly reassures, through the Scriptures, what is right and wrong. God warns each one of us - " Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" - Galatians 6:7, 8.

The Lord instructed Samuel to do their bidding, and he obeyed. Thus, Israel received just what they wanted, and also what they deserved.

NO WOUND? NO SCAR?

Hast thou no scar?

No hidden scar on foot, or side, or hand?

I hear thee sung as mighty in the land,

I hear them hail thy bright ascendant star,

Hast thou no scar?

Hast thou no wound?

Yet I was wounded by the archers, spent,

Leaned Me against a tree to die; and rent

By ravening beasts that compassed Me, I swooned:

Hast thou no wound?

No wound? No scar?

Yet, as the Master shall the servant be,

And pierced are the feet that follow Me.

But thine are whole; can he have followed far

Who has no wound nor scar?

Chapter Nine

SAUL - THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE

"Now there was a man of Benjamin, whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite, a mighty man of power. And he had a son, whose name was Saul, a choice young man, and a goodly: and there was not among the Children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people" - I Samuel 9:1, 2.

Saul now is introduced by means of his genealogy. These names all speak of his good moral character. He possessed all the characteristics that people look for - tall, dark, and handsome; and, although powerful in his stature, he had a lack of humility. We read of Saul, that "from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people"; of course, this did not include his heart! His heart was lifted up with pride, but it had no reason to be.

He was truly a man after the people's heart. But one thing is very significant - he springs from the tribe of Benjamin. God's choice of a king, did not come from the tribe of Benjamin, but from Judah - "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh (Peace-bringer) come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be" - Genesis 49:10. This is clearly a prophecy of Messiah who was of Judah. David, who later was king, was also of Judah. This was positive proof that Saul was not the man that God would choose to reign over His inheritance. Nevertheless, because of the ungratefulness of Israel and their rebellious heart and continued disobedience, God elevated Saul - "asked for" - to be captain over His people. Saul had a small beginning - he was sent to seek asses which were lost. This speaks of the old

creation, which Saul was serving when God called him. He never found the asses. (The reason Saul could not find them was because God had hidden them. He wanted Saul to come to Samuel). This, no doubt, is a hint of the hoped-for satisfaction which is never found in things of the old creation. Notice some of the traits of Saul, who was one of the best specimens of an unregenerate man that could be found in that day. In verse five, he was concerned for his father. In verse seven, he felt he should give the seer something. In verse twenty-one, he was showing humility - it appeared he did not think much of himself. Then in 10:16 we see he could keep a secret.

"Now the Lord had told Samuel in his ear a day before Saul came ..." - 9:15. By comparing this verse with 8:21 we find that God and Samuel had communion. Of course, this was the inner ear of Samuel - his heart. Seven times in Revelation, chapters two and three, we find this phrase - "He that hath an ear, let him hear." This means to have the assurance of God speaking to the heart by His Word. Saul finally met Samuel and they sat down to feast upon the peace offering sacrifice - 9:24. Even though Saul was not God's choice, yet He would not accept even him without the sacrifice. Christ is the antitype of the peace offering, as well as of all the offerings, and that is the only way that God can have any dealing with man.

The peace offering speaks of the phase of redemption that brought God and man together. The old creation can have no audience with God, and natural man can only approach to God upon the basis of the Cross. We read in Colossians 1:20 - "And, having made peace through the blood of His Cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself ..." Now we can enter into God's Presence - sit down and feast upon the wonderful results of Christ's atoning work on the Cross. Thus, the first division of the book ends, with the prospective king at the prophet's house.

SET APART FOR CHRIST

Freda H. Allen

SET APART - a chosen vessel to the King of kings.

Set apart, forever severed from all earthly things.

Set apart to lavish on Him all thy heart's rich store,

And within His heart to enter deeper, evermore,

SET APART - to bear the fragrance of His blessed Name,

And with Him to share the anguish of the Cross of shame.

Set apart with Christ to suffer o'er a world undone,

And to stand in fiercest conflict till the fight be won.

SET APART - no reputation on this earth had He.

For thy sake, reproach fell on Him; for His sake on thee.

Set apart to walk with Jesus, God's beloved Son.

This the record of thy journey - "And they two went on."

SET APART - His special treasure; to His heart how dear.

Joined to the Lord - one spirit; thou art more than near.

Set apart - thine eyes to see Him; feet to walk His ways;

Hands to gladly do His bidding; lips to speak His praise.

SET APART - for intercession in the Holy Place;

Where the light that shines forever, is His blessed face.

Set apart - thy life an offering evermore laid down;

Yet to be to Him forever as a royal crown.

SET APART - an earthen vessel, empty, weak, and small;

Yet the Treasure that it beareth - Christ, the Lord of all.

Set apart - God ever, only, filling all thy heart -

Unto Him for a possession, and Himself thy part.

Division II Chapters 10 - 15

ANOINTING OF SAUL AND HIS REIGN IN GOD'S WILL

Chapter Ten

SAUL ANOINTED KING

"Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over His inheritance?" - I Samuel 10:1.

The vial used was a flask from which liquid flowed. In 16:13, when David was anointed king, a horn of oil was used. The horn resembled an elephant's tooth and figured power. The oil,

blessing and power of God, was poured on Saul's head because he was chosen by God. Beginning at this part of the book, Saul is representative of the Gentile world powers in their God-given dominion. World rulership was given over to the nations in 606 B.C. According to Daniel two, there are four world empires that God recognizes during the tenure of the "times of the Gentles." They had diversified characteristics, and these we find manifested in Saul.

At the beginning of his reign, he seemed to be humble and unselfish; but, in reality, this was a lack of faith. He hid among the stuff, and someone had to bring him to the anointing ceremony - 10:22. In this respect he was like Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, who had a humble beginning. There was a time when Nebuchadnezzar lost sight of the fact that it was God who had elevated him to the throne. Because of his pride, he was forced to live like a beast. At the end of this time, he was restored to his throne; but he had learned true humility.

Later, Saul manifested the Medo-Persian characteristic. This government showed many kindnesses to the Jews, as witness the books of Esther, Nehemiah, and Ezra. So Saul manifested kindness to the nation and to David also, when they first became acquainted.

The Grecian Empire, ruled by Alexander the Great, was one of rapid conquest. This is the only world empire that has no Biblical history, though it is mentioned in prophecy. Saul assumed authority swiftly and surely, after his newfound power began to be realized.

Last, but not least, there was the Roman Empire. This was by far the longest rule - 31 B.C. until almost 700 A.D. It was also the fiercest of all the governments that went before. It was renowned for its cruel and unsympathetic character. Saul manifested this in his attitude to David. No one in the Old Testament was treated in a more degrading manner, by a sovereign, than David was. But we will come to that whole story in the last division of the book. We want to point out that Saul's reign was typical of the powers that "are ordained of God" - Romans 13:1.

Samuel told Saul three signs that would happen after his departure. These were given to prove to Saul that Samuel was speaking for God. "When thou art departed from me to day, then thou shalt find two men by Rachel's sepulchre in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah; and they will say unto thee, The asses which thou wentest to seek are found: and, lo, thy father hath left the care of the asses, and sorroweth for you, saying, What shall I do for my son?" - 10:2.

The first sign, Rachel's tomb, signifies life out of death. She died, that Benjamin might be born - Genesis 35:16-20. He figures the Christ of resurrection power. Jesus is the true Benjamin, who was raised from the grave in "the power of an endless life." Zelzah, "dazzling shadow," tells us that all of the types and shadows find their fulfillment in Him.

"Then shalt thou go on forward from thence, and thou shalt come to the plain of Tabor, and there shall meet thee three men going up to God to Bethel, one carrying three kids, and another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine" - 10:3.

In the second sign, we have a picture of Calvary. The three men are a hint of the Trinity, all going to Calvary. Yes, Jesus died; but, the Father suffered too. The Holy Spirit also enabled Jesus to do the will of God - Hebrews 9:14. The kids speak of Christ, the Sacrifice. The loaves figure Christ in resurrection, as the Sustainer of life. The wine is the joy and strength of the new creation life, and also the power of the Holy Spirit. Tabor means "thou wilt purge," also, "purpose of heart." This tells us exactly what God did, and why. Our sins were purged at Calvary, once and forever. His purpose was to bless us in Christ forever. Notice these men were on their way to Bethel, "house of God." This is the final destiny of all those in Christ.

The third sign shows that God was with Saul in the beginning of his reign. He was "turned into another man," and began to prophesy - 10:6, 10. In verse eleven, the people seemed to be astonished; but, if they had yielded to God, they would have known His doings.

In verse eight, Saul is told to go down to Gilgal and wait for Samuel. Samuel is limiting Saul's power and giving him his first test. We will find that he failed the test. These two men, Samuel and Saul, were total contrasts. Samuel was dedicated to God from his birth, and Saul was the people's choice. Samuel remained the representative of God's universal kingdom, while Saul was put over the earthly kingdom. In this we realize how totally opposite they were to each other.

As Saul carries out the second sign, we see the people getting their minds on him because he was prophesying; and they ask questions as thy did also of Jesus in Matthew 13:54-58. Did he come by it in the natural? This also reminds us of the word "Moab," which means "from father" or "what father" - Genesis 19:37.

In the remainder of the chapter, Samuel has called the Children of Israel together for the purpose of choosing their leader. After he has told them they were rejecting their God, the tribes are called

near and the tribe of Benjamin taken or chosen by lot. But Saul could not be found for he had hid himself among the stuff. "Stuff" is baggage, and means "vessels." Saul was a vessel among those lifeless vessels. Only God could empower him with life for His glory.

The people "ran and fetched" Saul and shouted, "God save the king"; or, in other words, "Let the flesh live." That was what Israel wanted, for they had rejected God's way of living. The "manner of the kingdom" of Samuel was first told in chapter ten, verses ten through eighteen. Two groups of people followed Saul to his home in Gibeah - those "whose hearts God had touched," but also "the children of Belial."

Chapter Eleven SAUL'S VICTORY

"Then Nahash the Ammonite came up, and encamped against Jabesh-gilead: and all the men of Jabesh said unto Nahash, Make a covenant with us, and we will serve thee. And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, On this condition will I make a covenant with you, that I may thrust out all your right eyes, and lay it for a reproach upon all Israel" - 11:1, 2.

In this chapter, the opportunity arises for Saul to take his place as the head of the nation. The enemies of Israel, the Ammonites, came up against them. There is a wonderful spiritual lesson in these verses. The Ammonites were descendants of Ben-ammi, the son of Lot, through an illicit relationship with his youngest daughter - Genesis 19:30-38. Nahash means "serpent," and the very meaning of his name reveals who incites his actions against Israel. This king represents the higher critic, who engages in the modernistic teaching of character building. He is related to Moab - the pleasure seeking, worldly professor. The Philistine figures formalism. This is seen in the Thyatira church; while the characteristics of Moab and Ammon are viewed in Laodicea - Revelation 2 and 3.

"Ammonite" is "a gentile of tribal (people)." "Jabesh-gilead" - "Jabesh" means "dry," and "Gilead" means "heap of witness" and "rolling forever." It would seem that Nahash was the title of the king rather than the name of an individual. Spiritually this speaks to us of modernistic leaders backed by Satan who are encamped against the weakness of the old creation. (Judges 21 tells why Jabesh-gilead was weak). They wanted to make a condition before they made a covenant. The condition is important in spiritual truths. When truth is not productive and walked in, the attacks of error are most effective. They want to thrust out all their right eyes - make them blind so they will not get a vision of the Truth. The right eye represents the eye of faith which cannot reason as the Ammonite does. Through faith in God, we have power and dignity with God in the spiritual realm. The word "thrust" is literally - "scoop or hollow out the ball." It would not render them wholly blind, but would disqualify for war. Also, Nahash wanted to insult or bring reproach on the nation Israel. When we reason with God, we are made in His image - Isaiah 1:18. The eye of faith sees God and not man. The Ammonite speaks of the spirit of doctrinal heresy which is satanic. This is the greatest evil.

The possession of our land, faith's land, lies between these two foes - Moab and Ammon. These enemies are backed by Satan, who makes them appear as true ministers of God. If the Lot Christians (the carnal and self-seeking) had been like Abraham (God-fearing and obedient), this situation would have been avoided. When people know the Truth and then turn from it, there are no depths to which they will not sink. Sad, but true! This results in a hindered spiritual vision, which becomes a reproach for all loyal Christians. The obedient faithful Christians, must bear the shame and reproach caused by halfhearted believers. People see so many worldly churchgoers, that they think Christians are all alike. Well, we say very emphatically, that they are not all alike. There are still a few around that adhere to not only what the Scriptures say, but also what the Scriptures mean.

The people gather together at Bezek which means "fetter," and was somewhere in the center of the country near the Jordan valley. Jabesh-gilead, or Jabesh, was in the territory of Gilead. In its widest sense Gilead included the half tribe of Manasseh (1 Chronicles 27:21), as well as the tribes of Gad and Reuben (Numbers 32:142); and was east of the Jordan. Of the cities of Gilead, Jabesh was chief. The Ammonites were east of Jabesh-gilead. They were the descendants of Ben-ammi, the son of Lot by his youngest daughter - Genesis 19:38. Compare Psalm 83:7, 8. They are mentioned frequently with Moabites - descendants of Ben-ammi's half brother. They were also gross idolaters, and were bastards and not sons. In spiritual language, the Ammonites also figure that which does not and cannot enter into the meaning of the Cross. They see only the world, and boast that it is good enough for them. Of the land beyond Jordan, they are entirely

ignorant. If they enter over, it is for the purpose of distressing Israel and making an attack on faith and to boast in taking away from Israel that which he can never make truly his own - as in I Samuel eleven. The Philistine is seen in the Thyatira church, while the Ammonite is in the Loadicea church. The possession of our land, faith's land, lies between these two foes.

Saul led Israel to victory in the morning watch. It is in the dawn of our overcoming that the Ammonite needs to be slain. This deliverance, in a spiritual sense, does not put Israel right with God for much more is needed. But it is a necessary deliverance. The Spirit of God came upon Saul, and he rallied the nation to stand for the oppressed. But this was Saul's last great victory. From the twelfth chapter on, we see a gradual decline in his attitude. "And the people said unto Samuel, Who is he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? bring the men, that we may put them to death" - 11:12. The attitude of the people was still wrong. God did not want them to have Saul, and Samuel agreed with God. Some people would dethrone God if possible. They do not outwardly say this, but by their attitude they show it. Saul shows mercy - "And Saul said, "There shall not a man be put to death this day: for to day the Lord hath wrought salvation in Israel" - 11:13. He was hiding his true character, like Judas of New Testament ill-fame. Later, Saul sought to slay innocent David, because of envy.

In the latter part of chapter eleven Samuel, as priest, takes the people back to Calvary (Gilgal). It is the place of constant victory where we need to go after every battle and victory. No matter how far along we are in spiritual things, we constantly need the strength and victory over the old creation. It is where we are kept mellowed, humbled, and renewed. Notice it is Samuel, and not Saul, who leads them there. We do not see Samuel rejoicing; for, as we will see in chapter twelve, he knew they had sinned against the Lord in their asking for a king other than Jehovah.

"Tis Love Divine that stoops to share
The cruel pang, the bitter tear;
Though the day be long and dreary
He will whisper, "I am near. "

Chapter Twelve

SAMUEL - FAITHFUL STEWARD

"Behold, here I am: witness against me before the Lord, and before His anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you" - I Samuel 12:3.

In I Samuel 12:1-5 Samuel, still at Gilgal, called all Israel together as a witness of his life and ministry. They had rejected Samuel, and in his place had chosen a man after their own hearts. How does it feel to be rejected? Samuel and all the prophets felt the sting and agony of being pushed aside. Jesus was a Man rejected and full of sorrows. It seems that all of God's great men felt the crushing blow of being not wanted, at some time in their lives. Israel had really rejected God, but they showed their attitude to the visible leader - Samuel. He had to bear the brunt of their rejection. Today, when people refuse to acknowledge Christ's Headship, they show their enmity against Christ's servants. The carnal folks must always have a target at which to shoot their darts of unbelief and unyieldedness.

Samuel stood before them with a clear conscience. His very presence witnessed against Israel's attitude. He had been a faithful minister from childhood, leading them through various battles into victory. He warned them of the dangers of seeking a king out of God's will. He was faithful in telling them all the truth. In Acts twenty, we find another true minister giving some last minute instructions to the elders of Ephesus. His words there correspond to Samuel's ministry to Israel: "Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind ... And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you ... Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" - Acts 20:18-27.

The Apostle Paul also gave the elders some warnings which, for the most part, were not heeded. A true minister not only tells the people of the love and grace of God; but also warns them of the dangers that may beset them along the road to victory. In Samuel's case, the people were forced to admit that he had been a faithful and true servant.

In I Samuel 12:6-15, Samuel rehearsed some of their past history, showing them that God had

been faithful to lead them on without any other king. His grace is always seen in His dealings with His people. Time after time, Israel refused God's grace, and it is the same with the Church. It is often necessary for God to reveal the failures of His people, in order to magnify His own grace and power to them.

Samuel continued to take the place that God had given him, and warned the people of rebelling against God's will and leadership. In other words, regardless of who was their king and leader, they were to show their obedience to God. Saul represents Gentile rulers. And, though Israel had been under the thumb of the nations until 1948, their first allegiance was to be toward God. They will forget this in these last days, and again depend upon the nations for their sustenance and safety, much to their sorrow.

I Samuel 12:16-25 is a confirmation of Samuel as God's prophet and official leader. He was speaking for God; and so God spoke for him in the thunder and rain. It is interesting to note that God speaks in many ways. If people refuse to hear His Word, He is forced to use other means. Evidently Samuel's words were falling on deaf ears that day, though they acknowledged the truth of them. Some saints hear the Word of God, but never open their hearts to receive its instruction. Thus, God is forced to use something else to teach them the desired lesson. People fear signs more than the Word. Adversity and sickness will often speak more loudly than the Scriptures, especially to the dull of hearing and hard of heart.

Dear Samuel! He was always faithful to his trust! He knew the hardness of their hearts and the fickleness of their devotion; and yet he said, "God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way." There are no greater words found in the Scriptures. This was the Spirit of Christ speaking through him that day. Over a thousand years later, Jesus Himself uttered similar words from the Cross. Stephen prayed for his rejecters also. Overcomers are always noted by their compassionate attitude toward the ones who do them harm. They turn the other cheek to receive another blow, knowing that this is God's will for all who live godly. Oh, for more Samuels today!

A SOUND IN THE MULBERRY TREES

Jennings Vicars

I Chronicles 14:14, 15

Where'er it lists the Spirit blows,
Yea, like the wind doth whir;
And when through the mulberry tops it goes
God says, "Thyself bestir
The golden moment let us seize,
And make the most of it;
For when the sound goes through those trees,
Tis for our benefit.

Oh, let us not this sign ignore
Which means the time is right,
That the Lord Himself will go before
The Philistines to fight.

Who knows but this may be the day
That God will send His breeze,
And we will see the top limbs sway
In "the mulberry trees."

Chapter Thirteen

THE FIRST TEST OF THE KING

"Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel, Saul chose him three thousand men of Israel; whereof two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in mount Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin: and the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent" - I Samuel 13:1, 2.

Acts 13:21 tells us that Saul was given unto Israel "by the space of forty years." Men of war were set up with Jonathan leading a thousand in Gibeah ("a hill") of Benjamin ("son of my right hand"), and Saul leading two thousand in Michmash ("hidden " and also "poverty was felt and poverty has departed") and in Bethel ("house of God"). Both were in places secure and near to God.

"And Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba, and the Philistines heard of

it. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, Let the Hebrews hear. And all Israel heard say that Saul had smitten a garrison of the Philistines, and that Israel also was had in abomination with the Philistines. And the people were called together after Saul to Gilgal" - I Samuel 13:3, 4.

This is our introduction to Jonathan in this chapter. His name means "Jehovah is Giver" or "gift of Jehovah." Note it is not mentioned that he is Saul's son until verse sixteen. He is a picture of faith in God which takes hold of Ephesians 2:4-6. Saul takes the credit for the victory that Jonathan had. But faith stirred up the Philistines, type of formalty, and they gather themselves together to fight - 13:5. In Jonathan we find what Saul should have been and was not - a man of faith. When weapons are put in his hands he uses them. The word "garrison" in verse three is "something stationary," "a military post (place of warfare)." Israel were afraid, and some went over Jordan (their descent) to the land of Gad and Gilead. Israel, the people of God, followed Saul trembling rather than following the Lord. Some went back and did not stay and fight. Saul called them "Hebrews," claiming them to be children of God (faith), but he did not call them "Israel." In Genesis 32:7, we see Jacob "greatly afraid and distressed" before he wrestled with the angel; and afterward "he halted upon his thigh" and his name was changed to Israel ("prince with God"). As Israel we have "power with God and with men" and prevail. Saul knew nothing about this. He did not see his weakness or dependence on God.

Saul was now fully installed as the king over Israel. He was accepted of the people, and was relishing his first victory. But the testing time had now come, and he must stand the test or be set aside. He did not stand the test, for he had no true faith in God, and he was thus under the power of circumstances. He was slow and undecided when prompt action was called for; and then, when the situation called for waiting, he seemed unable to do that. In natural courage he was not deficient; but without faith this only gives birth to self-confidence, and leads astray. One's own confidence, when needed, always gives way to fear and unbelief. Here too, a man's religion - which without faith is only superstition - becomes a hindrance, as we shall see in Saul.

"And the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel ... When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait, (for the people were distressed), then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits. And some of the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he was yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling" - 13:5-7.

Israel was now confronted en masse with their avowed enemy - the Philistines. Saul's courage deserted him, and that fear was quickly communicated to the people. As is well known, Israel is a type of the Church, and the Philistines figure organized religious formality. Organization always seeks to usurp God's authority over the saints. We will admit that it is a formidable foe; but it is not invincible, because God is against this evil practice. The letter to Ephesus and the one to Pergamos, are cases in point - Revelation 2. Notice Verses six and fifteen. The key to understanding this evil is the word "Nicolaitanes." It is made up of two Greek words - "nikao" to conquer, "and of laos" "the people"; or clergy over laity, as it is practiced by the present-day Philistines. That which was lurking outside the door of Ephesus (deeds of Nicolaitanes) subtly gained an entrance into Christendom, and in Pergamos was held as a doctrine. But Jesus says, "... which thing I hate." To take our stand with Jesus and sympathize with His feelings in this matter is to gain the victory over this treacherous enemy. If we obey God, He will fight for us.

"And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed: but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him. And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt-offering to me, and peace-offerings. And he offered the burnt-offering" - I Samuel 13:8, 9.

I Samuel 13:8 connects with 10:8, where Samuel had given Saul instructions as to what to do. Samuel waited until the last day of the seven to put Saul's character to a test. But Saul took upon himself the office of priest and offered a burnt-offering. He failed in faith, obedience, and patience. When Samuel appeared, Saul went out to meet him that he might salute or bless him. Right away he offered three excuses, when Samuel asked, "What hast thou done?" Oh, how full of excuses the old creation is, for not obeying the Lord. In I Samuel 15:22 God through Samuel said, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the Voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams," Saul should have made supplication unto the Lord rather than offer an offering. He did not ask for forgiveness, but excused himself and went on to further disobedience. How necessary it is to obey the Word of God at the beginning of our dealings with Him; for if we do not we, therefore, do

not walk on in full fellowship with Him. One of the greatest secrets of the overcomer's life is learning to wait on the Lord. In I Corinthians 10:13 we read, "That ye may be able to bear it," or "wait it out." In I Samuel 2:30, God told Eli, "Them that honour Me I will honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed."

Saul became self-sufficient, and his first test ended in failure. Dispensationally, this figures the State intruding into the things of God. He gave the leaders authority in government, but not in spiritual things. But there is also a personal lesson for us. Obedience is our only responsibility. God will carry the load. Saul had no faith - he could not wait. But one of the great secrets of the overcoming life is waiting. We wait upon the Lord in prayer, and our strength is renewed - Isaiah 40:31. When in testings, we let the Lord fight our battles; and, though the trial is long, He gives us grace to bear it (wait it out). The saints in Thessalonica "turned to God from idols ... and to wait for His Son from heaven" - I Thess. 1:9, 10. The Philadelphia assembly was commended for keeping the Word of Christ's patience (looking for His coming) - Rev. 3:10. So the greater part of the Christian life is waiting; not a passive waiting - but an active, expectant, hopeful waiting. This seems to be the hardest lesson for many to learn. They want to be up and doing - work, work, work. But the greatest labor, in the sight of God, is doing what He has commanded to be done; not what we think ought to be done. Because of Saul's persistent disobedience to God's express command, he lost God's blessing during his reign and later his crown and life - II Samuel 1:10. Oh, let us be attentive to the Voice of God. Let us desire only God's smile of approval, and gain the crown promised to the overcomers.

"And the spoilers came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies: one company turned unto the way that leadeth to Ophrah, unto the land of Shual: And another company turned the way to Beth-horon: and another company turned to the way of the border that looketh to the valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness" - 13:17, 18.

In verses thirteen and fourteen we read, Thy kingdom shall not continue ... because thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee." Saul expressed no word of sorrow, nor did he seem cast down. He was not willing to do God's will, as David was.

These spoilers represent the active members of Christendom that oppose true believers. Ophrah "dust," Shual "jackal," and Beth-horon "house of hollowness," speak of the methods that the religious people use in attempts to defeat God's people. They are defiled by the filth of lies and half-truths; and seek through slyness, flattery, and cajolement, to bring us down into the dust with them. Of course, they make their abode in the "house of hollowness." Their words are only sounding brass and clanging cymbals of unbelief. They have not the ring of truth. Oh, yes, they are very persuasive. This is the reason so many true believers are ensnared by their tactics. One sly phrase they seek to put over is "the dignity of man." Hear the hiss of the serpent? That may sound sweet, but it is not true. "Man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish" - Psalm 49:12. God shows us the photograph of fallen humanity in Romans 1:18-32 and 3:13-18. Is that not a dismal picture? And yet we are all in that picture until we step into Christ by faith - into His unsullied righteousness.

Of course, when we refuse to yield to their cunning trickery, they put into operation another weapon. Zeboim "troops" speaks of persecution. This is one of their greatest weapons. They mock us and call us many abusive names, which we will not take time and precious space to enumerate. We that believe and love the Truth know them anyway. Thank the Lord, He is for us! Their plans will be defeated, and we will go on in glorious and sustained victory until the trumpet sounds Amen!

In 13:19 Israel were under the power of the Philistines and being oppressed by them. Unbelief can bring God's people to this place. But they had weapons which they could have used, and all speak of the Word of God and the results of its use. The mattock was a tool with a steel head like a pick having flat blades, and was used for loosening the soil and cutting roots. Josiah used them in II Chronicles 34:6. Also, see Isaiah 7:25. The coulter is a sharp blade on a plow, to cut the earth. The fork is an instrument with a handle with two or more pointed parts. The axe is a tool with a sharp blade used for chopping, splitting, and shaping wood (humanity). The goad was a stick or rod with a point on the end. Figuratively, it drives or urges one on. At one end it had a spade used for removing mud from the plow. If this mud was not removed, the plow was useless. At the other end was a sharp point for prodding oxen. In Judges 3:31 we read of Shamgar, deliverer and destroyer, using it. Paul felt the goad in Acts 9:5 "The Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." It is a figure of useless resistance

to God's great power.

In 13:21 we read, "Yet they had a file." This file means "to peck at," "two edged," "scatter into corners." It speaks of the Word which was at their disposal to use, but they lacked the spiritual energy.

PRAISE THE LORD

Who forgiveth all thine iniquities;
Who healeth all thy diseases;
Who redeemeth thy life from destruction;
Who crowneth thee with lovingkindness
and tender mercies.

Psalm 103:3, 4.

Chapter Fourteen

THE PATH OF FAITH

"Now it came to pass upon a day, that Jonathan the son of Saul said unto the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over to the Philistines' garrison, that is on the other side. But he told not his father ... And between the passages, by which Jonathan sought to go over unto the Philistines' garrison, there was a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other side: and the name of the one was Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh" - I Samuel 14:1-4.

Jonathan's name means "Jehovah is giver." He represents the active faith of the believer. He seemed to discern that Saul's reign was displeasing to God, and later acknowledged the same to David. Jonathan had two reasons for taking this journey: that God would be glorified, and for the welfare of the people of Israel. He and his companion encountered a passage, which pathway is the way of everyone who walks by faith. On the one side was Bozez - "white shining." This speaks of the glitter and allurements that would seek to distract us from absolute dependence on the Lord. On the other side was Seneh - "thorn." This rock speaks of the hardships of the life of faith. It is a difficult passage. We cannot be moved to the right or the left, but must continue straight forward. Faith must go this way. It is the way of victory, though it costs much. But every loss brings a gain.

"And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the Lord will work for us: for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few" - 14:6.

Two things moved Jonathan - the Philistines were uncircumcised, and he knew that God was able to deliver. His faith was laying hold of Leviticus 26:8 - "And five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight." This is the language of faith. The result was that God fought for them, and the enemy was vanquished. Jonathan's faith caused faith to spring up in others; for the fearful came out of their hiding place, and the Lord delivered Israel that day.

Now we see the opposite of faith. In its place, Saul manifested the self-righteous efforts of the old creation. "And the men of Israel were distressed that day: for Saul had adjured the people, saying, Cursed be the man that eateth any food until evening, that I may be avenged on mine enemies. So none of the people tasted any food" - 14:24.

This was an undue restriction, and caused the people to become faint and unable to push on in the battle. This is what the ritualistic world-church has done. They would curse, when God would bless. The thing that happened in that day far past, has taken place in this age. Undue prohibitive laws lead to license and to greater sin. Law causes the outbreaking of sin. Under law, people will do worse than without law. The leaders forbid lawful things. What is the result? The testimony and lives of Christians are weak and lifeless. One person says this thing is sin, and another says that thing is sin. Men are not the judge of what is sin. The infallible Word of God alone is the guide of the people of God.

Paul is our apostle, and his words are God's words to us. "What do you say, Paul?" "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace" - Romans 6:14. This is the only place where sin is inoperative - under grace. Let us believe it, and not be swayed by the opinions and commandments of men. "I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean" - Romans 14:14. There are dozens of Scripture verses that fit this subject, if the honest

heart wishes to search further. Each one must judge for himself what is harmful or a hindrance. If we lay hold of God's grace, we will not live loose lives; nor will we have a legal spirit, that condemns everyone that does not measure up to our straight rule of six. Grace, and grace alone, is our enabling to believe and thus please God. Selah!

Saul was the guilty party in our lesson; but he sought to assuage his own lack of faith by shifting the blame to his son, whose faith in God was really what won the victory. Saul would have sacrificed his son to gain a name of (pretended) righteousness. But God saw to it that Jonathan was not harmed. This did not move Saul, but he remained unsubdued and independent.

The rest of the chapter gives us the genealogy of Saul. The meanings of the names speak to us of the goody-goody old creation. There is a moral side to the old man, that speaks in pharisaical tones - "God, I thank Thee, that I am not as ... this publican." Natural man is proud of his ancestry, but God is not concerned about our ancestors. He is interested in us as individuals. We stand or fall as to our own living faith in the Word. Any victory we may manifest will come always and only because we have believed God.

The next chapter shows the result of unbelief; whether considered from Saul's actual conduct, or our own personal experience.

A Ransom Divine

Nothing to do? No, not a bit!

Nothing to pay, no not a whit!

All that was needed to do or to pay:

Jesus paid, Jesus did, in His own blessed way.

Nothing to fear? No, not a jot!

Nothing to cleanse? No, not a blot.

Christ is my peace, and I've nothing at stake;

Satan can never unsettle or shake.

Nothing of guilt? No, not a stain!

How could the blood let any remain?

My conscience is purged, my spirit is free:

Precious that blood is to God - and to me!

Nothing to settle. No! thanks be to God

The matter is settled: the price was the blood

The blood of God's Son, a ransom divine,

Believe, just believe it, and peace shall be thine.

Chapter Fifteen

SECOND TEST OF THE KING

Samuel also said unto Saul, The Lord sent me to anoint thee to be king over His people, over Israel: now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the Lord" - I Samuel 15:1.

Saul was the responsible head over the nation of Israel, and he was to receive his wisdom from God. The words - "hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the Lord" - were the key to Saul's failure. It is the key to either our victory or defeat. When men refuse to listen and heed God's Word pertaining to their own personal lives, they will always end up in defeat. Saul had a choice, as each one has today. There were many opportunities for Saul to change his ways. Even after his foolish request of chapter fourteen, God gave him another opportunity to hearken to His voice. If we are defeated, it is not God's fault.

"Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass" - 15:2, 3.

We learn in this chapter what God's attitude is toward the flesh. Amalek - "a people that licks up" - represents the lusts of the flesh. He was the grandson of Esau, who also figured the flesh. The Amalekites were the first nation to oppose Israel when they came out of Egypt (Deuteronomy 25:17-19), and afterward continually proved to be Israel's enemies (Numbers 14:45 and Exodus 17). God never forgets the enemies of His people. Therefore, He is against them and they are devoted to judgment.

"And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the

oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly" 15:8-9. Agag was the king of the Amalekites. His name means, "I will overtop." He is a representative of the nice flesh. When we speak of the old man or the flesh, most people think of the drunkard, the worldling - all the evil of natural man. But there are two sides to the old nature. There is the nice side that very few can discern, because it is so sweet and courteous. It is deceitful. It is a counterfeit of the life of Christ. It is religious, philanthropic, and patriotic. Christendom is honeycombed with it. Some think that if they do not kill or steal, if they treat their neighbor right, and if they go to church on Sunday, everything is all right. Paul, before his conversion, was the most religious zealot the world has ever seen; but, he was still unacceptable to God, until he met Jesus on the road to Damascus and was saved. All his goodness and morality were of no avail. So the Sauls today spare the nice refined part of the flesh and say, "I have performed the commandment of the Lord" - 15:13. But some of the Amalekites escaped, because in the book of Esther we see one of them - Haman. He was a royal Amalekite of the house of Agag, and the last of them. The Word of God was fulfilled at his and his son's deaths - Exodus 17:14-16; Numbers 24:20; Deuteronomy 25:19. Had Saul obeyed God and destroyed all the Amalekites, Haman would never have come upon the scene to plot against God's people. There is a personal lesson for us also. If we do not judge our flesh, it will destroy us. If we do not use the Sword of the Spirit against its every manifestation, including the nice refined religious desires, emotions, and affections, it will finally slay us; or else later, this enemy of "Israel" (the spiritual man) will arise and give us much trouble, as Haman's plot against the Jews proves. "And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the Voice of the Lord, and have gone the way which the Lord sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites" - 15:20.

Even after Samuel showed Saul that he did not fulfill the commandment of the Lord, he still insisted that he did. He blamed the people. Saul was so self-centered, that his vision of true judgment was darkened. In verse twenty-two follows one of the greatest principles of the Bible - "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." God wants obedience; anything less than this is unacceptable to Him. It is the key to overcoming. Disobedience leads to rebellion and stubbornness, and all this is a rejection of the Word of God. People become bewitched, like the Galatians of the New Testament. Legality administers a spell-inducing potion that puts a sense of sleepiness upon the people. It is nothing but religious sorcery. Christendom has been drugged by the chief pharmacist, the devil. The majority of Christians, even some among those who seem to understand the teachings of Scripture, are not free from this religious potion.

We have in this chapter also, the reason for Saul's disobedience to God's Word. Samuel said it well, "When thou wast little in thine own sight ..." Saul was apparently humble in the beginning of his reign, but we find out that this can also be a trait of the old nature. If we study Saul's life carefully, we will find out the many manifestations of the nature of the old man. Many of God's people never realize this side of their old nature. As has been already written, attention is focused on the more outward display of wickedness; when, all the time, the moral judge may have worse things lurking in the regions of his heart that no one else knows about. Many times we do not know just what we are by nature, until something triggers that emotion into action. We can judge these displays immediately, and gain the victory; or we can try to suppress them and cover them with a veneer of sweetness and piety.

After Saul heard Samuel's stern denunciation, he suddenly felt an urge to worship the Lord. This was insincere worship on his part. His motive was to escape the inevitable judgment. He wanted to appear before the people as having done no wrong. Today, we may weep many tears, or utter empty phrases of worship; but God looks on the heart. If Saul had been truly repentant, Samuel's attitude would have been different. After Saul's insistent demand to worship, Samuel honored his office and returned with Saul; and we read, "Saul worshipped the Lord." But this show of worship did not alter God's edict. So Samuel, the true prophet, must judge the flesh. There will always be a Samuel to wield the Sword of the Word and destroy the flesh. We must acknowledge the wickedness of our own flesh and judge it first, before we can take the Sword to others. Samuel only moved at God's command. Some assume the place of judge, and try to set everything straight; but, until God speaks, we cannot move in this way. The Word of God gives us the authority to judge others who are out of the way; but the Spirit sends us forth at the right time.

This is a sad lesson in this chapter; but, nevertheless, it works good "unto them which are exercised thereby" - Hebrews 12:11.

THANKSGIVING

D.J. Williams

With thankful hearts we come to Thee,
Lord Jesus, God and Man.

Since we from sin have been set free,
According to God's plan.

We thank Thee for Thy precious blood,
For sinners freely shed;

And all must come beneath that flood,
Without which all are dead.

We thank Thee for eternal life,
And we shall never perish.

Thy Word is true, and ends all strife;
This truth we dearly cherish.

We thank Thee for Thy Holy Word,
A lamp unto our feet;

A light for those who once had erred,
Till at Thy throne we meet.

We thank Thee for the heavenly Dove,
Who came our hearts to cheer;

Confirming both His Word and love,
Dispelling doubt and fear.

We thank Thee for Thy healing balm,
For by Thy stripes we're healed.

Thy Presence brings a holy calm;
Thou art our Rock, our Strength, and Shield.

We thank Thee for the crosses, too,
When things don't go the way we would,

But after thought and praying through,
All things with God work out for good.

We thank Thee for the blessed hope,
That Christ will come - may be at noon.

Let's lift our heads (no time to mope),
And pray, "Dear Jesus, do come soon."

Division III Chapters 16-31

ANointing OF DAVID AND HIS WAITING TO REIGN

Chapter Sixteen

THE KING OF GOD'S ELECTION AND SELECTION

"And the Lord said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided Me a king among his sons" - I Samuel 16:1.

Samuel obeyed, and Jesse was instructed to call his sons to the sacrifice. Seven sons were brought forward, but none of them was the choice of the Lord. Samuel was surprised. He thought Eliab, the eldest, was most suitable - 16:6. But the Lord said, "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature: because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." Finally the last but not the least, according to the verdict of Jehovah, was called. Jesse had not mentioned him for he never imagined that he was predestinated to the kingly office. No. Sometimes, God's men are the ones that no one would guess were Divinely chosen. They are too little and unknown. Men must have a revelation as to their place in His purpose and plan.

"And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither" - 16:11. Thus Samuel learned of the existence of the eighth son, whom the father said, "Keepeth the sheep." Ah, here is the reason in a nutshell, for God's choice of men. They are always found doing His will, even before His appointment and

anointment. David was busy. He was doing that which his hands found to do. He was a shepherd lad. Many of God's men were keepers of sheep. Not one was lazy, nor hunting a job, nor an easy way of getting a living. They were laborers, actively engaged in work at the time they were called. Jesse sent for his eighth son (hint of the new creation). "He was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the Lord said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he" - 16:12. Here is God's choice for the throne. None other could fill the bill, regardless of his education, influence, personality, or whatnot. No one of the other seven sons, more popular and probably better looking, could qualify for the place. God was sovereign in the matter. Man's opinion is always set aside. God looks upon the heart and judges accordingly; hence, we need not be surprised and should never be disappointed with His choice. "Then Samuel took the horn of oil (notice the capacity - it was not a vial), and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward" - 16:13.

Here is the first mention of the name of this most fascinating man. We love David. He is so intensely human and likable, and he loved God. God's grace was so manifest in him, to him, and through him. He is truly a winsome personality. It is no marvel that God testified: "I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfill all My will" - Acts 13:22. Obedience to the known will of God marked his steps, regardless of the opinions of men. When David was anointed to be king over Israel, he did not look like a king. He did not even seem to be a warrior. He was not old enough to go to battle like his brothers. Apparently, all he could do was to tend sheep, and play the harp, and write songs. But, as God said, He did not look on men as others did; and so, as God looked at David, He saw the finished product. He saw a mighty warrior, a good king, and a loyal servant of Jehovah. Note David's credentials as told to King Saul - "Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Beth-lehemite, that is cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters (speech), and a comely person, and the Lord is with him" - 16:18. This was said of David before he killed Goliath, or had even won a battle for Israel. This testimony came from his experiences of herding and tending sheep! He learned the principles of fighting, overcoming, trusting the Lord, and singing songs in the night, while with the "few sheep" of his father. God's training ground is not always the battlefield. Saints must be trained in little things, before they can overcome greater things. If they do not prove themselves true to God in little ways, they can never do it with bigger things.

All of this is a wonderful type of the growth of the new creation. Samuel represents the new creation life. David, in following Samuel, would then speak of the new creation in development. He was the eighth son of Jesse. Eight is the new creation number. Note, also, that the new creation is never showy or boastful or proud. Saul represents the flesh trying to be spiritual. At first, he succeeded in looking like the spiritual man, in his humility and otherwise pleasing ways; but, when the real test came, he was unwilling to put the "good flesh" to death as pictured by Agag and the best of the flocks. He even ventured into the place of spiritual sacrifices, and sought to go where only the spiritual priest can go. But David's weakness and littleness were real. He became both humble and great, by trusting the Lord.

The meaning of the names of the three oldest sons of Jesse are pertinent to our thought. These three men had the same opportunity to have the place for which David was chosen, but evidently their hearts were not in the same condition as David's. Eliab, meaning "my father is God," represents a wonderful characteristic of a Christian. He has the knowledge of who is his Father. He knows that God is his Father; and that is a good beginning, but not enough. Next comes Abinadab, whose name means "my father is a liberal giver." This is additional knowledge. Some saints know also that all good gifts come from the Father - salvation and other spiritual blessings; but this is not the requirement for reigning. The third son, Shammah, appears. His name means "hearing," and this is a further step in a Christian's life. To hear the Word of God is wonderful; but that still is not the only and first quality necessary for reigning. The other four sons' names are not given here, so evidently are not necessary to know. David's name means "beloved." Ali, there is the secret to all these other qualities. He was beloved of the Lord. How could the Lord love him in such a way, if He did not know him intimately. God loves all His children, but some of them are beloved. This is love in experience. If a Christian loves the Lord with all his heart, all the other qualities of reigning will appear in due time.

Note another fact that, at first, the king-to-be is not named. He is only known as one of Jesse's sons. This is interesting, because it brings forth the truth that now the new creation is not manifest as reigning with Christ. The new creation learns to "reign in life" by Christ Jesus, over all

the hardships, over the flesh, and over Satan. The saints who are in training, do not look like kings. Their time of reigning with Christ has not come, their days of overcoming are not over. They are known only as members of the new creation. Their identity is still a part of the whole. But the true ruler will not be hidden forever. David gradually became the king to the whole nation, but he was God's king while still on the hillside with the sheep. So God already sees the finished work of redemption, and more especially the special group who will reign with His Son on the throne for a thousand years. These saints are still learning to fight the bears and the lions, and to trust the Lord with the sheep and their own lives. They are learning songs in the night, and how to sing them. These songs are out of their experiences. David's songs were a source of blessing to Saul; but, while David had learned the actual value by being in fellowship with the Lord, Saul could only be soothed by the results that came to David.

This is true of Christians. Some learn firsthand God's dealings with them, and they learn to sing instead of cry and mourn. Others only get the results of the victories of others - not the real victories. They are soothed by others' victories and songs. They go on with the Lord, only if others are going on. They could never go on by themselves. This is the true test of one who will reign with Christ. He has his own experiences, and does not need the victories of others to take him on. This was David's experience. We can easily see why God chose him.

Shortly after David's anointing, he is called to play upon the harp before Saul, that he might quiet the evil spirit that had come upon him. He is a past master in the art of music. He is again found "with the sheep" - 16:19. How different from the carnal attitude manifested by most men. They would have been lifted up by the Lord's choice of them, and immediately would have given up the menial task of herding sheep. It would have been the natural thing for David to have told one of his brothers to look after that work; he must get ready to reign. But, no, he went right on doing his duty. We plainly see the reason for God's choice of His men. They were OVERCOMERS before they were called out and sent forth; and they continued being overcomers. They qualified beforehand.

David did not begin to reign on the throne as soon as he was anointed, but he had to wait God's time. As soon as Samuel poured the horn of oil upon David, "the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward" - 16:13. This set him apart from all others of that time. The Spirit of God was upon him, and the Lord was with him. Similarly, today, the ones who have caught the vision of Jesus and His throne are different. The Spirit of the Lord is upon them in a special way. They know that they are anointed for the throne, and so they yield to the power of the Spirit that is upon them and in them. The anointing sets them apart. Those who are in training for the throne, must go through many experiences that will equip them for reigning. David had plenty of training before he was acknowledged as king. He was in rejection for thirteen years, before he took the throne over Judah; and, it was not until seven and one-half years later, that he was acclaimed king over all Israel. Yet, he had been anointed, twenty years before that. To be anointed is one act; to be crowned king is another.

In this respect, David typifies Jesus Christ who has been anointed to reign as King of kings. He has been waiting many years to assume the place which is rightfully His. The nations of the world have taken things in their own hands, and are ruling without the help of God. They do not seek His will in any respect. But, how different was David, and also his Antitype! David performed all of God's will. The same is true of the coming King, Jesus Christ.

Have you been anointed for the place of reigning with Christ? Do you feel the heavenly pull? Have you experienced the power of the Spirit, working in your inward parts, changing you from one glory to another? If this is so, you can be sure that you have been anointed. These are training days; and, even as David, we cannot be expected to do everything perfectly but we are learning to be perfect. We may fail, even as David; but we do not need to excuse ourselves, and continue to fail. Our failures only point out how we need to be changed. But, if like David we have a heart that desires God's will, we can be assured that we will come to the throne in due time. The training of the present is only an impetus to greater things. The only realities are the spiritual development in the new creation life. So, let us play our harps, write and sing our songs, trust the Lord for our victories over the flesh and the devil; and, before we know it, we will be reigning with Christ on His throne in the heavens.

LOST CHRISTMAS

Why wait till Christmastime again is here?

Why spend those precious hours in hectic ways,

Doing the things that you could do all year,
And let the noise of whirl of festival days
Drown out the angels' song? Why not take time
To lift the eyes to candles in the sky;
To walk some silent night, while carols chime,
And hear the hush of wings brush softly by?
Take time to meditate; to catch the spell
Of childish trust, that simple faith you knew
When love was everywhere, and all was well ...
The gift you lost may now come back to you.
Seek not for Christmas in the busy mart
But cradled somewhere in a trusting heart.

Rachel Van Creme

Chapter Seventeen

DAVID'S VICTORY

"Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle ... at Shochoh, which belongeth to Judah ... And Saul and the men of Israel ... pitched by the valley of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines" - I Samuel 17:1, 2.

In this chapter we have an interesting account of the most unusual and spectacular conflict of all the ages. Goliath, the champion of the Philistines, whose height was six cubits and a span (over nine feet), and who wore a helmet of brass, and a coat of mail or armor, and greaves of brass upon his legs, came out of the camp and challenged the armies of Israel to choose a man to combat with him. He was such a formidable figure that no one would take up the challenge; hence, he mocked and jeered saying, "Give me a man, that we may fight together." The people were afraid, and all the mighty men put to shame. Then came our little David upon the scene. The man of the hour was present at that crisis, as most everyone will admit. What could Israel do, when even the greatest were in perplexity? Surely the problem was great. What shall we do with Goliath? There was no getting away from his presence and his mockery. He had them in his power. But there is hope.

"And Jesse said unto David his son, Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched corn, and these ten loaves, and run to the camp ... and look how thy brethren fare" - I Samuel 17:17, 18.

David was ready. He arose early and was on his way, leaving the sheep with a trusty man. When he arrived, the battle was in array - army against army. He ran in amongst them and saluted his brethren. As he talked with them Goliath came out, as was his custom, and cried to them for a man to come against him. All the warriors of Israel fled, when they saw him. David could not understand the fear and failure, though it was told him. He was surprised that Israel could be so defeated. He inquired as to all the details. Was there any reward for the man who would conquer him? His eldest brother heard, and rebuked him immediately. He was envious of David. Surely it is always so. Joseph's brethren were envious of him, even as later were the brethren of Moses. Eliab knew that David was the chosen of the Lord. Was he not anointed with the horn of oil, while he the older, larger, and more handsome, was passed over? He had cause for just anger, he argues to himself. Hence, he cried, "Why camest thou down hither? And with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle." It is really laughable, if it were not so serious. He threw one question after another at David. "Why have you come? Why have you left the sheep?" Then he answered them himself. But David had the victory over all this. He had the victory over himself. He answered gently, but truly and firmly. "What have I now done?" he inquired. "Is there not a cause?" In other words, "Do you not see the reason of my being here? You are not able to fight this champion, and no one else appears on the scene. God's army cannot be defeated. I am here at this crisis time. I am here to fight Goliath." This is what he is really telling his brother. "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?" That is the way David looked upon Israel. They were God's people. Why should they be defeated by the world or the devil? He had the spirit of faith - the conquering spirit. He lined up God, alongside Goliath; and the latter looked as nothing to David - he was as good as defeated already.

David's words of earnestness and valor were declared to Saul. No doubt, someone ran quickly to

him saying that at last there was a man of Israel who was willing to meet the champion of the Philistines. The king sent for David, and the latter spoke of Goliath saying, "Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine." He was a noble little warrior; but Saul was skeptical. David did not look the part. He was young and frail, compared to the giant. Saul endeavored to dissuade him from what he feared would be his death; but David knew the reason for his being on the scene. Apparently, he came on a trivial errand, bringing supplies to his brethren. The way of the chosen ones may not always seem important. They are ever going in the way of doing good, as we intimated before - doing what their hands find to do. Many men are waiting for the big opportunity to come along; but it never comes. They might have found it in the humble service, even as David found, had they only been willing to do the little things. David was so sure that he was able to go out and fight Goliath, that he almost convinced Saul. He told him a little secret: "Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: And I went out after him, and ... slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God." Here was the great secret of David's victory - he beheld the Lord. God's honor was at stake in this matter. David beheld Him shamed, in Israel's defeat. He had a vision of Jehovah's side of salvation, and of His association with His people. He saw that Jehovah was linked up with His people - their honor was His honor, their defeat was His defeat. No marvel that he was victorious. It was God, not David, against Goliath.

"And Saul armed David with his armour." He clothed him in his panoply; but it was not suitable for David. It did not fit; therefore, he refused all of Saul's well-meant help. He knew that he must be himself and go, trusting in God for success, not in Saul's armor. As he said, he had "not proved" these, but he had proved God; hence, he knew that He was sufficient. "He took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook ... and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine." When Goliath saw the stripling lad he disdained, or ridiculed, the idea of David being any match for him. He seemed like "a youth" with it a fair countenance." The Philistine was disgusted that they sent such an easy foe for him to whip. "Am I a dog," he exclaimed, "that thou comest to me with staves?" He cursed David. It was an insult to his prowess, for this young lad to be counted as a worthy opponent of the mighty erstwhile champion. He determined to show them in quick order, what a man he was. He cried in rage, "Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field." David called, "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the Name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied." David had no fears nor misgivings in any measure, as to the outcome of the battle. Is there not a need of him? God will not, yea cannot, be defeated. He said to Goliath with no uncertain sound, "This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee ... that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel." He was invincible, for he put God right on the spot to do the work. The Lord must show Himself Master of the situation. David ran to meet his adversary. He was in a hurry to begin the fight. He put his hand in his bag, taking from it one of the stones and slung it at the Philistine's head. It sank deeply into his forehead, and the battle was over. He fell to the earth dead, by one of David's stones. "But there was no sword in the hand of David." Then he ran and, with Goliath's own sword, cut off the giant's head. The victory was won by the little stripling of the fair face and gentle mien. When the Philistines saw their champion dead, killed by the youth, they knew that Israel's God was fighting against them and they fled. The men of Judah shouted and hastened after them, and slew many of the enemy. David took the head of the giant to Jerusalem; but he put his armor into his tent. This belonged to him. He won the victory, and the spoils of conquest were his alone.

Saul inquired about the youth who had gone forth to fight Goliath. He had forgotten the minstrel lad who had played the harp and put the evil spirit to flight. And no one seemed to know him. How strange, apparently! "Unknown, and yet well known," are the men of God. When David returned from the slaughter, Abner brought him to Saul with the trophy of, victory - the head of Goliath in his hand. In answer to Saul's inquiry, David said to him, "I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Beth-lehemite."

David, the man of the hour, must win the combat. There was no question as to the outcome. He was on the scene at the crisis moment, having come in obedience to his father. He immediately found the reason of his coming, though apparently he had just appeared as the grocery boy. The armies of the Lord were being dishonored and defied by a superman, of whom all were afraid.

But he inspired no terror in David. He was ashamed that Israel's brave warriors had not gone forth against him. He offered himself. He had been prepared in secret - hidden away from the public eye - 17:34-36. It was there that he had proven his weapons and found them invincible. Hence, he won the battle with a smooth stone from the brook.

DISPENSATIONAL ASPECT

The dispensational lesson of this chapter, pertaining to Israel the nation, is very far-reaching. It takes us all the way to the Millennium. David represents the meek and lowly Jesus, who was sent to the nation by Jesse (God the Father) with tokens of blessing (corn and loaves). "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son" - Galatians 4:4. Christ's Jewish brethren were jealous of Him, even as David's brethren were of him - 17:28. They thought Him too small to deliver them from their galling yoke of bondage. Their unbelief drew a veil across their hearts, and they did not recognize their King.

Jesus' early training prepared Him for the Cross, even as is shown in the life of David - 17:34-37. In the wilderness, Christ showed that He was the Master of the devil and all his deceitful tactics. Jesus also had eighteen years of secret training in which God was preparing Him for the momentous event of Calvary. The mighty victory of Calvary is depicted in 17:51. Jesus slew Satan with his own weapon - "... that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" - Hebrews 2:14. But the Jews rejected Christ and His message of love; and, therefore, they will again encounter a formidable foe at the end of this Church Age. They will again be beset by the devil in the person of the anti-Christ. But the Lord shall come out of Zion and deliver them, "and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob" - Romans 11:26. I Samuel 17:54 is a picture of the prominence that Jerusalem will enjoy as the world capital. The story of perfect deliverance will be told during the Millennium by the world's evangelists - the Jews. David slew his enemy with a small stone. Jesus Christ, the "Stone cut out without hands," will one day smite HIS enemies - will "consume" all the kingdoms of the earth. After this, the Stone will become "a great mountain" - God's Kingdom on earth - and fill "the whole earth" - Daniel 2:34, 35, 44, 45.

PERSONAL LESSON

We must always keep in mind that all the work of the Cross is provisional, and only becomes a reality to us as individuals as we lay hold of it by faith. We must stand against the devil and his hierarchy of evil every day. He is the champion of all false teaching. Satan's religious power is his greatest power. He is dressed in brass, which figures judgment in its unyielding character. He has three weapons which he uses in his attempts to defeat God's people - 17:45. The sword figures death, with which he seeks to instill fear in the heart. The spear tells us of afflictions that he uses to cause us to give up our hope. The shield speaks of his deceitful tactics in using even the Scriptures to advance his cause. In contrast to the devil's weapons - the sword (death) and the shield (deceitful tactics) - we also have a sword and a shield. Our Sword is the Word of God - Hebrews 4:12 and Ephesians 6:17. We wield this weapon as Jesus did, by declaring, "It is written." Our Shield is the Lord Himself - "I am thy Shield" - Genesis 15:1. We also have "the Shield of Faith" - Ephesians 6:16.

If we are to gain the victory over Satan, we must accept the training program which the Lord has set up for us. It is in three simple phases:

The victory over the world is the first one we must take. David's defeat of the lion tells us this. Now, every believer overcomes the world in a measure, when he accepts Jesus as Saviour. But here it means separation from the ways and attitudes of the world, its hopes and ambitions - a coming away from worldly companions and all its pleasures, which are not conducive to the life of faith.

Then we have the second step - victory over the flesh - figured by the defeat of the bear. How sly and deceitful the bear is! One never knows what he intends to do next. So it is with the fleshly nature of man. The way of victory over the flesh is outlined in Romans six. Most Christians never arrive at this place in their experience, because it is too costly. All our natural wisdom must go on the brush pile. All our supposed goodness must be rejected. This is what the majority cannot seem to do. But, if we want God's best, we must go God's way.

Later, and most important, is victory over the devil (Goliath). Is that possible? Yes! Jesus won the victory at Calvary; all we have to do is to take it by faith. We must put on the armor of God and resist the devil - hold our ground. How do we resist? By the Word of God - figured by the stones which David had. Faith is the victory. Ephesians six displays the armor of God.

"BORROWED"

They borrowed a bed to lay His head,
When Christ the Lord came down.
They borrowed the ass in the mountain-pass
For Him to ride to town -
But the crown that He wore
And the Cross that He bore
Were His own.
He borrowed the bread when the crowd He fed
On the grassy mountain side.
He borrowed the dish of broken fish
With which He satisfied -
But the crown that He wore
And the Cross that He bore
Were His own.
He borrowed the ship in which to sit
To teach the multitude -
He borrowed the nest in which to rest.
He had never a home so rude -
But the crown that He wore
And the Cross that He bore
Were His own.
He borrowed a room on the way to the tomb
The passover lamb to eat -
They borrowed the cave for Him a grave
They borrowed a winding sheet -
But the crown that He wore
And the Cross that He bore
Were His own.
The thorns on His head were worn in my stead;
For me the Saviour died;
For guilt of my sin the nails drove in
When Him they crucified -
Though the crown that He wore
And the Cross that He bore
Were His own -
They rightly were mine.

Chapter Eighteen

DAVID IN HIGH PLACES

"And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house. Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle. And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, and behaved himself wisely: and Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants" - I Samuel 18:1-5.

These two names, Jonathan and David, are familiar to almost everyone. They have become almost a proverb, and are synonymous with the highest type of friendship; yet their typical and spiritual import are little known.

The Old Testament is like unto a great gallery of pictures. It abounds with striking photographs and realistic scenes of immense value to us when we understand them; but we must refer to the New Testament for the illumination. There we learn that these wonderful pictures were actual happenings, and were painted by inspiration for those who are living in the present age. We have many of these pictures of David. His history becomes a fascinating picture book when its import is realized, and we get the revelation of the dispensational, typical, and personal lessons therein.

It is glorious in the extreme, freighted with Divine wisdom in its different phases. It is the personal element pictured in the life of David and Jonathan.

To get the connection, we must remember the preceding chapter. The scene set before us is most interesting - two armies in battle array. On the one side of the valley of Elah, Israel were gathered and pitched. On the other side was their adversary the Philistines with the giant Goliath - the defiant defier of Israel - and all the boasted might of their army. He drew near and presented himself forty days. Israel were dismayed and greatly afraid. But, at the end of that time, there was a change. God intervened. He sent a stripling shepherd to their help; but he was also His anointed king. The mighty foe of Israel, Goliath of Gath, was slain by the youngest son of Jesse. Complete and perfect was the victory. The champion was dead, and the Philistine army all vanished at his defeat.

"And Saul said to him, Whose son art thou, thou young man? And David answered, I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Beth-lehemite" - 17:58. And Jonathan, who had looked across the valley of Elah and beheld that terrible adversary and had been afraid and unable to conquer him, was amazed at the victory of David. And Jonathan himself was no little pigmy of a man. He was a mighty warrior. We read in this very book of Samuel (chapter 14), sometime before the battle pictured here, that he went out single-handed with the exception of his armor-bearer and defeated a whole army of Philistines; but Goliath was too much for him. No doubt, he wondered and felt sorry for David, when he saw the ruddy youth go out against the foe. And his amazement was greater, when he saw that little fellow kill the giant. Oh, what a mighty shout must have burst from his lips when that stripling David ran and cut off the giant's head. He took off Goliath's head with the giant's own sword. There must have been a terrific commotion in that army of Israel, and a loud and triumphant boasting in what that little David did that day, when the body of the giant was down in the dust and his head lifted up and shown to the people.

But that victory, though wonderful and great, was only a figure of the far greater reality of Calvary. Not only forty days but four thousand years the adversary, the devil, had mocked and taunted the whole human race with their inability to cope with him. They were all terrified when he put in an appearance. His weapon, death, was formidable. He was supreme over the whole human race. None had ever vanquished him until God's Anointed came upon the scene and fought against him and won the battle.

But let us look further at the type. Jonathan was first terrified at the giant; then he was satisfied, when he saw the giant was dead; and finally his heart was captivated by the man that fought and won the battle. He saw that little fellow in a new role - as a mighty one, a conqueror - and his heart was knit to that of David. He loved him as his own soul. He filled his vision. There was no one that had ever touched his heart so wonderfully as this stripling lad with his shepherd bag and his five smooth stones of the brook. It was the marvel, the miracle of the thing, that astonished him. How David could overcome that giant with nothing in his hand but a slingshot and some stones was more than he could understand. He knew that God had done the supernatural, and David was the chosen vessel of Israel's deliverance.

Saul stands for Christendom. The religious system called by the Name of Christ has taken Him under their wing, as it were, in the same way as many have taken Mohammed. He is their prophet, and they are proud of Him; but they know nothing experimentally about His death and its results to them. They, as a whole, have no interest in the fact that Goliath's head has been cut off. But, when we truly believe that the power of Satan has been annulled by the Cross, it makes a difference. We are changed; and, we gaze at the Man who overcame our enemy, in a different way. We marvel at the power and grace of Christ who single-handed went forth to meet our foe taking His life in His hand, as it were, and died that we might live. Yet, in that apparent defeat, He was the mightiest Conqueror the world has ever seen. And He will shortly demonstrate that fact; yet now it is only a reality to faith. But, when we know Him, how we love Him! Like Jonathan, our heart is knit with that of our Beloved; and nothing can shake us loose. Saul may have had Him in the house, though he soon desired to get rid of Him; but the true disciple has Him in his heart, and loves Him better with every passing day.

Jonathan made a covenant with David; and he stripped himself of all that he possessed - his garments, his sword, his bow, and his girdle. Remember, he was a great man. We may think we strip ourselves, and give up all that we have and are; but, generally speaking, we have little to give to our David. We have no great inheritance, no throne, no crown. But Jonathan was the king's son, and he had a great inheritance; but he quickly realized that David was his master. His

opinion of himself waned, when he looked upon the conqueror of Goliath. Its conceit and self-sufficiency departed. He said, as it were, "Why should I wear these royal robes? This sword and bow and arrow

do not belong to me. I did not kill the giant. I will give them to him that deserves them, the true king." So he laid all that spoke of his kingly rank and authority, everything that he had of honor, down at David's feet. Jonathan somehow knew that David was the coming king; and he acknowledged his sovereignty by his actions at this time.

Jonathan reminds us of another Hebrew of a later date, another Jew, one of the finest Pharisees that ever stood up in his own righteousness. Saul of Tarsus was his name. He too, was a great man in the flesh even as Jonathan, though of a different character. Jonathan was great as to national affairs - a mighty warrior, and heir apparent to the throne of Israel. Saul of Tarsus was equally as great, but in religious affairs. He, too, laid down all his honors and fleshly glory at the feet of David's antitype - the Lord Himself. He admitted he had something of which to boast, according to the ways of men; yet, he stripped himself of all that which was gain to him, so that he might win Christ - Philippians three. All that exalted Saul, "an Hebrew of the Hebrews" as he terms himself, robbed Christ of the glory due Him; hence, how gladly he stripped himself, that Christ might be all. Thus, his heart was knit to Jesus. He delighted to honor and exalt the Conqueror of Calvary. He had such a sense of the worthiness of Christ, that he wanted nothing on himself that would detract from His glory.

"And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, and behaved himself wisely: and Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people" - I Samuel 18:5.

David became a famous figure at the king's court. Like Moses, he gained a name for himself as a great leader of the armies of Saul. So wisely did he conduct himself, that the men and women celebrated his exploits by singing and dancing. Saul became envious of David's popularity. The people's attitude had changed toward him. They looked upon the youth from Bethlehem, not Saul, as their deliverer. The women chanted as they played upon musical instruments, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." And here is where the trouble began. That green-eyed monster jealousy, with his twin brother envy, has been a long time on the scene. Many able men and women have been worsted in the game of life, by these two evil tyrants. Saul looked upon David with suspicion. Satan was surely getting in his work, as was clearly evident. An evil spirit came upon the king. He threw the javelin in his hand at David. Envy always throws a javelin. David was playing upon his harp, as was his wont, to soothe the restless spirit of the king. But the music was in vain now. He was angry and afraid of David. Why? He saw that the Lord was with David, and had departed from him. It is always thus. The Lord's favor upon Jesus - His gentle holy life - made the Jews envious. Likewise, in the present instance. David's troubles were beginning. He was God's man, and such have special training before they are ready for the great place designed for them in God's purpose.

David was demoted. He was removed from being commander-in-chief of the armies of Israel, and made a captain over a thousand; but he was not defeated. No, he was an overcomer. That is the reason that he had been chosen for the kingdom. He behaved himself just as wisely in the lowly place as he did in the high. "The Lord was with David" - and the people loved him better than ever, we are assured, because of the victory he manifested. There was no complaining in his streets, he tells us later in one of his precious Psalms. "The lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord" was David's testimony as well as Job's - Job 1:21. God makes no mistakes. He cannot be defeated. All things serve Him.

David's life was now in jeopardy. Ten times in chapters eighteen and nineteen Saul tried to kill David because he envied him. Of course, Satan was back of it. Saul was against Christ, for Christ was in the loins of David. He could no more kill David, than he could thwart the eternal unchangeable purpose of God. Saul was determined to get rid of him. And though he had proven false to his first promise to give Merab, his elder daughter, to the man killing Goliath; herewith, he made another promise to David - he would give his daughter Michal to him, if he would kill one hundred Philistines. David was pleased with the prospect. He felt no resentment that he had been cheated. He was humble and grateful for anything. He may have fallen in love with Michal and learned of her love for him. In any case, he sallied forth looking for Philistines; and he came back with the proof that he had found and slain two hundred of them. By the fact that David and his associates brought back double the requirement (two hundred Philistines dead) shows the margin of victory provided for the overcomers of any age. The New Testament verse is - "We are

more than conquerors ..." - Romans 8:37. Then Saul gave him his reward - Michal his daughter as wife; nevertheless, he was more wrathful than ever. He was assured that the Lord was with David, and not with him; hence, he was the more against him. And he had reason, for David was God's man. Nothing could alter this fact. He was on the pathway to exaltation and honor. It is written in the chronicles on high.

This can also be said of the full overcomers of today. When we, with all our heart, surrender to the Lord and His will - when we, by living faith, put in our bid to win Christ as our eternal Bridegroom - it is written in the heavenly chronicles. We do not want to go any other way. We cannot go any other way. There is no other way for us. This does not mean simply to repeat what others say (as a parrot would); but it means that this message of overcoming (which will reach a climax with the out-resurrection) must be a living, pulsating, daily reality to us.

DISPENSATIONAL SETTING

Saul's treatment of David is very striking when viewed dispensationally. The nations are jealous of Jesus Christ. They are afraid of Him. They know that their tenure of office is almost at an end. They are assured that Christ will eventually reign, and they are seeking to hinder Him. But He shall have the dominion - "a King shall reign in righteousness" - the throne of David shall be exalted, even as God declared to him - II Samuel seven. A Jew shall rule the world, regardless of all the plans and schemes of men or Satan. Christ shall be exalted, even as the type teaches. Saul was powerless to get rid of David, and Jonathan loved him. "And Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan: and Saul sware, As the Lord liveth, he shall not be slain" - I Samuel 19:6. When Christ is truly known there is not a mere momentary excitement, but an abiding love and loyalty to Him and His cause. We believe in Him and must confess Him before men. We see this in Paul and all the apostles of the early Church. They delighted much in Jesus, even as Jonathan did in David. They were fearless when it came to His cause. Though it was dangerous, yet they boasted of Him and His coming Kingdom.

At this point in our story, the kingdom of Israel was governed by the house of Saul; but God had rejected him and his house. Samuel had already anointed David as king; and, though he was not on the throne yet, faith owned his claims. It is the same in the antitype, as we have noted. Christ's true followers are tested, even in like manner as was Jonathan. They, too, witness a good confession. Listen to Paul's testimony, "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord" - II Corinthians 4:5. He spoke well of Him, even as Jonathan spoke good of David in the doomed house of Saul. Saul apparently stayed his hand a little bit, and pretended to be friendly again with David, and Jonathan was satisfied. He said, as it were, "He is not as bad as we thought he was." Jonathan is representative of the Christians that have not come out of the denominations. He thinks Saul is generally all right; though he may, at times, have some misgivings. Jonathan thought, "Saul did act a little ugly; but we might be mistaken. The churches are all right. They mean well. They are doing good work. There is good in everything." So, for the time being, Jonathan was satisfied; for Saul hearkened to the voice of Jonathan.

How long ago seems yesterday
When gray skies clouded our dreams,
How high our spirits on a sunny day,
How bright the future gleams.
Those cloudy winter days now passed,
We barely remember it seems.
Since the chill has gone with the overcast
We see warmer days - promise of spring.
As we view the beautiful rising sun
Bringing to light perfections of godly creation;
Such breathtaking scenes, free to everyone,
Make us aware there is no greater sensation.
Surely forever we will give Him the praise,
And ask His guidance as we each do our part.
At the start of each day, dawn's curtain He'll raise,
Leaving this thought: "Oh, God, how great Thou art.

Vivian Klein

Chapter Nineteen

DAVID IN PERIL

"And Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should kill David" - I Samuel 19:1.

Saul could find no cause for his anger against David. David behaved himself so wisely, and his conduct was so irreproachable, that the people were impressed with him; and Saul was yet more angry. He insisted that David be put to death. Saul knew that the kingdom had been taken from him, because of his failure to obey God; but he would not yield to that ultimatum - 15:28. He was bound to hold the kingdom for himself and his family. He sought to stir his son Jonathan against David; but he was not successful. Jonathan told David of his father's evil design against him, and advised him to seek safety in hiding. Then he pleaded with his father, in David's behalf; though David's exaltation to the throne meant defeat for him. But he was a friend indeed; there was no question of his loyalty. Saul was moved by his son's intercession, and promised he would take no steps against David. He even swore to this fact, saying, "As the Lord liveth, he shall not be slain" - 19:6. Therefore, David returned to his place in Saul's house. But the sequel proved that no confidence could be placed in Saul. He had no regard for his oath.

The trouble blew over, and everything was apparently all right again; but it was not all right. That was just on the surface. Saul's heart was not changed one iota. Saul still hated David and sought his life. It is the same today. "He that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit" - Galatians 4:29. But it is the world's persecution by which the true believer, the follower of Jesus, is marked - "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you" - John 15:18. Jesus tenderly expressed the estimation He put upon fidelity to Himself - "Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations" - Luke 22:28. He said this to the faithful little company that had shared His rejection, showing how He valued their fellowship when the house of Israel was plotting against Him. Likewise, the sympathy of Jonathan was precious to David. It was a foreshadowing of the above, and sweetened the bitter cup of his rejection.

"And there was war again: and David went out, and fought with the Philistines, and slew them with a great slaughter; and they fled from him. And the evil spirit from the Lord was upon Saul, as he sat in his house with his javelin in his hand" - 19:8, 9. Envy and jealousy came upon him again. He listened to David playing and making music, and remembered his bravery in battle. Yet, the king hated him. How terrible that people can sit together at the same table, and apparently be friendly; and yet, some will be hating others and seeking to injure them, even as we read in this case. "And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with the javelin; but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, and he smote the javelin into the wall: and David fled, and escaped that night" - 19:10. Saul was worse than ever. He also sent messengers unto David's house, to watch him and to slay him in the morning. But God intervened through an ignominious escape.

"So Michal let David down through a window: and he went, and fled, and escaped" - 19:12. This was a favorite way of escape. It speaks of the weak things which God uses to deliver His people from their enemies. In Joshua 2:15 we find the story of a mighty deliverance from the face of certain death. Rahab used a cord to let the two spies down from the wall - those that Joshua had sent to gain information. There is also the case of Paul, in Acts 9:24, 25. He recounts that deliverance, in II Corinthians 11:32, 33. In that chapter, we find in what Paul boasted - his limitations. Notice, in each Scripture we have given, that the word "down" is mentioned. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted" - Luke 14:11. This is the unchanging principle in God's dealings with His saints. As one brother expressed it many years ago - "The way up is down. The further down you go the higher up you get; and you never reach the top until you hit the bottom." Food for thought.

A NEW YEAR PRAYER

John Wright Follette

"O Lord, I pray that through this coming year
Our fellowship may deep and richer be;
That I may recognize Thy Presence near,
And turn as to a friend my Lord, to Thee.
Walk with me, then, and guide me with Thy eye -
I dare not trust myself to move one pace.
I know not what ahead of me may lie
Of joy or sorrow; yet whate'er the case,
One thing I know, that Thou art near my side,

And knowest well, my weakness and my frame;
Thou needed strength will give, if I abide
In Thee, and in the strength of Thy dear Name.
I ask Thee not to give me joy, aside
From that which comes from doing Thine own will.
To know Thy thought and purpose, naught beside,
Except that Thou wilt them in me fulfill.
Oh, help me not to fail Thee, Lord, in this,
But with Thy grace and strength, oh, keep me true.
Forbid that in Thy thought for me I miss;
But help me trust in Thee to bring me through.
Afresh I offer up to Thee my life,
To use me as Thou wilt or set aside;
To manifest Thyself in open joy and light,
Or in some hidden corner there to hide,
It matters not to me, if only Thou
Wilt make my foolish heart what Thou dost choose;
And daily yielding to Thee, teach me how
To gain more of Thy life, and mine to lose.
Live out Thy life through me, and let there flow
Such streams from Thee, my Head, that naught can stem
The currents of Thy life - e'en here below.
These things I ask in Thy dear Name. Amen."

Chapter Twenty

DAVID IN FLIGHT

"And David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said before Jonathan, What have I done? What is mine iniquity? And what is my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life?" - I Samuel 20:1.

Jonathan does not know what is in the heart of Saul. He does not know the deep-seated envy and hatred that Saul has for David. Even so, believers in the churches do not see that the professed Christian world does not love Christ. They do not understand that some who are outwardly moral and apparently good are not truly saved. We must have the Spirit of discernment to detect the evil hateful heart manifest in even religious people.

"And he said unto him, God forbid; thou shalt not die: behold, my father will do nothing either great or small, but that he will shew it me: and why should my father hide this thing from me? It is not so" - 20:2. Jonathan had such confidence in his father; but David knew better. He said, "Thy father certainly knoweth that I have found grace in thine eyes; and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved: but truly as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death" - I Samuel 20:3.

Oh, no! Saul cannot deceive David. He is assured that he is no friend of his. We find this a fact in our case. The world does not love us, when we love and talk of Jesus. We notice it in our neighbors. Talk to them about the Lord, and the things of God; and immediately they become uneasy, and feel that they must return home. "I have something on the stove," they will say, or other irrelevant trifling remarks. There will surely come a separation, if we are bold in defending Jesus; as Jonathan shortly found, when he took up David's case with his father.

"Thou son of the perverse rebellious woman, do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion, and unto the confusion of thy mother's nakedness? For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom" - 20:30, 31. Jonathan was surprised indeed. "Wherefore shall he be slain? What hath he done?" he enquired - 20:32. "And Saul cast a javelin at him (Jonathan) to smite him" - because of his love for David - 20:33. Therefore, "Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat no meat the second day of the month: for he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame" - 20:34. Jonathan had sought to protect David from Saul; but when a spear was thrown at him, he was finally convinced of Saul's evil. Some saints are not convinced of a separation, until they have been stepped on themselves. Jonathan was angry now. He went to find David. They had arranged between them how he would warn David, so that he would get out of the reach of Saul - 20:16-36.

DAVID IN REJECTION

"And as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of a place toward the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded" - 20:41. Yes, David exceeded, you can be sure of that. If we weep a little bit, Christ weeps twice as much. "And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the Name of the Lord, saying, The Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever" - 20:42. Here is one of the saddest verses in the Bible - "He arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city" - 20:42.

This is a crisis point in Jonathan's biography, a solemn moment. David is now an outcast from the house of Saul; even as the Lord Jesus Christ is at this time rejected by the world, even by Christendom. Now Jonathan loved David. He believed that he was God's anointed king who would eventually come into his kingdom; but he let him go into rejection alone. He refused to leave his father's house. The renunciation of the respectability, honor, and prestige of being connected with the apparent successful reigning house of Saul was too much for even Jonathan. He could, and did in theory, lay down all that was his after the flesh; but unlike Saul of Tarsus, when it came to the practical carrying out of his consecration and renunciation, he was not willing for the sacrifice. Yes, he had something to give up. There was real suffering connected with his turning away from his father's house and going out in the wilderness, unknown and unnoticed except by the Lord. It was too much for him; hence, he said "Good-by" to David, and held fast to Saul. The sequel is sad. He died with Saul.

So Jonathan goes back into fellowship with all of that which rejects his friend David. He returns to comfortable beautiful surroundings, where there is no lack; while the savior of Israel, the conqueror of Goliath (the champion of the Philistines), is out in the wilderness - out in the barren waste with no comfort, not even the necessities of life - hiding in the cave of Adullam from the inclement weather.

But the sorrows of God's anointed were but shadows of the deeper sorrows of God's only Begotten Son. They point toward His sufferings as He lived here in this world - unknown, unloved, unsung (except by the publicans and sinners) - or, at the suffering of death, when He hung upon the Cross between heaven and earth rejected by His friends and foes. His were the deepest sorrows - His the deepest rejection.

Here is the testing place for Christians, even as it was for Jonathan. We all come to this moment; and some of us are not willing to go the way of rejection and reproach. We do not like the cave of Adullam nor the wilderness, where things are poor and mean. We want the warmth of Saul's house. We like to go with the majority. Jonathan would have to go alone with David; but, it meant too much, dearly as he loved his friend. Fleshly ties could not be broken. "Blood is thicker than water," we can almost hear him say. "I owe something to my father and mother," and so on, he argued. David went out alone. This reminds us of a scene in the life of Jesus, where we read: "Every man went unto his own house. Jesus went unto the mount of Olives" - John 7:53; 8:1. His rejection is plainly manifest at this point in His career. Jesus had come up to the Feast of Tabernacles, which figured His second coming. He showed Himself to the people, telling them that He was the Messiah for whom they were waiting. Some believed on Him; others did not. This brought a division. Jonathan and Saul, in type, were again on the scene. Christ went out alone; though Nicodemus, standing in relation to Him as Jonathan to David, witnessed for Him. He said in substance, "Why, what has He done? For what reason do you want to kill Him?" "Jesus went unto the mount of Olives" - a picture of His rejection. He had no home. Other folks had houses and friends, even the animals had dens, and the birds had nests; but He had no place to lay His head - Matthew 8:20. Jesus departed alone, even as David. David was then alone, separated from all that he loved - II Samuel 1:25-27. (Compare Paul - Acts 20:13, 37, 38). Is not this the story of the full overcomers?

DISPENSATIONAL ASPECT

There is also a dispensational feature to chapters nineteen and twenty. Of course, Saul represents the civil powers; and Jonathan represents true believers that are joined with present-day national and religious powers that are against Christ. But "Jonathan" Christians cannot believe that the nations are against Christ. The nations seek peace. So religious organizations cry out, "Pray for peace." Outwardly, it seems that they are right; but they are dead wrong. It is not Scriptural to pray for the peace of the world, except we pray for the coming of "the Prince of Peace." We are to "pray for the peace of Jerusalem" - Psalm 122:6. In Colossians 1:20 we read

that Christ it made peace through the blood of His Cross." In Ephesians 2:14 we find that "He is our peace." The world should heed the admonition, and accept the peace already made. But they will not. Therefore, they will continue to seek peace without seeking Christ. They will find only a false peace, established upon a shaky unscriptural foundation - "For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden (unexpected) destruction cometh upon them ... and they shall not escape" - I Thessalonians 5:3. "And the Scripture cannot be broken," Jesus said - John 10:35.

MAGDALENE

J.D. Wilson

Who loves for love alone,
And waits for dirges' end
Until her love is shone
In day long glow: Transcend
Beyond cause and effect,
With only Him to see,
Who chose her, His elect
Throughout eternity.
Wait not much longer, maiden,
For time is passing by,
And He prepares your kingdom:
Together you shall fly
To wed in love and life with Him
Who holds the stars and seas in hand.

Chapter Twenty-one

DAVID IN TRAINING

"Then came David to Nob to Abimelech the priest I Samuel 21:1.

First, we wish to consider the parting of Jonathan and David. Jonathan was David's best friend, his bosom friend, we might say. He had comforted and cheered him in the early days of their friendship; and loyally withstood Saul, his father, in his enmity toward David. Nevertheless, when David was forced to flee, Jonathan did not share his rejection. He swore eternal friendship, and emphatically declared his faith that David would reign. But, when David went out into exile, he went into the city and to his own house - I Samuel 20. That must have almost broken David's heart.

We have experiences of like character. Our dearest friends will reject us when we go this way of separation and loyalty to Christ. "Don't be so intense. You will be called fanatical, or worse," they will tell us. Nevertheless, some of us must go on. We have heard the call of the Lord, and have left all to follow Jesus in rejection or wherever He leads.

In the following three chapters, David, visited seven cities. He is a type of Christ. Therefore, we are not wrong in our interpretation of these steps of rejection with David being stages of our experience in rejection with Christ. These companions of David, who shared his rejection, also shared his exaltation and throne. They were with him in adversity, and also with him in prosperity. So shall it be with the overcoming saints of today. Let us look at these stopping places, as David goes out separated from all that he loves.

David's first stop was Nob - "elevation" or "heights." After his parting from Jonathan, when he was absolutely rejected of the house of Saul, he thought of his religious friends - the priests. He was convinced that he would receive some comfort and encouragement from them, but that was not so. They were afraid of him, because he came alone; therefore, his heart was chilled by their attitude. They helped him a little, and gave him a sword and some bread; but, otherwise, he was rejected. Again, his heart was hurt. He was crushed, as he turned away and went on alone.

This incident of the bread (21:3-6) is mentioned in Mark 2:23-26. Jesus justified David for taking the shewbread for himself and for those with him, which was not lawful for anyone to eat but the priests. By the Spirit, David lived ahead of his time, even in the realm of grace. He knew that the things of the temple had become a form. So why call the bread holy, when the type of Christ was rejected? All of God's relation with Israel depended upon David being king. He was the connecting link. The sanctity of the consecrated things had departed. In type, the kingdom was set aside; because the king, David, was in rejection. Therefore, the types were common. Nothing of religious men is hallowed when they have no faith.

"And David arose, and fled that day for fear of Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath" - 21:10. David's second stop was Gath - "winepress." He thought of turning to an old friend, Achish, the king of Gath; but he found him to be just as his name implies - "only a man." David found no solace nor hiding place there. He found it to be, instead, a winepress. He feared that they would hold him prisoner, after he overheard a conversation about his presence there. This changed his mind altogether concerning his friend. He feigned insanity, in order to get away. He made a great mistake in trusting in the friendship of the world. He was foolish to go there, and he had to act a fool to get out of his predicament.

So the overcomers today, who are in rejection with Christ, cannot get encouragement nor comfort from their religious friends nor from their social acquaintances of long ago. It is foolish for overcomers to seek them out. They have chosen the Lord, and those former friends are not traveling that way, so their paths are diverse. The worldly friends do not understand them; they cannot fathom the consecration that they manifest toward Christ. They have not the vision. The overcomers learn by experience that their old friends, religious or otherwise, do not want their company any more. They are rejected, as they finally learn, even as David. They have no friends except those to whom the Lord leads them.

Every one of God's men has had a similar experience. They are all forced to flee from the face of their enemies and dwell in the wilderness, or what answers to it, for a specified time. They are in peril there, too. Paul, in his day, recites his perils - "In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren" - II Cor. 11:26.

Those necessary evils were allowed by the Lord for all these chosen men of destiny. They were thus made to depend upon Him. It is marvelous to meditate upon the manner of the training of these warriors of faith.

The humbling must come. There is no other route to honor. Perils of all manner met these men who were with David, but they faced and overcame them. These were realities! Suffering in spirit, soul, and body was the order of the wilderness. David spoke of himself in that lonely barren place, as a flea jumping from one danger to another and also as a dead dog - 24:14. But it was thus that they learned the most necessary lesson - dependence upon the living God. No man is worth anything to Him, otherwise. He must be their only Source of supply. He must be their Storehouse. Every provision for their need must be found in Him. His sufficiency is thus emphasized, as well as their insufficiency. They learned Him as their Refuge in time of danger, and as their Strength in an hour of weakness. This is when David composed Psalm 56.

"He that hath the Son hath life" -

I John 5:12. If we do not hinder Him
by our sufficiency and self-effort
He will work in us until we reach
the consummation, the objective for
which we have been redeemed - our
spiritual character will be the exact
copy of the Pattern Jesus. He has
come to do this; therefore, let Him
have His way. It will be then our way
also. We will be like Him. Hallelujah!

Chapter Twenty-two

DAVID IN REJECTION

"David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him. And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men" - 22:1, 2.

David's third stopping place was Adullam - "testimony." And that is truly what he became. He testifies to us, even to this day, of God's faithfulness. It was there that his friends came to share his cave. Notice them. We call them David's "D.D.'s" - the Distressed, those in Debt, the Discontented - and none of them appear to have anything to lose. They had no honor, nor prestige, nor renown to give up, and yet their following David into exile is counted as a sacrifice and is greatly rewarded. As David's company was of the poor and unknown of the earth, so is the

case today. As is written, "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which ARE NOT, TO BRING TO NOUGHT THINGS THAT ARE: that no flesh should glory in His Presence" - I Corinthians 1:27-29.

David's friends who shared his rejection may have been a trial to him at times. They were not the cultured refined type that Jonathan was; but they were loyal to him in exile. Likewise, those sharers of the rejection of Christ were ordinary folk as were His apostles; but they shall reign when He reigns. David did not remain in Adullam long. The prophet Gad warned him to depart, because of Saul; therefore, he left the cave. At this stage of his experience, David wrote Psalm fifty-seven.

"And the prophet Gad said unto David, Abide not in the hold; depart, and get thee into the land of Judah. Then David departed, and came into the forest of Hareth" - 22:5. David's fourth stop was Hareth - "the cutting" or "engraving." Here comes the challenge to David's faith. Overcomers stay in the place of carving, whether in David's day or now. Everyone that shared David's rejection was there. Everyone sharing Christ's rejection comes into this same place. They are cut and slashed, even by saints who are not going the way of overcoming; but they still carry on. It is through this process of engraving, that the brilliance of the diamond-like beauty of Christ is seen. If we have a separation like David had from Jonathan, we may come into a cave. When we have witnessed to the things of God, then we seem to be shut up for a while. The enemy would hinder our testimony. He tries to make God out a liar, and hinder us from having the joy and victory that the Lord has given. Sometimes our testimony gets beyond our experience. Then God cuts us back a little. We may be hindered from witnessing for a while, that something may be worked out in our lives. Then our testimony will be a new one. There will be a victory that we never had before. Do you praise the Lord that He cuts you back? Is He giving you a training that is a little different than before? It is the way that David's worthies went, and so with Christ's overcomers. Christ Himself went the way of Hareth. Cutting and slashing were common occurrences with Him; and we are appointed to go the same route. It will not always be so. We suffer with Christ and we shall reign with Him, even as David's companions reigned with him.

"Then answered Doeg the Edomite, which was set over the servants of Saul, and said, I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub. And he enquired of the Lord for him, and gave him victuals, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine" - 22:9, 10.

Ahimelech gave to David some shewbread, which was something that no one else had ever done. David saw the grace of God, and thus he was bold to ask for the shewbread to feed himself and his hungry men. When Saul heard these things, he was enraged against David. Who told Saul this? It was Doeg, the Edomite, who represents the flesh. As sure as we begin to eat the Word of God and take hold of the Sword of the Spirit, the devil will rise up against us. The Edomite, the carnal fellow, will tell on us; then the devil will rise up against us. Have you ever heard the Edomite, when you were talking of the grace of God? Have you said, "I will take God's grace for this hard place. I believe the Lord will supply these needs. I believe the Lord will do mighty things for me"? Has the Edomite come around and tried to make trouble? When we enjoy the grace of God, the flesh will try to stop our fellowship with the Lord. It was at this stage in David's career that he penned Psalm fifty-two.

Did David say, "I will have to go back to the house of Saul. I cannot stand this persecution and cutting back"? No. He was steadfast in his trust in God. The sad thing is that eighty-five priests were killed. The one that was left fled after David with the ephod, and he told him about the death of those priests. David said, "Abide thou with me, fear not: for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life: but with me thou shalt be in safeguard" - 22:23. Wonderful words of faith! Do they not sound very much like the very words of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ? "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" - John 15:7. No matter how much the Edomite may try to cut off our fellowship with Jesus, He is still saying to us, "If ye abide in Me." David here is a wonderful type of Christ and of full overcomers. Oh, we are so glad that the things which are true of the Son of God are true of us. Jesus went from one place to another. The Jews sought to kill Him. Many times they came into the synagogue, and thought they had Him; but God never allowed them to touch Him. So the enemy would stop us; but God will not let him do so.

Whate'er my God ordains is right

In this I rest secure;
E'en though the future lies unseen
I know He goes before.

Chapter Twenty-three
DAVID FIGHTS FOR KEILAH

"Then they told David, saying, Behold the Philistines fight against Keilah, and they rob the threshingfloors" - I Samuel 23:1.

David heard that the Philistines had invaded Keilah, and were robbing the people of their food. His heart was touched with compassion because of his brothers' needs. How like Christ he was! He was displaying the character of the true King of Israel. Saul was using his energy and manpower in trying to destroy David, while the enemy was invading the land.

Keilah means "enclosed place," and there we find some possessions which the Philistines desired. The threshingfloor is the place where we sift the wheat from the chaff. It is here that the Truth, of God's Word is brought forth. It is a hidden place, secluded from the world, just as Gideon typifies in his actions - Judges 6:11.

The Philistines represent religious unbelievers; that is, they have a great profession, but no spiritual possession. They are jealous of the true people of God, and covet their spiritual light and power and victory. They would like to have the Christian's possessions, but they do not want to obtain them through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. They are pictured aptly by the Apostle Paul as - "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" - II Timothy 3:5. They would try to rob us of our spirituality by false piety. They come upon us either slyly or quite openly, and want to dwell with us. Paul says firmly, "... from such turn away." These religious formalists or modernists are the greatest enemies the Christian has. The Philistines were to be feared more than Saul. That is why David was so concerned.

In all this we see David's continual dependence upon God. He enquired for instruction and guidance in fighting the enemy. We can only gain a victory through the direct guidance and strength of the Lord. Our David showed us the way then, even as Jesus later displayed when He walked this earth. Can we hope to get by any other way?

Next we go from the sublime to the depth in ungratefulness and deceit. David knew that his life was in danger, and would always be, as long as Saul was alive. He also knew the deceitfulness of the old man, and he discovered it anew in the men of Keilah. We wonder how those men who had been delivered from the Philistines could turn against their benefactor. Such is always the case with the old man. He is desperately deceitful, and we cannot trust him an inch, whether in ourselves or in another. The Lord told David what to expect, and He also tells us in His Word what to expect from our old nature. We cannot depend on the old life, no matter how good or reliable it seems. It is only God who will give us the true picture of what we are. The Bible is both a mirror and a laver. We can look into it and see our picture in the old creation. Then we find the way of cleansing and a way out of the old creation into the new by being born again. But let us never forget that the old creation life - our old man - is as deceitful as ever; and it is only after we are a new creation that we learn how horrible is the old man with his deceitful lusts.

David had to leave that "enclosed place"; but God was with him, and each step was in the direction of the throne. His six hundred men were scattered. David could never become attached to earthly help. He had to learn that his help came from the Lord. So, the mighty warrior had to flee, stripped of his bodyguard amidst disappointment and disillusionment. That was good for him, as it is for us all.

"And David abode in the wilderness in strongholds, and remained in a mountain in the wilderness of Ziph" - 23:14.

David's next stopping place, Ziph, means "refinery." We would have thought that David was about through with his trials. Instead of that, the Lord took him to a place of greater training. So, that is the way with us. Many times the Lord puts us in the melting pot. When we feel that we cannot stand another trial, we must remember that God's grace is sufficient. We do not give up. This is a fine place to be in, because we learn the powerful love of the Son of God. Jesus was in the melting pot for you and for me. He was tested in all points "like as we are, yet without sin." We have a High Priest who is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." There is not a trial nor battle nor persecution, but the Son of God enters into it and He has made a way of deliverance for you and for me.

There is not an idle statement in God's Word. It is going to be fulfilled to the uttermost. If we really

believe it, when we are put in the melting pot, we will stay there by His grace until He delivers us. If we deliver ourselves, we are liable to get into a worse trial; but, if we stay until God delivers us, we will come out as beautiful as the Son of God.

David was God's choice king, a type of His wonderful Son Jesus, in training for the kingdom. He must suffer even as Jesus and all those associated with Him. It is written, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him" - II Timothy 2:12. There is a price to pay for the throne rights. They are not won by wishful thinking. So David passed through Ziph. It was a hot place, but the Lord's choice saints suffer more than ordinary ones. Those in training for the kingdom must stay in Ziph awhile. But the Lord is with them in the fire, and He watches that the fire only burns away the chaff. Those overcomers get out of Ziph when the Lord sees that it has done its work. This is just about the end. The refining is about over. The Ziphites gave his hiding place away to Saul, so David must flee again.

While David was in the "refinery," his friend Jonathan came to see him. Here we see the human side of each overcomer. No matter how spiritual one may be, there is always some comfort and solace received through human association. This is something we never lose. Some people have tried to isolate themselves, thus believing they are more spiritual by so doing; but, we need this association, especially with spiritual ones. Jesus felt the need of companionship in His hour of need. He asked His disciples, "Could ye not watch with Me one hour?" Usually, in a desperate time, no one is able to enter into it with us; but, nevertheless, we long for someone who understands.

Jonathan loved David, but his heart was never centered on the Lord as David's was. He loved what David was, but not the One who made David that way. We find the same true today in lovely Christian people. They know our stand for the Gospel and the Lord, but cannot go "all the way" with us. They would seek us out and "to enter in; but eventually they, as Jonathan, depart - "And David abode in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house" - 23:18.

"And David went up from thence, and dwelt in strong holds at En-gedi" - 23:29. David's seventh and final stopping place was En-gedi - "fountains of the wild goat." These stopping places of David in his exile, teach us of the overcomer's experiences. They are practical lessons for the overcomers of this present age; for they too, like David, are in training for a throne. All these stopping places tell us of a stage of development in David's life. Therefore, En-gedi teaches that the hot fiery trial is over, David had gone through the fire and had arrived at a place of refreshing - "a fountain of water." And, for the overcomers also, there will be a cessation of the carving and of the fire. They will have done the work; and the overcomers will be ready for the throne, even as David. He was refreshed and comforted as he stepped up to the high place of Engedi.

Depend on God - What stronger arm
Has e'er been found on which to trust?
Behold the One who faileth not,
And in His sight are we but dust.

Depend on God -
Rest on His word.
He is thy tender, loving Lord.
Depend on God - the Fortress sure -
Hide in the Rock, in truth then know
That thou are sheltered, safe, secure,
Though winds of testing strongly blow.

Depend on God -
Rest on His word.
He is thy tender, loving Lord.
Depend on God - He loves to feel
Thy trembling hand within His own;
When pressed beyond all human power
'Tis then His power divine is shown.

Depend on God -
Rest on His word.
He is thy tender, loving Lord.
Depend on God - thy burden giant
To Him who said, "Cast all thy care."

Then free as bird on joyful wing
Rejoice that He thy load doth share.
Depend on God -
Rest on His word.

He is thy tender, loving Lord.

Chapter Twenty-four

DAVID TESTED

"And David said to Saul, wherefore hearest thou men's words, saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt? Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that the Lord had delivered thee today into mine hand in the cave: and some bade me kill thee: but mine eye spared thee; and I said, I will not put forth mine hand against my lord; for he is the Lord's anointed" - 24:9, 10.

David had achieved victories before in the wilderness school. He had lived as a youth before the Lord - doing His will in the little things that came to his hand, tending the sheep in obedience to his father. It was at that time that he killed the lion and bear in dependence upon the living God. Afterward there was the great triumph over Goliath, which brought him into the limelight of Saul's court. The high places and their honors did not tarnish the sterling worth of his character. Like Daniel in a later day, he proved himself conqueror in prosperity; and then came adversity's training camp, with all its privations and perils. Here were found the greatest trials, but also the greatest victories. He had to be proven master of himself as well as of circumstances, and thus be worthy to reign. For as he declared later, "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God" - II Samuel 23:3.

Twice in this book, we find that Saul was in the hand of David. He was so close to Saul that he could have taken his life; but each time he overcame himself (his old man, we would say) and refused to make a way out of his temptations. He had left his cause to the Lord; and he resisted every impulse within himself and within his followers to avenge his wrongs. He knew that he was the anointed king, and that his day of showing would dawn as sure as that God lived; and he was willing to bide His time. But he cut a piece off the skirt of Saul's robe privately - (it was a hint that he and his kingdom were to be cut off). Later his heart smote him for doing this little harm to the Lord's anointed - 24:4-7. Saul was still God's anointed, officially; for He had not at this time publicly announced David as His choice for the throne. But he knew, and he let Saul know, what a narrow escape he had. Saul was overcome with gratitude; and he repented, apparently, of his attitude toward David. He acknowledged David's personal triumph.

Ah, that was a victory. This spirit of letting God fight his battles and bring him out of trouble and avenge him was habitual with David. He learned the Lord and His purposes concerning himself, and he was assured that nothing could happen to him except what was in the will of God. Such faith in God is wonderful. David absolutely trusted the Lord. He had been proven in every sense of the word, and he had thus proven the Word of the Lord.

Saul had to admit the fact that David was more righteous than he; also he declared that he knew David would come to the throne, saying, "Thou shalt surely be king, and ... the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand" - 24:20. Saul then entreated David that he would not cut off his seed, nor destroy his name out of his father's house. And David promised Saul. "And Saul went home. but David and his men gat them up unto the hold" - 24:22. He did not trust his enemy even yet. He had found him so lacking in honesty, that he did not believe in any of his promises.

But David was being made ready for the throne. Not until we have the mastery over our own old man are we capable of reigning over others. Even when Saul and Jonathan were slain, David did not rejoice, though he was enriched thereby. He mourned their death and praised Saul and bewailed Jonathan his friend who died with Saul. Jonathan did not live to reign with David as he hoped, for he did not share David's rejection nor his sufferings. So for us the lesson is obvious. If we refuse the rejection with Christ, how can we hope to reign with Him? Jonathan was a most precious friend to David. Their names are linked together as the symbol of friendship; but notice, when David came to the throne, Jonathan was missing. He had owned David as greater than he, and "loved him as his own soul" - 18:3, 4. Nevertheless, he did not share his rejection; so he did not share his throne.

Humbling is fundamental for all the chosen men of God. He knows what they need to learn, and He does not spare the rod and spoil the child. Discipline is an absolute necessity; and, if they refuse the training and leave school before they graduate, it only proves they are not God's men. All of these, who have truly purposed in their heart to obey God, wait to the end of the term to get

their diploma.

A PRAYER FOR COURAGE

This, too, will pass. O heart, say it over and over,
Out of your deepest sorrow, out of your deepest grief,
No hurt can last forever - perhaps tomorrow
Will bring relief.

This, too, will pass. It will spend itself - its fury
Will die as the wind dies down with the setting sun;
Assuaged and calm, you will rest again, forgetting
A thing that is done.

Repeat it again and again, O heart, for your comfort;
This, too, will pass as surely as passed before
The old forgotten pain, and the other sorrows
That once you bore.

As certain as stars at night, or dawn after darkness,
Inherent as the lift of the blowing grass,
Whatever your despair or your frustration -
This, too, will pass.

Grace Noll Crowell

Chapter Twenty-five

DAVID AND NABAL AND ABIGAIL

"And Samuel died; and all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him ... And David arose, and went down to the wilderness of Paran. And there was a man in Maon, whose possessions were in Carmel; and the man was very great, and he had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats: and he was shearing his sheep in Carmel. Now the name of the man was Nabal; and the name of his wife Abigail" - I Samuel 25:1-3.

David had just previously gained a great victory. He had conquered Saul by his magnanimous attitude toward him when he had him in his power. It was truly wonderful. He had not only gained the mastery over Saul, but he had shown the habitual self-mastery of one who is walking before God. Saul was not only his enemy, but a most powerful aggressor, who sought his downfall and death continually. David had suffered at his hand, the loss of all things that men count dear; yet, David had spared this enemy, when he had him in his power. That was victory indeed!

Now notice the opposite attitude of our hero. Nabal was not exactly an enemy, but he was selfish, insolent, and proud. David had no cause to fear him. With such a one, though rude and stingy, how easy to show himself magnanimous and gracious - which in Saul's case had cost so much. Nevertheless, it is here that David failed. He was terribly severe and unjust. Being denied that which he demanded and to which he might have had a moral but no legal claim, he blazed out in a passion of wrath which would have involved with Nabal every male of his house.

"Is it possible that this is the David that we have been admiring?" someone may enquire. "Is this he who showed such self-control? Can this be the shepherd-king of Israel, the appointed ruler in the fear of God, the same who has felt the unrighteousness and injustice of men, the one trained to bear and forbear in the school of experience and suffering? Is there then another person in David, another spirit, a fleshly man?" Yes, it is even so, sad to say. Sin dwelleth in the flesh, even in a Christian, to the end of his days. Our best remedy against sin is to be aware of its existence and count that we are dead, because "our old man is (was) crucified with Him (Christ)" nineteen hundred years ago - Romans 6:6. We are to have no confidence in the flesh, not even in our own.

Observe that David, at this time, did not consult the ephod to ascertain the will of God. He wanted his own way, which was the way of sin: and was stopped, in his mad impetuous haste, by a woman. It is often the case. Many of the weaker sex (as they are called) have shown themselves the stronger and have given good advice and saved men from grief and sorrow, as in the case in view.

But, there is a typical picture here, which is the point. Samuel had just passed away. The watch of the people was no more kept at Ramah. Everything is significant in this interesting story. The long watch at the exalted place was over. Samuel figures Christ as Prophet, prior to His coming as the true King to assert His right to reign - Psalm 2; Revelation 10:1. His gathering together of

the prophets around him figures the true Church who acknowledges His Lordship amidst the self-will and insubordination of all that is of the world - whether it is religious or otherwise. Thus Samuel and the prophets figure the present time, when the Lord is here in the Person of the Holy Spirit watching with His saints. The Christ of Galilee has gone to the Cross and accomplished redemption; but the Christ of glory will soon assume His place as "King of kings, and Lord of lords."

This watch, being gone with Samuel, implies typically that this age is over and all things are changed. The King is about to rise and reign, and His people who have shared in His rejection shall also share in His reign. To these facts of the history before us, the future prophecy answers in figure. David, after his magnanimous attitude toward Saul, arose and went down to the wilderness of Paran - "adornment"; which brings to us the thought in keeping with what is here, that "the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose" - Isaiah 35:1. But this is only a type, and not the accomplishment.

A most difficult portion in some sense is before us, if we are to find the spiritual meaning underlying the natural. We will see here, as always, how these figurative men are made to serve as types for us; for, even their failures are suggestive, as in the present instance. We are introduced to a man of Israel whose home is at Maon "dwelling place," and whose possessions are in Carmel "vineyard," but who is Nabal "fool." These places together speak of Israel's blessedness, the habitation of God in a vineyard or park, a place of fruitage and beauty; and yet, the man was not impressed with his good fortune. He had fallen from the favor of God, though he came of the family of Caleb the overcomer. He was as we have noted, a fool, which is the character of everyone that does not appreciate the goodness of God. It is the same word as is found in Psalm 53:1 - "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."

In contrast with this foolish fellow Nabal was his wife Abigail, "father of joy." She was the begetter of joy, a happy optimistic social creature, that radiated gladness because she believed God and appreciated His grace. We will see, as we continue the application of the description of Abigail, how well her name fits her.

Nabal "was shearing his sheep in Carmel." David sent ten messengers to salute him and to seek some provisions in acknowledgment of the care that they had bestowed upon his shepherds and sheep in the wilderness. Nabal refused David's request. He answered in an insulting manner, reviling him as a runaway servant and his company as people of whom he knew nothing. David's men conveyed the insolent reply to their master. We have the same rude attitude manifested in the religious world today toward those who are separated from sects and the world. They are in rejection here, and are reviled and ridiculed as fanatical and foolish. The preachers who are in such a case are looked upon with contempt. They are refused every courtesy, and any suggestion to help such "runaway" servants is treated with insolence. It is difficult to endure, even as is evidenced here.

David was angry with Nabal. David the king in obscurity, so disguised that none knew him except the few whose eyes had been opened by the grace of God, was angry. He said to his men, "Gird ye on every man his sword ... and David also girded on his sword: and there went up after David about four hundred men" - 25:13. That was quite a company. The captain intended to wipe out all the males of Nabal's house. He was indignant. He had done Nabal good; but then he was rewarded with ingratitude and abuse which are hard to bear we must admit.

If we take note of all the surroundings in the chapter - the death of Samuel, the altered position of David, and the character and connection of Nabal - we find in Nabal a striking picture of Israel in her apostate condition of the last days. The demand of David's messengers would then speak of the last Divine testimony to Israel, as to what they owe Christ. Their attitude toward David suggests their attitude toward Christ their King and toward His claims. Nabal was ignorant of David's place and sovereignty; likewise will Israel be ignorant and meet the messengers of God in the end with insolence. Their rebellion will show their kinship with Nabal. A fool and his folly are closely aligned. Abigail is the figure of a remnant who, by their faith, will avert judgment from the nation; though, later, the apostate nation will meet the judgment of the Gentile nations who reject Christ as King and insist on reigning without Him on His throne. The believing remnant will be severed from Israel by their faith. They will acknowledge His right and authority to reign. They will know that He is God's anointed King, even as fair Abigail acknowledged and served David. She reminds us of Ruth, who also was widowed by the judgment of God; and later, united to her deliverer, became a blessing to Naomi - representative of the nation, widowed and bereaved.

The apparent failure of David is seen, in typical light, to be no failure at all. He is a figure of Christ coming to judge the wicked and rebellious Jews. His judgment will be stayed by the faith and love of a believing Jewish remnant, who will intercede for the nation so effectually that His anger will be turned away. The faith of Abigail is beautiful to behold. She recognized in David, the king of Israel, the anointed of the Lord; and also his blamelessness and zeal for God. The presents that she brought to him emphasized these points, and marked him out as the excellent and worthy one of God. "Then Abigail made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles (skins) of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on asses" - 25:18. She sent her servants before her, and came to meet David. He was riding with his men, coming to take vengeance on Nabal. When Abigail saw him she descended from the ass and fell upon her face at his feet, saying, "Upon me, my lord, upon me let this iniquity be: and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience, and hear the words of thine handmaid. Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal: for as his name is, so is he; Nabal (fool) is his name, and folly is with him" - 25:24, 25.

Truly she was a beautiful character, one who believed God and claimed His mercy for others. She acknowledged that Nabal deserved to be punished for his rudeness; but she desired to save the situation on both counts. She continued her words to David, urging him not to take things into his own hands but to let the Lord avenge the insult; declaring that later he would be glad that he did not avenge himself. What good advice! She had not heard Paul's words, nor read his wonderful ethics of Christianity - Romans 13, 14. Who gave her such wisdom? The Holy Spirit was the same Teacher then as He is now.

Abigail won. She saved David from his hasty decision, and gave to him her presents which are typical of Christ and His sufficiency and worth. His joy, strength, power, and amazing sacrifice on Calvary are pictured by the corn, the bread, the raisins, the wine, and the sheep, which she gave to David; the number five - God with man, the number of grace - was thus emphasized. Abigail, "the father of joy," lived up to her name. She was consistent. She brought joy and victory, as does everyone that believes God. The wife of a fool may sometimes be wise.

Nabal may have been and, no doubt, was a great man in natural things - wise in making money, and understanding cattle and farming - because he had accumulated riches; but, oh, how far short he came of discerning spiritual values. He sought the things of earth. He figures the greater part of the Jewish nation, who will be interested in natural things when Jesus is ready to come. They will have their affections set on natural things, and will fail to discern the time or day of their visitation. Abigail shows us the opposite side of the picture and the recompense of all those, whether they be of Israel or of the Church, who believe God and "see Jesus" - the Mighty Overcomer, the God Man, who will be exalted over the earth as "King of kings, and Lord of lords." They will live and reign with Christ for a thousand years.

Note how it fared with Nabal. "And Abigail came to Nabal; and, behold, he held a feast in his house, like the feast of a king; and Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunken: wherefore she told him nothing, less or more, until the morning light" - 25:36. No, he would not have understood how his life had been endangered by his folly and insolence. In the morning, when he was sober, she mentioned the matter; and we read, "His heart died within him, and he became as a stone. And it came to pass about ten days after, that the Lord smote Nabal, and he died" - 25:37, 38. God avenged David. Likewise, He will take vengeance on all the enemies of Christ. They will be taken away in judgment, even from among the Jews. Only those will remain in the land who have faith in God and look for their Messiah.

Notice the beautiful sequel regarding Abigail. When David learned of Nabal's death, he rejoiced that his anger had been turned away by that woman of grace. He had fallen in love with her charm, and sent his servants to take her to be his wife. It seemed the men of that time took it for granted, that the women they desired were just waiting for the word and were anxious to marry them. Of course, in this case, we can see the typical meaning - that the Lord, the King of the Jews, will take the remnant of Israel to be His earthly wife. Abigail had the great honor accorded her. She visioned David's greatness as well as his sovereignty. Even so, the Jewish remnant will vision Christ's honor and glory. Abigail spent no time in pretense of not being ready. Nor did she say, "This is so sudden." But immediately she arose and, with her maidens, hastened away to meet her lord and master and be happy ever after. She had been married to a fool; now she is wedded to a wise man. So the story ends.

Chapter Twenty-six

DAVID - THE TRUE RULER

"And the Ziphites came unto Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself in the hill of Hachilah, which is before Jeshimon? Then Saul arose, and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, having three thousand chosen men of Israel with him, to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph" - I Samuel 26:1, 2.

In this chapter we see the further training of David. He was hidden away in Hachilah, "obscurity, darkness" - in the wilderness of Ziph, "melting pot." He had not had any rest from his enemy, Saul. David had shown in the previous chapter that he did not have complete mastery over his own spirit. Now he is found in the refining process of the melting pot. The Lord never quits His working in us because we stumble. His purpose is to achieve a maturity in growth, and perfection in attitude; and, He continues to put us in places of obscurity, until we learn every lesson that He has for us.

David again proved to be the master of this situation. In I Samuel 24:16-21 Saul humbly acknowledged that David was God's choice to be king; but he showed the deceit of the old man, and once again went after David to slay him, God always intervened for His servant David, who might well have written the words, "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

David is fearless in the face of the enemy. He puts forth a challenge to his men, and Abishai said, "I will go down with thee" - 26:6. Thank God for the ones who accept that challenge, and step out into rejection with the Lord. It means entering the enemy's camp; but, notice, that the Lord had gone before and rendered the enemy helpless.

Once again Saul's life is spared by David. Saul's judgment was executed by his own enemies. David acknowledged Saul's place of authority, as long as God allowed him to remain there. He knew the due time would arrive for the dethronement of Saul and his own exaltation. Wonderful lesson to learn! This episode shows that the true ruler, David, had things in his own hand. We need not fear either, that the conditions in the world will get out of hand. Our Lord will be exalted in due time. Meanwhile, it was left for others to take the life of Saul.

DISPENSATIONAL ASPECT

The remaining chapters of I Samuel are a strong suggestion of the seven eventful years that are yet to fill the pages of world history - Daniel 9:27. The "times of the Gentiles" will have come to the full, and God's schedule will call for His chosen King to assume the reins of world dominion. But the nations will insist upon holding the dominant position. Because of their attitude, the Lord Jesus Christ will be compelled to wrest the power and authority of world government out of their hands.

But someone may ask, "Why does it take seven years for such an invincible figure as Christ to take command of the world situation?" We must remember that God has some other purposes to fulfill, beside relieving the Gentiles of their official place. He will be finishing His work with the Church, and also will be working behind the scenes for His beloved people Israel. God works according to His own will outlined in the Bible, and He will not be late.

"So David and Abishai came to the people by night" - 26:7. Christ will come "as a thief in the night"; that is, the world will not be expecting Him - I Thess. 5:2. They will be making overtures to another, who will blatantly be claiming the throne rights of Christ. When the time is ripe, how easily the Lord will take away Gentile national authority and their official place - spear and water - 26:11. All three of the things David prophesied in verse ten concerning Saul will also happen to the nations. Thus, the Stone "cut out without hands" will deliver the stroke of Divine justice; and Gentile power will become like "the summer threshingfloors," and no place will be found for their rulership, for Christ's kingdom will fill "the whole earth" - Daniel 2:34, 35, 45.

"Then said Saul, I have sinned: return, my son David: for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly" - 26:21. The nations sometimes seem to repent when catastrophe strikes; but, their repentance is not real, as their after-conduct proves. There is also a personal lesson contained in this verse. Sometimes, folks will admit that they have been wrong and done foolishly; but, they will continue on the same course, even as Saul did after he had expressed himself so emphatically. The confession is not sincere. It does not spring from repentant hearts. They probably mean it in some measure at the time because of a feeling of gratitude (as was the case with Saul), or sorrow over hurting someone who has been loyal and true, or an imaginary enemy who proves otherwise. But the conviction of the deep wrong done, or the sin before God, is

absent; hence, the wrong continues. They go on being fools and erring exceedingly. The thing is not really judged in the Presence of God and put away, because of some self-justification or other excuse for the wrong done. Fools they are and fools they will be, even as the foolish man who spoke the above significant words. They learn when too late, what fools they really have been. What egregious failure is witnessed on every hand these days. How few there are among Christians, who are not playing the fool. Oh, what loss they will suffer!

CHRIST IN ME

A.B. Simpson

This is my wonderful story, Christ to my heart has come;
Jesus, the King of glory, finds in my heart a home.
I am so glad I received Him, Jesus my heart's dear King;
I who so often have grieved Him, all to His feet would bring.
How can I ever be lonely, how can I ever fall?
What can I want, if only Christ is my all in all?
Now in His bosom confiding, this my glad song shall be;
I am in Jesus abiding, Jesus abides in me.

Chapter Twenty-seven

DAVID IN DESPAIR

"And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul: there is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coast of Israel: so shall I escape out of his hand" - 27:1.

Herein is recorded one of the few failures of David. He fled to the Philistines for safety from Saul, but his spirit was defiled. He was made to fear. Out in the wilderness, he was bold. Unbelief gives birth to fear and failure. When we lose sight of God, we become panicky. Today, if saints of God cannot stand the continued persecution of separation, they join the Philistines - that is, formal Christendom.

David dwelt in Ziklag, which means "enveloped in grief." This speaks of the pressure of circumstances. We wonder how David could forget his experience of the former chapter. But we also learn that, though we may have great victory one day, we may also be faced with discouraging developments the next. After years of experience we learn the truth of Paul's statement, "For we walk by faith, not by sight." Our feelings change with the circumstance, but faith keeps us on an even balance. This interval in David's life is recorded for our learning and comfort. Though David failed to take the victory over his feelings, yet in all this he was obedient to God and loved Him as we read in verse eight. Saul had failed to devote to death the Amalekites, but David slew them. He was always on God's side. So, when we measure by God's standard and not man's, this experience of David's was not as bad as it appears on the surface.

David here is a type of the remnant of Israel in the end-time. The nations will be against them and vehemently seek their annihilation. This godly group will be in dire straits, and will be seeking an avenue of escape. Though their hearts will be right, their heads will rule momentarily, until the Lord really shows them that He loves them and will protect them from the onslaught of evil.

"And Achish believed David, saying, He hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him; therefore he shall be my servant for ever" - 27:12. The worldly formal religions will seek to bind the remnant and curtail the fulfillment of their hopes in their Messiah, but to no avail; for God is for His people.

WAIT ON!

To talk with God,
No breath is lost -
Talk on!
To walk with God,
No strength is lost-
Wait on!
To wait on God,
No time is lost -
Wait on!

Chapter Twenty-eight

SAUL SEEKS HELP FROM A WITCH

"Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land. And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem: and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa. And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled. And when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets" - I Samuel 28:3-6. Samuel was now dead, and Saul had failed miserably. All his woes were piling upon him finally. Verse five shows us the innermost feelings of Saul. God was bringing him down to the depths of despair. This chapter shows us again the truth brought out in the book of Daniel, that God truly reigns from the heavens and that He setteth up kings and bringeth them down. Saul had no further relationship or fellowship with the Lord after Samuel died. Desperation drove him to his knees; but, alas, it was too late. This scene will be replayed by the nations in the end-time. Already the leaders' hearts are failing them for fear of what the future holds; and in desperation they will apparently turn to the Lord, but through the false church. But, let us return to our present chapter.

Saul found no satisfaction in his plea to the Lord; and, realizing that God was through with him, he turned to the only source of help he could think of - a witch who could cause the spirits to talk. Saul had put away all the fortune-tellers or spirit mediums when he took office; but, in his desperation, sought one out and consulted her. He disguised himself. But, no matter how cleverly he had changed his appearance, he was still old Saul with all his fears and the weight of disobedience laying upon his heart.

In this narrative we have a strange occurrence. Was this really Samuel? Could a spirit medium disturb the peaceful rest of a child of God? Many today would like to think so. And Saul wanted to hear so badly from Samuel that he grasped at anything. We are sure that it is the same today with the poor, distraught, sorrowing folks who are grieving for their loved ones who have passed away. In their grief and desperate hope, they "see" many things that are not real.

No doubt, Saul really saw Samuel and heard his voice; but it was only a vision. Saul knew his time was come, and he had spoken almost these same words to David at an earlier time; but he was hoping that perhaps a miracle might occur. God gave Saul this vision of Samuel, and spoke through the apparition. This is not impossible for God to do. He spoke to Balaam through a dumb ass. Saul heard again the words he already knew so well - "The Lord is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy. And the Lord hath done to him, as He spake by me: for the Lord hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbor, even to David" - 28:16, 17.

There is no comfort for Saul; no hope for him. One could feel sorry for him if this were not God's verdict and, also, if he had not had many chances to yield to God. Of course, we must remember, that Saul was never God's choice as king. He only gave Saul to the Children of Israel because they wanted him. He failed to show himself a true leader. He proved that he had no control over himself. David showed throughout these lessons that he was the overcomer, God's choice as king. It took many years to prove to everyone that Saul was a failure and doomed to judgment. He was defeated through his own disobedience to God's Word. He had no recourse to justice or mercy from God.

In this narrative, we have a most wonderful dispensational picture. As we have stated before, Saul's reign represents the Gentile nations and the time allotted to them. Even today, we can see the fulfillment of these things. The Gentile times are almost at an end, perhaps they already are; but God must show everyone that the nations are really unable to govern themselves without Him. God has His true King in hiding; and, He will remain in obscurity, until God's time when all the kingdoms of the world become the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The nations, like Nebuchadnezzar, refuse to acknowledge God's supremacy. They will learn their lesson even as did Nebuchadnezzar, by becoming beast-like. We can see their claws growing today. Some of the nations are sharpening their claws and trying them out on other nations. They will wonder why there is no peace for them; and, in their desperation, they will turn to the false church which is adept at witchcraft. She is adept in the practice of witchcraft, which word means to "fascinate by false representations; to charm beyond the power of resistance; to administer a spell-inducing potion." This scene in I Samuel is an exact duplicate of the one which will take place in just a short time. Already we see "Saul's" heart turning toward the witch of En-dor. In Revelation 16:13, 14 we see the trinity of evil (counterfeit of the Triune God) coming forth to deceive the nations with miracles. These nations will blindly follow the "man of sin" to their

downfall in the battle of Armageddon. In Revelation seventeen we have the fulfillment of Saul's visit to the witch. In verses two to five, there is pictured the witchcraft of the false church. This time, however, the nations do not get a true picture. They are deceived into thinking that, by joining with the false church, they will be able to bring peace and prosperity to the world. The woman's heady wine will intoxicate them to the degree that everything looks rosy. God told Saul the truth; but, the false church will deceive the nations, because she will be deceived by Satan. In this chapter we have the woman's photograph; but, in chapter eighteen, her epitaph. As in Saul's time, only judgment awaited him, though he hoped for some ray of hope. The nations will also seek peace; but, during the tribulation days, they will see nothing but misery and destruction. They will have utterly refused God's King, and so God will "have them in derision." He will "laugh" at their puny and wicked efforts to achieve peace without Christ - Psalm two. He will let them lie on the bed with the false church; but Divine judgment will be swift and sure. "And the woman had a fat calf in the house; and she hasted, and killed it, and took flour, and kneaded it, and did bake unleavened bread thereof" - I Samuel 28:24. In our lesson, we see that Saul was encouraged to eat. He had no appetite for these things; but the woman and those with him persuaded him to eat. These items of food always suggest Calvary and the things of God. In this instance, they tell us of the form of godliness which the church today practices. She speaks of the Cross, and even builds big ones to adorn her houses of ill fame. This is the thing God hates. He loathes every form of hypocrisy. So the nations will sit down at the table of the "witch" and partake of her devilish fare. It will seem like goodly food; but how far different from the food that Samuel had prepared.

The false church, the harlot, will seek to entice and pacify the nations with her religious victuals; and they will gulp down every bite greedily. Too late they will realize that this food so deliciously prepared and beautiful to see is full of poison. The wrath of the nations will be turned upon her, and they will utterly destroy all that she is and all that she stands for. Revelation 17:16, 17. Thus God will be vindicated of His enemies, and He will leave her judgment to the nations whom she courted. Then God will send His Son to execute judgment on the nations of the world.

The atoning work is done,
The Victim's blood is shed;
And Jesus now has gone
His people's cause to plead.
He sits in Heaven, our great High Priest,
And bears our names upon His breast.
He sprinkled with His blood
The mercy seat above;
For justice had withstood
The purposes of love:
But justice now withstands no more,
And mercy yields its boundless store.
No temple made with hands
His place of service is;
In Heaven itself He sits,
A heavenly Priesthood His:
In Him the shadows of the law
Are all fulfilled, and now withdraw.
And though awhile He be
Hid from the eyes of men,
His people look to see
Their great High Priest again:
In brightest glory He will come,
And take His waiting people Home.

Thomas Kelly

Chapter Twenty-nine

DAVID DELIVERED FROM THE PHILISTINES

"Now the Philistines gathered together all their armies to Aphek: and the Israelites pitched by a fountain which is in Jezreel. And the lords of the Philistines passed on by hundreds, and by thousands: but David and his men passed on in the rearward with Achish. Then said the princes

of the Philistines, What do these Hebrews here? And Achish said unto the princes of the Philistines, Is not this David, the servant of Saul the king of Israel, which hath been with me these days, or these years, and I have found no fault in him since he fell unto me unto this day? And the princes of the Philistines were wroth with him; and the princes of the Philistines said unto him, Make this fellow return, that he may go again to his place which thou hast appointed him, and let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he be an adversary to us: for wherewith should he reconcile himself unto his master? Should it not be with the heads of these men? Is not this David, of whom they sang one to another in dances, saying, Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten thousands?" - I Samuel 29:1-5.

David had fled to the country of the Philistines, and had found favor with Achish. Here, apparently, was refuge for the battle-weary David. Achish gave him a city, Ziklag, to dwell in with all his family and possessions. He remained "in the country of the Philistines ... a full year and four months" - 27:7. We read also that Saul sought no more for him when he learned that he was now safe in the land of the Philistines.

We would surely say that David lacked the faith he once had, when he fled from Saul. However, it is so easy to criticize someone who is fearful in a battle, because we are not in the conflict. Let us experience a little of the suffering and pressure of a severe trial, and we may find ourselves seeking the quickest way out. God trained David through all his experiences; and, today, He lets nothing go by unused. All things do work together for our good; and so we learn from David's life the way to victory.

The Philistines were the enemies of Israel; and, therefore, David had no business being there. We see by the language of the princes, that David had no fellowship with them; but he was still in their midst. We may view this incident in two aspects:

First, the Philistines represent formal Christendom. True believers cannot be a part of this religious system. They may seek to join some group, but there is no real fellowship. Organized Christendom looks on true believers with distaste and suspicion. There is no communion between light and darkness, and neither is there any concord between true and false. Sometimes believers will tire of the separation caused by standing for the whole Truth of the Scriptures. They begin to make suitable excuses for their new-found allegiance with the worldly church. And these battle-scarred saints find a respite from the enemy. Of course, Satan does not need to fight the one who is going his way. When he sees a little slack in the faith of a saint, he immediately gives a push in the wrong direction. If we fail to lay hold of renewed strength from the Lord, we can be caught away by the tide of religious formality and foolishness.

But God had His way of delivering David; and, though it was not a glorious deliverance, yet it was effective. David found out that he had no allegiance with the enemy of his people. The princes of the Philistines called him a Hebrew, "one passing through"; that is, a pilgrim. The true believer cannot hide his identity. He will be branded a "Hebrew," and one to be shunned and distrusted. It hurts when we know we are not welcome; but, it is the best hurt we can ever have, to become separated from religious formality. These professed believers are God's worst enemies, and we should take sides with Him and "come out from among them" and be separate.

Next, we may view this incident from the standpoint of the end-time. David figures believers of this time, and the Philistines figure the nations. So-called Christian nations will eye the Jews and be suspicious of them. Even today, the Jewish nation is a thorn in the sides of many nations. The princes would like to get rid of them. This attitude will increase and prevail through the Tribulation Days. But, as David was delivered, so will be the Jews. God will help them and protect them from their enemies.

We do not believe that David could have fought against his own people. The worldly princes knew that his allegiance would not have remained true to the Philistines. Sometimes Christians try to fit into the worldly scheme, but find they cannot. God has truly separated us, and there is no safety nor satisfaction outside our own camp. We will have battles, sure; but the overcomer is not content to relax in the camp of the enemy. If we feel like David and think to go to the land of the Philistines, God will see to it that we are so miserable and uncomfortable that we will gladly rush back into the fold.

"So David and his men rose up early to depart in the morning, to return into the land of the Philistines" - 29:11. Separation is the true mark of the overcomer. The world goes one direction; we must travel another. We are not a part of this world, and can never fit. We are pilgrims and strangers, looking for a city "whose Builder and Maker is God."

The Lord is risen: now death's dark judgment flood
Is passed in Him who bought us with His blood.
The Lord is risen: we stand beyond the doom
Of all our sin, through Jesus' empty tomb.
The Lord is risen: with Him we also rose,
And in His gave see all our vanquished foes.
The Lord is risen: beyond the judgment land,
In Him, in resurrection life, we stan
The Lord is risen: we're now redeemed to God,
And tread the desert which His feet have trod.
The Lord is risen: the sanctuary is our place,
Where now we dwell before the Father's face.
The Lord is risen: the Lord is gone before;
We long to see Him and to sin no more!
The Lord is risen: our trumpet shout shall be,
"Thou hast prevailed! Thy people, Lord, are free!"
William P. Mackay

Chapter Thirty

DAVID GAINS THE VICTORY

"And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire; and had taken the women captives, that were therein: they slew not any, either great or small, but carried them away, and went on their way. So David and his men came to the city, and, behold, it was burned with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives. Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep" - I Samuel 30:1-4.

When David returned from the Philistines, he found his lovely home had been invaded. More sorrow was heaped upon him, and we read that he and his men "wept until they had no more power to weep." Thus, we see the result of failing to judge the flesh. This narrative clearly shows that the Christian has no place in the world. He will be torn and bleeding by his association with the world, and then he will find that the flesh has taken its toll and robbed him of his most cherished possessions.

All seems dark in such a situation, but the overcomer cannot be defeated. We must remember that David was an overcomer, and God always brought him out in victory. Someone may ask, "Do you mean that an overcomer can fail?" We answer, "Oh, yes." Anyone can stumble and make a mistake; but his attitude after his error determines whether he is an overcomer or not. David always admitted his failure, and always sought comfort and strength from the Lord. He always took sides with the Lord against the flesh, whether in himself or in someone else. In this chapter we see that, although the flesh had gotten the upperhand, that was no reason to become discouraged and give up. David poured out his soul unto the Lord and inquired of Him wisdom. The Lord gave him the word and the strength to pursue the enemy and overcome him. We are instructed to judge the flesh, no matter what the consequences. It hurts when we see that the flesh has been judged, and someone chastened; but we cannot sympathize with the flesh. We are to count with God and, as David, pursue the enemy and defeat him. We should never be discouraged over some failure, but get up immediately and ask the Lord for wisdom and strength. David and four hundred of his men went seeking for the Amalekites. On the way, they met an Egyptian. He would represent the guilty one in the case, being a type of the worldly one, servant to the flesh. David makes him serve his purpose, and the Egyptian led them to the enemy. All of our difficulties and even our failures can serve us. We can use them to bring us to greater victory. So David and his men defeated the Amalekites, and retrieved all that had been taken from them. They were enriched by their sad experience. What a victory! What joy they must have felt when they returned with all the spoil!

David was relentless in pursuit of the enemy. He spared no one intentionally. All were destroyed. Thus, we must deal with the flesh. We must go "all out" in hunting down and destroying the flesh. But note verse seventeen - "And David smote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day: and there escaped not a man of them, SAVE FOUR HUNDRED YOUNG MEN, WHICH

RODE UPON CAMELS, AND FLED." Ah, here is a wonderful truth illustrated in the escape of the young men. David slew all that he could, and did not purposely spare some as Saul had done in the case of Agag and some of the people. The Amalekites figure the fleshly nature in us. Saul failed to judge his flesh perfectly and absolutely, and he was defeated by this enemy.

David tried valiantly to annihilate all the flesh. He wielded his sword from twilight one day to the evening of the next; but, alas, some escaped. This tells us that sin is still in the flesh and never eradicated. We are told to reckon ourselves dead unto sin, and this is a continual reckoning. We are not to let sin reign in our members; but that does not mean that all sin is taken out. As long as we are in these mortal bodies, there will be the tendency to yield to the flesh. We can have victory over the flesh as we continually count with God that "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" - Galatians 2:20.

The camels represent our trials which are used for transportation. Rebekah rode a camel on her way to meet Isaac. That is, she overcame all the hardships of the journey in order to meet her bridegroom. Here we see represented the flesh in charge of the camels. When we judge the flesh in us as well as in other saints, then we reign over all our trials too. We can make the flesh and the trials serve us and bring us onward to our heavenly destination.

This is exactly what David did. The flesh had gotten out of hand. But he judged the failure, relentlessly bore down on the enemy, and came away enriched and blessed. He lost nothing, but in reality gained more. This principle is always the same. We can always count with God that "all things work together for good," whether the evidence is there or not. We want to emphasize also that if you experience a failure, do not sit down and weep feeling sorry for yourself. Judge the failure, which may be a result of yielding to the flesh; and take hold of Christ's life to keep from failing further. You will be more victorious than before your test. Keep on in the way you have started; victory will come. A child learns to walk by many a stumble and fall. He has many bruises before he finds a good balance. But he never gives up. He may shed a few tears; but something catches his eye further on and, lo, there he goes again. So with us.

Verses 21-31 show us that not only was David enriched through his experience, but also those who "tarieth by the stuff." Many in the land of Judah were also included in the blessing. This is another wonderful lesson of grace and victory. God was gracious to David in granting him this victory, and he in turn was gracious to others. The recipients of God's grace are always able to be gracious to others. The cold, calculating, heartless attitude of some saints, proves that they know nothing of God's grace.

The two hundred, who were too faint to go to battle, shared in the spoils. They stayed behind with the stuff. There are many today who have no apparent ministry. They are not seen nor heard publicly. Their ministry is often hidden to the public view, and yet they will share the reward of the public servant. The faithful saint who just "fills a seat" at services, but who lends his prayer and support, will share the reward of the faithful pastor. The lesson is apparent: be faithful in the place you find yourself. Never try to fill a place or perform a ministry that God does not give you. The place you fill so ably is as important as another's. You will never fit into another's office.

One added thought: our victories will always enrich others. They may seem insignificant but, if we manifest a victorious spirit, we will unconsciously encourage others. We will bless others while we are being blessed. If we travel in defeat this, too, will affect others adversely. If we are leaders or ministers in any capacity, we cannot expect others to act victoriously if we are defeated. Our lives touch others invariably. Even if we are in a trial, we must not let others see our misery; but always manifest a happy victorious attitude in time of testing. Great victory! Great will be the reward!

One little hour for watching with the Master,
ETERNAL YEARS to walk with Him in white.
One little hour to bravely meet disaster,
ETERNAL YEARS to reign with Him in light.
One little hour to suffer scorn and losses,
ETERNAL YEARS beyond earth's cruel frowns.
One little hour to carry heavy crosses,
ETERNAL YEARS to wear unfading crowns.
One little hour for weary toils and trials,
ETERNAL YEARS for calm and peaceful rest.

One little hour for patient self-denials,
ETERNAL YEARS of life where life is blest.
Then, soul, be brave and watch until the morrow,
Awake, arise, your lamps of purpose trim;
Your Savior speaks across the night of sorrow,
Could ye not watch one little hour with Him?
II Corinthians 4:17; Matthew 26:40

Chapter Thirty-one THE END OF SAUL

"Now the Philistines fought against Israel: and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa. And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Metchishua, Saul's sons. And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him; and he was sore wounded of the archers. Then said Saul unto his armor-bearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me. But his armor-bearer would not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it. And when his armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him. So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armor-bearer, and all his men, that same day together" - I Samuel 31:1-6.

In this chapter, we read of the final defeat of Saul and his regime. It is a sad account because, as king, Saul had great authority and grandeur; yet now he is just another warrior who died on the battlefield. His life affords us a great lesson. His defeat came about because of disobedience to God. All the other misdeeds can be traced to this one thing.

The first step of his downfall was in not destroying all the Amalekites as God had told him. Part obedience is no better than complete disobedience. At the end, it was an Amalekite who put him to death. The Amalekite speaks of the flesh; and we are told to judge the flesh in ourselves, and yield to God. If we do not, then we can expect defeat too. Paul says, "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" - Romans 8:13.

We not only will lose our life, but our crown as well. The kingdom was rent from Saul, and he watched his power slowly ebbing and his kingdom being taken from him. No wonder he hated David, who was God's choice! David represented all that God was - His righteousness and His will. Saul knew that he was not pleasing God; but he had yielded to his fleshly desires so long that it was impossible for him to do anything different. His throne and his crown were snatched away from him, along with his life. But what good was one without the other? The warning to us is found in Revelation 3:11 - "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

The next step Saul took toward defeat was in taking upon himself the office of a priest. God never gave him that place, and he was not in the priestly line. He had no right there, either by birth or by God's decree. This was a grave error, and brought about the dire consequences. The lesson for us is that we are not to assume a place which God has not given to us. We will have all we can do if we are faithful in the place and ministry He has chosen for us. It is a terrible thing to intrude into an office which is not ours. God knows whom He calls, and we are unable to deceive Him though we may fool people.

TYPICAL VIEWPOINT

First Samuel closes with the typical end of "the Times of the Gentiles." Saul represented Gentile leaders; and his continued rule after David was anointed figures the nations continuing their reign after Christ is enthroned. Second Samuel begins with David as king. Thus, we go from the rule of the Gentiles, to the reign of Christ.

Now, as to Saul's defeat at the hands of the Philistines, we have pictured the condition which will exist in the end-time. The Philistines figure the religious camp, as we have noted in previous lessons. Saul and Jonathan were engulfed by the horde of the Philistines. Even so shall the false religious system step in and usurp all authority that belongs to the spiritual people of God. Today, we find this to be so already. Organized Christendom has infiltrated the ranks of true Christians, until it is difficult to find a true overcomer among their groups. This formal religion has sapped the strength of the once vibrant Church.

This condition will steadily increase, until Christ spews this system out of His mouth - Revelation 3:16. The absence of David at this time is significant, because he figures Christ who will not be in this last phase of Christendom. They will take His Name, but He will know them not. Together, this false religious system and the Gentile nations will go down to defeat. God will judge them both; but He calls to His people to come out of her before His judgment falls - Revelation 18:4, 5. Today, the Philistine seeks a place in the Church. These religious professors enjoy the life and victory of the true Christian; but they deny the power of the Gospel. They are described in II Timothy 3:1-5. Let us take heed to the warnings, both literal and figurative, which we have in the Scriptures. Let us hold fast to the Gospel, and the power and victory which it brings. Let us hold fast to our faith in the Word of God, and not let the Philistine rob us of our joy. The more we believe God and shout the victory, the harder it will be for formalism to creep in. Study through this book again and note Saul's life. He is an excellent example of what not to be and how not to act. God has called us to a wonderful place, and desires that we count all as lost so as to achieve the glory which will be ours as joined to Christ. Provisionally, we have been seated in the heavenlies with Christ. Practically, we can enjoy the blessings of the heavenlies, though we are still on the earth. Let us obey God, count our old man dead, and walk in newness of life. We will gain a crown if we do and eternal joy in the Presence of our Saviour and Bridegroom, Jesus Christ.

"There are deep things of God. Push out from shore.
Hast thou found much? Give thanks and look for more.
Dost fear the generous Giver to offend?
Then know His store of bounty hath no end.
He doth not need to be implored or teased;
The more we take, the better He is pleased."

"DAVID THE KING"

Studies in Second Samuel
Paul N. Smith

"He raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will. Of this man's seed hath God, according to His promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus" - Acts 13:22, 23.

The Second Book of Samuel is devoted entirely to the reign of David. We view his triumphs as well as his failures. We are shown his most personal feelings; we feel his triumphs; we weep with him in sorrow; we sympathize with him. The Scriptures picture, through David, the enormous difference between the natural and the spiritual. As we view his life in entirety, we agree with God that surely here was a man who truly loved God and was a man after God's own heart. Jesus was called, "the Son of David" and of the Son of Abraham," as to genealogy in Matthew 1:1. He is not identified in this way with any of the other mighty men of faith. Jesus was never called, "the Son of Isaac" nor "the Son of Jacob." When Jesus takes His throne in Heaven, we read, "And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the ROOT OF DAVID, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof" - Rev. 5:5; 22:16. In looking more closely at David the man, let us notice some of his outstanding traits and abilities. He was a versatile man. As a teenager, he showed himself to be athletic. As he was tending sheep, a lion and a bear threatened the flock. David slew them both. I Samuel 17:34-36. He was a herdsman and tended the flock well, as this incident shows. He was faithful to this lowly task, and did not leave them even when Samuel came to his house.

He was an accomplished musician and composer. He was chosen to play for Saul in the king's court. This was quite an honor, and the king would not have chosen anyone who was not skillful in music. Notice the testimony of David's abilities, in I Samuel 16:14-23. He also wrote many psalms and songs. He, no doubt, sang to the sheep on the hillside. Songs were his companions wherever he was.

He was a poet. Many of his psalms are masterpieces of literature. They are ageless. The twenty-third psalm is an example of this. Its language is simple, and yet the message is profound. The words in this psalm average just under four letters each. This psalm has comforted the hearts of millions. It has given strength to the weak. Its message is eternal.

David was a great general. One would not think that such a fearless warrior could also write music and poetry. David could strum on the harp one day, and the next day take up the spear

and slay two hundred Philistines. He was great in hand-to-hand combat, but he was also a strategist. The secret of his ability lay in the fact that he trusted God and consulted Him before each battle. This was the secret to his entire life.

David was an outstanding king. He has been called the greatest king that Israel had. He ruled well. The people loved him, and were pleased with his reign over them. While he was king, he subdued all of his enemies; and he

thus allowed his son Solomon to reign in peace. His reign is symbolic of Christ's reign.

Last, but not least in any sense, David was a spiritual man. God gave testimony of him that he would fulfill His will. David also regarded the Lord in his activities. He consulted God in everything. When David failed, it was because he did not first consult the Lord. This was very seldom. His victories far outweighed his defeats. In fact, David always turned his failures into victories by having the right attitude toward God. He never lost contact with God. He never became independent of God. He was God's man from beginning to end. His life, though one of contrasts, yet was one devoted to God and His will.

We submit a simple outline of the book as follows:

- I. David's Reign Over Judah II Samuel 1-4
- II. David's Reign Over ALL Israel II Samuel 5-20
- III. Undated Incidents, and Psalms II Samuel 21-24

Chapter One

"TOUCH NOT MINE ANOINTED"

The first sixteen verses of this chapter record the deaths of Saul and Jonathan. This is a record of defeat for Saul, who yielded to his own carnal nature. It is the testimony of one who had been great, and who could have been greater; but he lost his crown through jealousy and rebellion. It is a sad ending for one who began with such great promise. To some men, fame is a snare. Only the strong in spirit can bear the honor of a king. Saul had been the people's desire and choice, God had condescended to their wishes, and had found the best that the world had to offer.

Outwardly, he was by far the best choice. He began his reign humbly; but his humility was not born of a true spirit. How true God's statement to Samuel! "The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" - I Samuel 16:7.

In the life and death of Saul, we have a spiritual lesson of yielding to the flesh. Saul had the opportunity of yielding to God, but he chose the way of disobedience and rebellion. He was not a man after God's own heart. He was a man who leaned to his own understanding. He was a man who despised the things of God. He bore the heavy burden of guilt. He did not choose to bend to the will of God. He refused to accept the fact that David was to be his successor. He had forty years in which to repent and seek God. In sparing Agag and the Amalekites, he sealed his death warrant. He was killed by the same hand that he had preserved. The Apostle Paul explains this truth to us by saying, "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" - Romans 8:12, 13

The young Amalekite, who brought the news of Saul's death, thought to have made an impression upon David. He supposed that David would have been delighted with the news, for it meant his elevation to the throne. The Amalekite, who represents the flesh, did not have any spiritual understanding. The flesh is always presumptuous and misled. The flesh clamors for the defeat of one's enemy, and then rejoices in the fall. The flesh can only see from a natural viewpoint. David reacted as the spiritual man should. He did not rejoice in iniquity. He had every right to be elated, because his tormentor and persecutor was dead. He no longer had to hide from Saul. David also knew that he was the anointed king of Israel, and that the death of Saul meant that God was going to give him the throne. This did not lead him to rejoice in the death of God's anointed.

What a solemn truth we have here! David had learned years before, not to touch the Lord's anointed. Even though Saul did not follow the Lord, he had been anointed king; and, until God was through with him, no one was to touch him. David could have slain Saul on different occasions, but he had restrained his natural impulse. He knew that God was ruling in the land of Israel, and he waited for God to bring to pass His own purposes. It takes great strength and victory to wait. David's confidence was in the Lord, and he could rest in that faith.

We also should learn to leave God's servants alone. If we feel they are wrong, let us pray for them. If they are not doing God's will, it is God's responsibility to remove them from office. We are

to examine ourselves, and to judge ourselves. To the Master, the servant either stands or falls. God took care of Saul in due time, and He also had His hand upon His servant David. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church; and, as such, He is the rightful Judge of the people of God.

"HOW ARE THE MIGHTY FALLEN!"

II Samuel 1:17-27 contains one of the most tender and eloquent elegies ever written. David, the rugged outcast, who lived in caves - David, the warrior, who thought nothing of slaying hundreds of men - now shows his tender and compassionate character. He forgot all that he had suffered at the hands of Saul. He held no grudge against his enemy. He spoke only well of Saul in his death. He proved his magnanimous spirit by his reaction to the vulgar Amalekite and his sorrow for the death of Saul. He was truly an artist. He had experienced sorrow before. He had known pain. But he had also known the tender and strengthening love of God. This enabled him to show this love toward the house of Saul. He possessed the love that "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." He had learned the victory of Paul's statements to the Philippians - "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." He let his mind dwell only on the positive traits of Saul's character. He did not let his spirit become vulnerable to the negative thoughts that would have dragged him down to the blood and filth of Mount Gilboa.

He sang a special stanza to his beloved Jonathan. Here was a love that defies definition. Here was a love that endured years of separation. It left no regrets. A part of David lay on the battlefield. A portion of his life had been destroyed forever, and memories only remained. David knew how to love! He was not ashamed of his emotions.

In Jonathan, we have the story of a man who considered his father's house and honor more important than God's will. He knew that David was going to succeed his father to the throne. He had given David his robe, his sword, his bow, and his girdle. He vowed to serve David when the time came for him to sit upon the throne. But, when David had to flee for his life, he went alone. Jonathan returned to the city - I Samuel 20:41, 42.

This illustrates to us the many people who love Jesus. They believe that He is their Savior. They believe that He will be "King of kings, and Lord of lords." They honor Him and respect Him, but they do not share His reproach. They want to share His glory, but they do not want to accompany Him into exile. They will follow Christ as long as it does not bring suffering. They do not wish to be identified with the Christ of rejection and shame. The Apostle Paul tells us plainly, that we will not share His exaltation unless we share His humiliation - II Timothy 2:12.

Though Jonathan loved David as his own soul, he did not live to see him as king. What a happy ending to the story, if Jonathan had cast his lot with David along with the few who were exiled with him! He would have been alive at David's coronation. Even so, David makes no mention of this. He forgets everything in his sorrow, except his love and respect for these two men.

This first chapter introduces us to this unique character, David. We have seen what makes him great. Now, we know why God thought so much of him. Let us remember this part of him as we continue our studies.

THINE AND MINE

I closely held within my arms a jewel rare;
Never had one so rich and pure engaged my care.
'Twas my own, my precious jewel, God gave it me;
'Twas mine, who else could care for it so tenderly?
But the Master came one day my gem to take;
I cannot let it go, I cried, my heart would break.
Nay, but the Master comes for it to bear above
To deck His royal diadem, He comes in love.
But Master, it is my treasure, my jewel rare;
I'll safely guard and keep it pure, and very fair.
If thou keep'st My gem, He said, it may be lost;
The threshold of My home, no thief has ever crossed.
And where the heart's rich treasure is, the heart will be;
The jewel will be safe above, gone before thee.

The Master said these words and gazed with pitying look,
While in the early hush of morn my gem He took.
Close to my heart that morn I held, tears falling fast,
An empty casket - the bright gem was safe at last.
Yes, Master, Thou may'st keep my own, for it is Thine;
Safe in the house not made with hands, 'tis Thine and mine.

Chapter Two DAVID IN HEBRON

"And it came to pass after this, that David enquired of the Lord, saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? And the Lord said unto him, Go up. And David said, Whither shall I go up? And He said, Unto Hebron" - II Samuel 2:1.

In this lesson, David proves further that he is God's man. He shows a humility and dependence that are truly remarkable. He was sincere in his humility. His predecessor was apparently humble in the beginning of his reign; but later events proved that his humility was only a temporary facade which covered a covetous heart. David was not like this at all. He was a spiritual man. This was not the first time that David had inquired of the Lord. It was his custom to consult the Lord before he made any move. His life teaches us the value of consulting the Lord in all our ways. There were a few times when David acted impulsively, and he had to pay the consequences. God did not let His "beloved" become careless in his manner at all. He let David know immediately that he had displeased his Lord. This was gracious of the Lord. It reminds us of Paul's words in Philippians 3:15 - "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you." If we learn this one thing through these lessons, then all the effort and time will have been worth it.

God's choice saints are His special care, and He is jealous of their victory. We become "choice" ones by depending upon the Lord, even as David. God had marked this perfect man, and knew that his heart was set upon pleasing Him in every way. God meticulously trained David and led him tenderly through each experience, because so much depended upon the faithfulness of this king of Israel. He was to illustrate the beloved Son of God, and his life had to manifest the victory of a yielded life. Let no one despise David. God surely did not.

David realized that with Saul's death, he was to become king over Israel. He did not form a committee, and boldly declare that Israel must bow their knees to him. Let us remember that David had been in exile for quite a while, and also that the people loved and revered Saul. How could they have been expected to lay aside all allegiance to King Saul and accept his enemy as their ruler? David knew this also, and he had the good sense to leave things in God's hands. He waited for God to put the reins of government into his hands. In this respect, as well as others, he is the perfect type of Christ who shall reign over the whole earth. He is waiting at the right hand of His Father, until God says to Him, "Go up." He has already been anointed King, even as David had been; but He is patiently waiting to hear the Voice of God.

David did not move until he knew all the will of God. He could make no mistake in this momentous crisis. The Lord knew which of the people of Israel would accept David as king, so how wise of David to let God decide for him. How different rulers are today! There were very few kings in Israel who showed the same allegiance to God as David did. When the Lord said, "Unto Hebron," David went. The meaning of this word is significant, and tells the story. Hebron means "communion." David had a direct "hot line" into Heaven at all times. He was in contact with the Lord every day, so it was an easy thing to find out directions. David asked, - "If, when, and where" - and God answered.

Verse two tells us that he took with him his two wives, Ahinoam and Abigail. Their names are significant also. The former means "brother of pleasantness"; the latter, "father of joy." Pleasantness (or grace) and joy accompanied him on this most important journey. There are many personal lessons which we can derive from these studies. Not only did his two wives accompany him, but his men of valor also - 2:3. Those who shared his rejection, now shared his exaltation. David remembered those faithful warriors, who asked for nothing but to be with him. He never coerced nor persuaded any of them to follow him. They chose to be with him, whether hidden in a cave or fighting on the battlefield. They knew that God had anointed him to be king; and they, too, were waiting for God to put him on the throne.

This is a glorious picture of Christ and those who are faithful to Him now. There were just a few

who realized that Jesus was going to the Cross, and that He would arise again. There are some today who know that Jesus has been anointed King, and that He shall reign. They have cast their lot with Him; and, although it means reproach and deprivation, yet they love their Leader. These faithful ones will be exalted when Jesus is enthroned. They will watch the ceremony, when God places the crown of authority upon His head. This scene is reviewed for us in Revelation four and five. There, authority is given to Christ in Heaven, before "His wives" and "His men." They will have the privilege of seeing this coronation, while inhabitants of the world are unaware of what is taking place in Heaven.

"The men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah" - 2:4. This is the second time that David had been anointed; but, there is a third time, of which we will comment later. In 2:11, we read, "And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months." He did not assume authority over all the house of Israel at once. There was a very good reason for this in David's time. Although King Saul was dead, yet his house still had some authority. They were entrenched in the kingdom of Israel. Though Jonathan, the apparent heir to the throne, was dead there was yet another son of Saul still living. There was also a power behind the throne that still wanted to retain the same place as he had under Saul, and his name was Abner.

As we see through the remaining verses of this chapter, a civil war was averted by some wise discussion. In our last lesson, we commented on the loyalty of Jonathan to his father rather than to David. He loved David as his own soul, and knew that he himself would never ascend to the throne in the will of God. We criticize Jonathan for not following David into exile, and then sharing the throne with him. But we can also see that, if Jonathan had remained alive to this time, David would not have been accepted so readily by the men of Judah. Their allegiance would have been divided, and this could have caused a rift between David and Jonathan. How all-wise is our God! He works "all things after the counsel of His own will." It was God's will that David ascend to the throne, and He saw to it that no one hindered that purpose.

We see the same purpose of God in regard to His Son Jesus Christ. It has been decreed that Jesus shall reign on the throne of David; and though men refuse to believe this, and though they will actively oppose such a change, God's will shall be done. David's reign in Hebron, for seven and one-half years, pictures the reign of Jesus Christ during the Tribulation of seven years. This will be an unsettled time. It will be a transition period from man-rule to God-rule. Just as it took David this period of time to assume the place God gave to him, so it will be with Jesus Christ. He will reign in heaven seven years before the world will recognize that fact.

When God sets His Son on the throne in heaven, "the times of the Gentiles" will be over officially. The King will be reigning without a kingdom. The nations will not acknowledge that Jesus is the rightful Heir to the thrones of this world. They will be usurpers during this period of time. Jesus will not be able to take His rightful place in the affairs of this earth, because the nation of Israel will not have accepted Him as their King. He will not return in "power and great glory" until Israel will call upon Him. "The men of Judah" represent the faithful remnant of Israel on the earth at that time, who will know that their Messiah is in heaven and will appear to them. They will have accepted Him in their hearts, having listened to the testimony of the two witnesses. He will be reigning over these "men of Judah" before the whole nation accepts Him.

Verses eight to thirty-two refer to this same period of time. Although David is the rightful king, yet Abner took Ishbosheth the remaining son of Saul and made him king over all the rest of Israel. Ishbosheth is very little known, and not much is said about him. His name means, "man of shame." He is called Esh-baal in I Chronicles 8:33. His name signifies God's attitude toward him. He was a usurper at that time. He did not belong on the throne of Israel. Abner had no authority from God to make Ishbosheth king. According to royal succession, he would have been considered to be the rightful ruler. God was ruling in the land, however, and Abner failed to recognize this.

In this episode, we have pictured in type the false rule during the Tribulation period. Abner would represent the forces in Israel who will lead the nation astray. They will influence Israel to accept the covenant with the nations, and will cause them to follow the anti-Christ. They will not know God's will, nor the fact that Christ is reigning in heaven and that He is the true Messiah. Ishbosheth was just a puppet in the hands of Abner. While Saul would represent Gentile powers up to the reign of Christ, Abner and Ishbosheth would represent the continuation of this usurpation but at a later date. They could represent the fateful reign of the false prophet and anti-

Christ.

Joab and Abner had a confrontation, and it could have led to a bloody civil war. As it was, three hundred and sixty men of Abner's were slain, while Joab lost nineteen. Here we see a conflict between man's choice and God's will. There is always a conflict when there are two opposing forces. As in us individually, there is always a conflict when we are doubleminded in all our ways. The teaching of the two creations is plainly evident in this record. When we try to do the will of God, the flesh will try to usurp God's authority in our lives - thus, bringing havoc.

Joab never trusted Abner, and finally took care of him for good. Joab represents the will and Word of God. He was unchangeable in his sentiments. His only thought was the preservation of David. He knew that, as long as Abner and Ishbosheth remained alive, there would be trouble. The Word of God never changes. It presents the Truth of every matter, and thus it stands.

In the counterpart, during the Tribulation, the will of God will overrule the forces of man. Joab dispenses judgment; and so the Word will judge mankind, and pave the way for Jesus to reign over all the earth. Joab could figure the 144,000 of the Tribulation. These people are loyal to Christ. They have given their lives for Him. Many of them, even as the two witnesses, will be martyred for their testimony. They will know the will of God, and will be outspoken against the false prophet and the anti-Christ.

The second chapter ends with no clear-cut victory for either side. God works things out after "the counsel of His own will," and sometimes it is not done in a night. We will see, as we continue through this book, that David is eventually established on the throne even as Jesus Christ will be firmly established as "King of kings, and Lord of lords."

GOD'S WORD

Oh, wonderful, wonderful Word of the Lord!

True wisdom its pages unfold;

And though we may read them a thousand times o'er,

They never, no, never grow old.

Each line hath a treasure, each promise a pearl,

That all if they will may secure.

And we know that when time and the world pass away,

God's Word shall forever endure.

Oh, wonderful, wonderful Word of the Lord!

The lamp that our Father above

So kindly has lighted to teach us the way

That leads to the arms of His love!

Its warnings, its counsels, are faithful and just;

Its judgments are perfect and pure.

And we know that when time and the world pass away,

God's Word shall forever endure.

Oh, wonderful, wonderful Word of the Lord!

Our only salvation is there;

It carries conviction down deep in the heart,

And shows us ourselves as we are.

It tells of a Saviour, and points to the Cross,

Where pardon we now may secure.

For we know that when time and the world pass away,

God's Word shall forever endure.

Chapter Three

DAVID'S POWER INCREASING

"Now there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David: But David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker" - II Samuel 3:1. The next three chapters tell us of the establishing of the kingdom of Israel in the hands of David. This long war had been waged from the time that David had slain Goliath. The Lord's anointed had shown his faith in the God of Israel, and had manifested his desire that Israel be freed from the Philistines. The people had recognized him as a great warrior and leader. Though the house of Saul had remained in power, yet it had gradually become weaker, while David became stronger. This is figurative of Christ's Kingdom and Satan's domain. When Christ was yet only the anointed King, He slew "Goliath" - Satan; and provisionally wrested the kingdom from His enemy. The war

has continued for many, many years; it has been a long war. But, thank God, the house of Christ is waxing stronger and stronger. Satan will soon be dethroned as "the god of this world," and Christ will reign supreme. This is the lesson we are to learn from these first five chapters of this book. Christ will be established upon His throne in Heaven; for "He must reign" until He has "put down all rule and all authority" which are against God.

Verse one of this chapter also symbolizes the conflict of the spirit and the flesh in each believer. Paul tells of this conflict in Galatians 5:16-26. He experienced this conflict, and told about it in Romans seven. When we possess the life of Christ, we become a new creature; we have a new nature which is holy. However, in our members, there is another power - the flesh or carnal nature. These two natures are contrary and opposed to one another. There is a long war between the spirit and the flesh. Christ, the Head of the new creation, is the stronger of the two. "Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world" - I John 4:4. If we take our members over to the side of Christ, the battle will soon be over. If we vacillate and remain uncertain, then the battle continues until either the flesh or the spirit has complete control. Paul declared, "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" - I Corinthians 15:57.

There is an interesting interlude in verses two to five. We have a record of the sons born to David while in Hebron. "Hebron" means "communion", and speaks of the fellowship of God with His people. Christ, the antitype of David, always had fellowship with His Father. David's sons and the meanings of their names, illustrate the results of the fellowship of Christ and His people. They tell us of the characteristics of Christ's nature. These attributes become a part of those people who are joined to Christ. This is the result of yielding to the Life of Christ within us. We must remind you, that the people to whom these names belonged did not always live up to the wonderful meanings of those names. In fact, it was quite often just the opposite. We all bear the name of "Christian," but that does not mean that we always emulate Christ. We do endeavor, however, to become real Christians - in deed as well as in name.

"Amon" means "faithful," and expresses the life of Jesus in regard to His Father's will. He, like David, was "a Man after Mine (God's) own heart"; and He did indeed fulfill all His will. He is faithful today to the people of God. He has become our faithful High Priest, and bears our burdens before the throne of God. We, too, can become faithful ones - dependable and trustworthy.

"Chileab" means "sustained of father." Christ was often strengthened by His Father while He was on the earth. He came to this earth in complete dependence upon His Father. He needed Divine strength to carry out all of God's purposes for Him. David learned this way of dependence. We, too, must depend upon God for our strength. Natural strength does not last in spiritual battles.

"Absalom" means "father is peace." Peace is the result of faith. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" - Romans 5:1. This is man's experience. Christ experienced the peace of God too, when His soul was troubled. His faith in His Father carried Him through.

"Adonijah" means "my Lord is Jehovah." We come to know the Lord as the One who will provide for us. We learn just what He is to us. As David declared, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want." We also learn that the Lord is our Healer. He is our Banner. He is the Lord of hosts. He is the Lord who will provide. As Jehovah, He has made Himself responsible for us. David illustrates this faith in regard to his life. He always let God do for him what His will decreed. He never refused the blessings of God.

"Shephatiah" means "judged of Jehovah." This refers to those who will let the Word of God search them out and judge them. They do not shrink from the correction of the Lord. They want Him to judge them. David is a good example of this truth. When he failed, he acknowledged his sin to the Lord. He realized that first of all God was offended by his sin, and that he should make it right with Him first. He put himself into the hands of the Lord to be judged. Christ put Himself into His Father's hands. He stated that He did those things that pleased His Father. He surely did not please the people all the time. His Father was always pleased with Him, however, and reassured Him from time to time.

"Ithream" means "abundance, or remnant of the people." This could refer to those who always believe God. In times of declension, there is always a remnant of faithful ones who follow the Lord. These people stand out from the crowd. They are over and above the average believer. It is not necessarily their great works, but their devotion to the Lord. Christ was of this group; so also

was David. There is a remnant today, who will be watching and waiting for the Lord to come. They are the "cream of the crop."

"These were born to David in Hebron." If we want to possess these wonderful traits, then we must abide in Hebron with our heavenly David. Communion with the Lord will establish our goings, and will make us Christ-like. The war between "the house of Saul and the house of David" claims our attention once again. The remaining verses of this chapter pertain to Abner, once the captain of Saul's armies. He is seen scheming and plotting to make a name and place for himself. He was truly the typical politician of his day. He was the diplomat. But there was one man who was not fooled by him for one minute. Joab knew him for what he was.

We are impressed in this chapter by the fact that men's hearts are made manifest in times of crises. When all is going well, it is not always evident whether an individual has victory in his spirit or has peace in his soul. God must try our hearts the same way. We may not know what we are either, until a calamity comes our way. Job did not know himself, nor God, until after his great trial of affliction. David's kingly character was manifested at the death of Saul. It is always the same. Men's hearts will be made bare one of these days, when Christ shall make manifest even the secrets of men's hearts. Paul declares, "For I know nothing by (against) myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but He that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall every man have praise of God" - I Corinthians 4:4, 5.

David and Abner are a contrast study of character. As we have seen of David before, he waited patiently until God gave him the throne of Israel. He did not seek this place, nor did he campaign for it, nor did he fight for it. He went step by step as God led him. Now Abner is quite different in his approach. He wanted a place of authority; it did not matter with whom it was nor how he obtained it. We know by verse ten, that Abner knew all the time that God was establishing the kingdom with David as king. While the majority of Israel was still following Saul, Abner made Ish-bosheth king over Israel. He perhaps thought that he could push this man forward, and keep the power for himself. He did not reckon with God nor His will, however.

This son of Saul's, Ish-bosheth, did not seem to have much to stamp him as a king. He was weak and fearful, and evidently was not noted in the kingdom. We do not read of him as being active with his father at all. He surely was not of the type that Jonathan was. He seems to have been a puppet in the hand of Abner. He did what this strong willful character demanded. As we noted before, these two men represent the forces that will be arrayed against Christ when He begins to assume authority over the nations. There will be all kinds of intrigue and subterfuge among the nations, at the coming of Christ. It is even so now. The anti-Christ will work his way into the favor of men and leaders, through hypocrisy and deceit.

When Abner and Ish-bosheth did not agree, then Abner immediately defected to the other camp. He tried his wiles on David. Now it seems that David was too naive here to understand what Abner was trying to do. Perhaps he was. He was not the type to deliberately hurt anyone. He was kind and full of pity for the underdog. We see a side of David here that is commendable. He had been trusting God to give him the authority of the throne. He is seen in this chapter as patiently waiting for God to fulfill His purpose; and, meanwhile, taking things as they came. He did not ask for Abner to come and see him. He did not take an active part in the discussion. He seemed to take the attitude that all things were in the Lord's hands, and so he remained calm and settled.

David makes one request that does not seem to be in character. He insists on having Michal, Saul's daughter, returned to him. She had been his wife, and had helped him to escape Saul at one time. When Saul had given her to another man, this must have hurt him deeply. He had never forgotten. He had risked his life to win her hand. He had battled furiously for the right to marry her. Perhaps he still loved her, or he could have felt that his kingdom would be established if she were once again his wife. He had every right to make this request; but, whether it was expedient, is another thought.

We might apply this request of David's to a desire of the flesh. We may want something which is out of the will of God, and feel that we have every right to have it. The desire may become so great, that we forget for a while that the will of God is more important. David learned to regret this request. God does grant our wishes sometimes, just to show us a lesson. Our desires may haunt us at a later time.

The other character in this drama emerges now, and he is Joab. His interests, for the most part, were of David and his welfare. He also had been waiting for a chance to revenge the death of his

brother, Asahel. At any rate, he exacted that revenge by killing Abner. This was not in God's will, because David called forth a curse upon Joab's progeny and evidently God prompted such a judgment. The heart of every man was revealed at this time. God used the envy, jealousy, rebellion, hatred, revenge, and covetousness, to further establish David upon the throne. In chapter four, we see further proof of this in the death of Ish-bosheth.

The typical aspect of this act of Joab is quite different, however. As we said, Joab represents God's will and God's Word. He could see right through Abner's actions as a threat to God's will for David. Thus, the Word does not consider personalities nor feelings. It cuts straight and true every time. There is nothing passive about the will of God. When it is time to act, something is done. Thus, when the time comes for Christ's enemies to be destroyed, nothing can stop God's judgment. He will spare nothing in fulfilling His purposes. He will show no pity, no compassion, at that time. The enemies of God must be destroyed, no matter who they are or what position they hold.

As to David the person, we see again his true character. He was, in all ways, the king. He was not petty. He could be gracious and kind concerning all people. His lament of Abner pleased the people, "as whatsoever the king did pleased all the people" - 3:36. Thus, God brought David into favor with all Israel. They learned to love him and to follow him as their king. God had truly transferred the kingdom from "the house of Saul" to "the house of David."

This is a picture of the respect and honor that will one day be given to the Lord Jesus Christ. He not only will please God in all His ways, but the whole earth will bow to Him. All peoples of the earth will reverence Him as "King of kings." God blessed David, according to His Word; and He will honor His Son even as He declares that He will.

The path of sorrow, and that path alone,
Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown.
No traveler ever reached this blest abode,
Who found not thorns and briers in his road.

Chapter Four

THE END OF THE HOUSE OF SAUL

"And when Saul's son heard that Abner was dead in Hebron, his hands were feeble, and all the Israelites were troubled" - II Samuel 4:1. When God is through with a king or an empire, no power on earth can stay His judgment nor change His will. As we noted in chapter three, the house of Saul was waxing "weaker and weaker." This chapter tells of its final defeat. With the death of Abner went the hope of Ish-bosheth and those still friendly to him.

The defeat of the anti-Christ and the Gentile powers will be just as swift and certain. God has decreed that His Son Jesus Christ shall sit upon the throne of David, and His Kingdom shall be a universal one. No power of earth can challenge His reign. Satan and all of his allies cannot change the purpose of God. The will and purpose of God move on to complete fulfillment. All that happens along the way prepares the final act of the establishment of Christ's Kingdom.

The death of Ish-bosheth was a shameful one. This is often the end of those who oppose God. History has proved through repeated lessons, that it is folly to fight against God. The hearts of the two captains, Baanah and Rechab, were evil; and their deed proved this. They thought that surely David would be pleased with their act of bravery! If they had been king, this would have been their attitude.

How little does the flesh understand spiritual values! David was not an ordinary king. He had not fought for the throne, nor did he rejoice over the death of his enemies. He never counted the house of Saul as his enemy. He knew that God had ordained him to be king over Israel, and that God would establish him upon the throne. It did not please him to see so much blood shed. This was a senseless death, and had no effect upon the outcome at all. God had rent the kingdom from Saul many years before this, even before he died upon the battlefield. David had only to wait for the right time.

Natural man, in his reason, cannot understand any of this spiritual language. He does not include God in his calculations. The leaders of the end-time will not realize that God is ruling from heaven. When the judgments begin to fall, their natural minds will not tell them that it is God who is wresting the governments from their hands. When they gnaw their tongues in pain, their natural minds will tell them to curse God. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" - I Cor. 2:14. There is a great gulf between the natural and the spiritual, and the only

way to bridge that gulf is to become a new creation in Christ.

Instead of these two captains being rewarded for their ghastly deed, as they had hoped, they received the same that they had given Ish-bosheth. God's judgments are sure and just. Christ's reign will be one of righteous justice. No sin will go unpunished. Today, God is dealing with man on a different basis. He is allowing men to go as far as their wicked hearts will let them, but the day of reckoning is coming shortly. Now is the day of grace, and God is longsuffering - "not willing that any should perish."

Chapter Five

DAVID, KING IN JERUSALEM

"Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh. So all the elders of Israel came to the king of Hebron; and King David made a league with them in Hebron before the Lord: and they anointed David king over Israel" - II Samuel 5:1, 3.

In this chapter, David is established king over all Israel. The road had been a long torturous one for him, but now the victory was sweet. God's Word never fails. His purpose, in anointing the young shepherd lad as king over His people, finally was realized. God can work miracles in a moment, but He also works slowly at other times. He has plenty of time, and is not bound by man's calendar. David showed a remarkable amount of patience in waiting for the throne. He could have taken things into his own hands more than once, especially when King Saul was at his mercy. But, he waited on God; and he waited for God. What a lesson for all of us!

David was anointed three times for the office of king. Samuel anointed him in the house of his father Jesse - I Samuel 16:12, 13. The men of Judah came to him in Hebron and anointed him - II Samuel 2:4. All the tribes of Israel came to him, showing complete allegiance, and anointed him king over Israel. As we have noted before, David is a wonderful type of Jesus Christ in many ways. In his anointing, we see the parallel in the life and ministry of Christ. The first anointing of David by Samuel would picture to us God's eternal purpose for His Son. God predestinated His Son to be the King of the Jews, even before His birth. David's second anointing, by the men of Judah, represents Jesus' anointing in heaven - Revelation four and five. Just as David was not accepted by all Israel at once, so Jesus will not be accepted by all Israel nor the world when He is first crowned King in heaven. The third anointing of David figures Christ's triumphant march back to this earth in "power and great glory." "Every eye shall see Him," and all Israel will be saved. It will be then that He will take complete authority over the earth.

In verses six to ten, Jerusalem becomes the chief city of Palestine. It was called "the city of David." The city was also called, for the first time, Zion. This name is used one hundred and fifty-four times in the Old Testament; whereas, "the city of David" occurs forty times. The Jebusites thought that David could never take their stronghold, and jeeringly spoke of his ability. "You shall not enter here, for the blind and the lame will prevent you" - 5:6 Amplified. They did not take into consideration that God was with David, and that it was His will that this city should belong to David.

Israel has always had to fight for this land. When God brought them out of the wilderness into Canaan for the first time, the country was full of inhabitants. All of these people had to be subdued before Israel could enjoy the fruitfulness of the land. God fought for them, and gave them the land even as He had promised. They have never occupied all the possessions that were promised to Abraham. Even today, most of Palestine is in the hands of Israel's enemies. Their Captain, Jesus Christ, shall deliver this land into their hands when He sits upon the throne of David. He will completely subdue all of His enemies and the enemies of His people Israel. This chapter tells us this in type.

"And David went on, and grew great, and the Lord God of hosts was with him" - 5:10. This is the reason for David's success. The Lord backed him up, because of His purposes for this man. David was to fulfill God's will for that time; and no matter the circumstances, even David's failures, nothing could alter God's plans. This is true of God's Son, Jesus Christ. While He was on the earth, no harm could come to Him before the set time. God moved men according to His will and, when the determined time arrived, the evil priests and elders carried out their evil desires. Had it not been for God's eternal purpose, no power in heaven and earth could have bound Jesus to the Cross. "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" - Acts 2:23. Through the envy and hatred of men's hearts, God wrought redemption for all mankind. God is never defeated.

This report of David will be true of Jesus when He assumes the throne in heaven. He will go on and grow great. God has already exalted Him, and has planned some great things for His Son. He will give Him complete authority over heaven and earth for one thousand years. He will give Him a Name that will be known by every creature; and every knee shall bow to Him, and every tongue shall confess that He is Lord - Philippians 2:9-11. He will have a glorious reign of peace and righteousness. Before He steps down from this throne of complete authority, He will have "put all enemies under His feet" - I Cor. 15:25. Jesus was humiliated, despised, "a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," the first time He was on earth; but His second visit to the earth will manifest His great power and glory.

David gained in prestige as well. Hiram, king of Tyre, had his men build a house for David. This was a gesture of friendly acceptance by the other countries. Israel never had war with the Phoenicians, and they had dwelt in the land unmolested since Israel's invasion of Canaan. The tribe of Asher did not drive them out of their portion - Judges 1:31, 32. This Hiram is not the same one of Solomon's reign which was many years later. Josephus says that this Hiram is father of the later one.

"And David perceived that the Lord had established him king over Israel, and that He had exalted his kingdom for His people Israel's sake" - 5:12. It seems that David had a progressive revelation of the extent of God's calling for him. Perhaps, at the first, the magnitude of the office was too much for David to comprehend; but as he gained in strength and prestige, with God blessing him every step of the way, the wonderful import became real. It is quite often the same with us. We learn by the Word of God that we have been joined to Christ, not only in His death but also in His resurrection. Then we learn that we have been seated with Him in the heavenlies. Our position is definite and unchangeable. We are made heirs of God, and have the privilege of sharing Christ's wealth and glory. This is too much for us at first; and, when the revelation does come of what God has really done for us, it is too much to believe. We fall back in awe speechless, until the power of the revelation gives us strength to praise and worship Him.

As Man, Jesus had a revelation at the age of twelve, for what purpose He had come into the world. No doubt, as He grew in stature, He grew in knowledge of the things too wonderful for natural man to understand. He perceived, through the Spirit, His destiny. When He went to the Cross, He knew that one day He would reign over heaven and earth. He knew the results of His crucifixion - "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" - Hebrews 12:2.

This was quite a revelation to David! He began to act like a king. He began to multiply his possessions from land to wives and concubines. All of this was the sign of a prosperous and powerful ruler. The real test of a man is how he conducts himself in the time of prosperity. When King Saul became great, his head was lifted in pride. The same was true of Nebuchadnezzar. David never became proud and haughty. God kept him humble, in allowing him to experience the weaknesses of mortal man. He was the overcomer in every stage of his life.

"But when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines came up to seek David; and David heard of it, and went down to the hold" - 5:17. We can never be secure in our victories. There are always enemies who would try to destroy the work that God has begun. In David's case, the Philistines felt that they had a right to attack this man. He had been a thorn in their sides for many years. They could not afford to let him become too powerful; this would mean their defeat.

Once again, we see the absolute dependence of David upon the Lord for guidance. He "enquired of the Lord, saying, Shall I go up to the Philistines? Wilt Thou deliver them into mine hand? And the Lord said unto David, Go up: for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into thine hand" - 5:19. David did not enquire of the Lord, "Am I able to defeat the Philistines?" He asks if he should fight against them; and then if the Lord would deliver them into his hands. What faith he displayed! He did not want to enter into a conflict unless the Lord went before him. This is the secret of his success against his enemies. This is the secret of his favor with the Lord. No wonder it is stated that David was a man after God's own heart.

The Lord was true to His Word, and the Philistines were beaten and driven off. They even left the images of their gods behind them. These were destroyed. David had won the battle, but the war was not over. The Philistines came up yet again; no doubt, a larger company this time. When David enquired of the Lord, He told him to lie in ambush and wait for the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry or balsam trees. The Lord brought His own army with Him this time. David

was to listen to the marching of the heavenly throng, and then proceed to battle with the Lord. "And let it be, when thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou shalt bestir thyself: for then shall the Lord go out before thee, to smite the host of the Philistines" -- 5:24.

David did as the Lord commanded, and God gave him credit for smiting the enemy. Faith is always rewarded.

In this conflict with the Philistines, there is a wonderful lesson for us. The Philistines were always the enemies of the Israelites throughout their history. To the Church, the Philistines speak of formal religion. Our greatest and longest battle is with organized religion, which has "a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." The Philistines never gave up the battle. Though they were beaten back, they returned to attack again and again.

We have to constantly battle against the formalism of Christendom. We can be entangled with them before we realize it. They have their gods and images constantly before us; and, if we are not careful, we will begin to imitate them. That has been the reason for the great downfall of the Church in these last days. Instead of separation, we have imitation. Formerly, Christians were noted because they were different. Today, it is expedient to be like the others. It is a great temptation to have prosperous, lavish, spectacular temples of worship. The prestige is marvelous.

David knew the strength of the Philistines. We need to know the strength of this devilish trend of formalism. We need to ask the Lord for His Presence and His strength in these battles. We need to capture the "images" of religion, and destroy them completely. This we do by preaching and accepting the Truth of the Scriptures. This we do by yielding to the Holy Spirit, and listening to the marching in the tops of the trees. We need to be Spirit-led and Spirit-fed. As Samson found years before, with this same enemy, he could only defeat them through his dependence upon the Lord. When he was shorn of his hair (power), he was like all the rest. If we do not have the power of the Spirit in our lives and in our services, we are like all the rest; and we will need to resort to carnal devices to attract the people. Let us remain little in our own eyes, and dependent upon the Lord. We will defeat the Philistines of our time, and bring victory to "the whole house of Israel."

If I could know the agony of pain

In which my brother wrought, yet gave no sign,
His bungling work would take on graceful shape,
And glory would illumine every line.

If I could know the heartache bravely hid
Beneath the smile of courage, day by day,
I'd not withhold the kindly deed and thought
To cheer my friend upon his lonely way.

If I could know the struggle to do right,
Of that poor fallen one so sore beset,
Not "Shame," but "Bravo," would I cry to him:
"Thou fightest foes whom I have never met."

If I could know the longings pressing close
Beneath derision's sneer at holy things,
A friendly hand I'd stretch across the gulf,
And tell him of the satisfaction Jesus brings.
And I can know! Oh, Son of Man Divine,
Flood all my soul with sympathy benign,
Until my very life is love impearled,
And pulses with the heartthrobs of the world.

Chapter Six

THE RETURN OF THE ARK

"Again, David gathered together all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. And David arose, and went with all the people that were with him from Baale of Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, whose name is called by the Name of the Lord of hosts that dwelleth between the cherubim" - II Samuel 6:1, 2.

We have not read of "the ark of God" since I Samuel seven when it was brought back from the Philistines and placed in the house of Abinadab. Now that David had established his throne in

Jerusalem, his desire was that the ark of God should have a permanent resting place. It is not certain how many years the ark had been in Kirjath-jearim. In I Samuel 7:2 we read, "The time was long; for it was twenty years." We do not believe that the time referred to here concerned the ark's presence, but a period of time in which Israel had fallen away from the true worship of God. The ark was returned during Samuel's time of judging, and before Saul was made king. One source puts it as eighty-nine years. At any rate, the time was long; and David's kingdom was not complete without the ark in Jerusalem. It was the symbol of God's Presence with them, because we read that the Lord of hosts "dwelleth between the cherubim."

We also learn from this the spiritual declension of Israel under Saul. There was no thought of spiritual worship in his mind and heart. He let his own spirit rule him, and he did not consult with the Lord. In this respect, he is a perfect type of world rulers who lean to their own understanding. The "ark" means nothing to them. As a rule, they do not seek the Lord for guidance. In the absence of the ark, the Israelites drifted away unto the worship of false gods. King Saul took the place of God.

David's desire was to return the ark of the Lord. His rule was a spiritual one. He made some mistakes, but overall he followed the Lord. He brought the people together under the banner of the Lord. He won complete victory over the Philistines, which Saul had never been able to do. His heart was set upon God's will, and his desire was to please Him. To have the ark in the city of David would mean that God was once more ruling His people through David.

David's desire was fine, but his method in bringing back the ark was not. In referring again to I Samuel six, God allowed the Philistines to return the ark by putting it upon a cart pulled by two milch kine. God showed His power, in this manner, to the superstitious Philistines. The milch kine left their newborn calves, and brought the ark to its resting place in the house of Abinadab. The Philistines had no part with Israel in their relation to God, and so it would not have been fitting for them to carry the ark as God had instructed the priests of Israel to do. The flesh can never be spiritual, nor do spiritual service. On the other hand, the spiritual ones cannot conduct spiritual service through carnal methods.

The Lord had instructed the priests of Israel how to move the ark from place to place. Read Numbers 4:1-15 and 7:9. The priests were separated unto the Lord and His service. They were sanctified and ceremonially cleansed. They could handle the ark, and suffer no consequence. They bore the ark upon their shoulders. These instructions are full of spiritual meaning. We must remember that the ark represented Christ and the work of redemption. The tabernacle and everything in it was counted holy, and God sanctified it for His use. There was to be nothing profane connected with the service thereof. The ark did not belong in the land of the Philistines, nor could the people there have any part with it. We saw in I Samuel, how God judged the Philistines while the ark was in their midst.

The meaning is this: Christ is a curse to those who do not accept Him as their personal Savior. The hypocrisy of Christendom today will end in judgment from a holy and wrathful God. They claim to have Christ in their worship, but in reality are worshiping other gods. They cannot have the ark in their midst, without bowing to Him and acknowledging Him as their Lord and Savior. This is why God was so jealous in the manner in which the ark was handled. Only the priests of God understand the meaning of the ark. Only the priests of God can present Christ before others. God separates His people from the "Philistines," and cleanses them from all defilement. Then they can enter into fellowship with the Lord. They can approach the ark where God's Presence is. They, in the image of the cherubim, may gaze upon the blood that Jesus shed on Calvary. They walk softly before the Lord but with assurance, because they know that their Savior has made atonement for them. Thus, they bear the "ark" upon their shoulders. Theirs is the responsibility of presenting Christ to the world.

We cannot understand why David did not follow God's instructions in moving the ark. He surely was not ignorant of the way, nor were the priests. He had always exercised good spiritual sense in other matters. Perhaps he was so zealous and eager to have the ark returned, that he moved too quickly. We learn from this, that we cannot become careless with the things of God. If the Lord guarded the symbolic worship so jealously, think of His attitude toward the reality. People do not realize the importance of true worship. They feel that, as long as they have a form of worship, God will accept it. Jesus said, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" - John 4:24. This closes the door to all insincere and false worship. A sinner cannot worship God, no matter how much ritual he employs. A carnal believer cannot worship

God effectively, unless it is on the basis of truth.

We see a departure here from David's usual manner of action. We read, "David gathered together all the chosen men of Israel ... And David arose, and went with all the people." We do not read that he consulted the Lord first. It seems that he consulted with everyone but the Lord. They built "a new cart." They set the ark, or "made it to ride," upon the new cart. God was not directing this venture at all. It was all man devised and directed. We say again, the Philistine way is not the Israelite way. God allowed the Philistines to use this method, because they were ignorant of Him and had no part in His scheme of things. God is surely displeased when His people use Philistine methods of worship.

David followed the procedure with appropriate music and singing. There apparently were joy and gladness and victory. God's displeasure was not felt right away. He allowed them to go on in their own way, all for a purpose. When Uzzah reached out to take hold of the ark, this was too much. God smote him for his rash act, "and there he died by the ark of God." We do not know whether Uzzah was a priest or not; but, at any rate, he did not know the true import of the ark. God was displeased with everything concerning this day; and His wrath upon Uzzah stopped this carnal display from going any further. God could never have allowed the ark to be brought back to Jerusalem in such a manner. Uzzah felt the brunt of the judgment.

David is hurt, humiliated, angry, and apparently puzzled. Verse nine tells us that David had not been in the will of God - "And David was afraid of the Lord that day, and said, How shall the ark of the Lord come to me?" This was not David's usual attitude toward the Lord. He was never afraid of the Lord. When he was in trouble, he went to the Lord. When he failed, he sought the Lord. This proves that, when men move out of the will of the Lord, they do not have perfect fellowship with Him. They have not asked the counsel of God, nor sought Him sincerely. If we make a move out of God's will, we are hoping that God will approve of what we are doing. We are not sure of Him, nor of His approval.

David's next step was the peevish petty reaction of a child. He would not have anything more to do with the ark. He carried it into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. He was in essence saying, "All right; if that is the way the Lord feels, I'll have nothing to do with the ark." He did not have the usual assurance either, that he was doing the right thing. He knew that God had a right to judge further if He desired.

Obededom, the innocent bystander, was blessed that day and for three months. He did not realize what the presence of the ark would mean. It must have had a tremendous affect upon him and his family though. Josephus tells us that, from the moment the ark rested beneath Obed-edom's roof, a tide of golden prosperity set in and he passed from poverty to wealth. But this is not all. In I Chronicles twenty-six, we learn that the whole family became attached to the service of the Lord's house, and even the grandchildren became mighty. The entrance of the ark opened an entirely new horizon to the house of Obed-edom. The personal lesson here is obvious. When we open our doors to the Lord, we will be blessed beyond our imaginations. He becomes the Blessor, and brings prosperity in all things. He will bring us to a fruitful place, and cause our lives to count for something. So David's blunder turned into blessing for one household. It also worked in a national way too. It made Israel aware of God in a real way.

During those three months, David had time to reflect on his rash act. When he learned that God truly "dwelleth between the cherubim," he returned to bring the ark "with gladness." Its whole attitude was different. The joy and gladness that accompanied the moving of the ark this time were genuine, and came from a dedicated heart. The priests were used to bear the ark; and, when they had gone but six paces, David sacrificed unto the Lord. How different were his methods this time! He did not set out on the journey until God had been worshiped. He acknowledged God's sovereignty in all this. He gave God His rightful place, and humbled his heart under the blood of sacrifice.

"And David danced before the Lord with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod" - 6:14. He removed his kingly garments for this special occasion. There was to be no other king in the Presence of the Lord. He chose the priestly garment of service. He was the recipient here, and not the Blessor. His joy was genuine; his ecstasy was inexpressible. The joy of the Lord, like electric current, ran through his body and set his feet in motion. He could not have controlled himself if he had tried. The Lord had control this day. He was pleased with this move. So, back to Jerusalem the company went. What a sight, and what sound, that must have been! Almost everyone rejoiced that day.

"And as the ark of the Lord came into the city of David, Michal Saul's daughter looked through a window, and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord; and she despised him in her heart" - 6:16. She was "Saul's daughter," and not "David's wife," this day. She thought as a king's daughter. She had never seen her father do such a vulgar thing. David was not proper that day, and the shame flooded her breast. She did not understand. The flesh never comprehends the working of the Spirit. The flesh never enters into spiritual worship. This attitude shut her away from the blessing of the Lord, and the outcome was no fruit the rest of her life - 6:23.

This entire chapter represents the contrast between formalism and true spiritual worship. David first used the Philistine method. In this, we see man's efforts in trying to do God's will. The Philistines speak of formalism in religion. They are like those of whom Paul wrote, "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" - II Timothy 3:5. Christians cannot use Philistine methods in worshipping God. This is what the Church has done. Instead of the simple pure way of the early Christians, it has adopted man-made ways. The "new cart" represents organization of all kinds that tries to do the service of God. The Church has left the principles which God has laid down in the Scriptures, and has followed man's carnal reasoning. The result is lack of real power and joy, and the end will be judgment.

God's ways are always new and refreshing. David's first attempt to move the ark was all of his doing, and the results were sorrowful. The power of the Spirit does not operate when men regulate things. It seems to be difficult for people to let the Spirit move in spiritual worship. Men must have their hands in everything. This proves that they do not really have faith in the Lord. They do not believe that He alone is able to regulate their affairs. They believe that new methods are better than the old-time prove methods of God. The freedom of the Spirit was seen when David went according to God's will. He did not worry about the consequences. He was not aware that others were present. He was lost in the joy of the Lord. He became little enough for God to bless him.

What a lesson to us today! God still blesses the poor and contrite one. He blesses those who follow His Word and His precepts. He blesses those who worship Him in Spirit and in truth. He regulates their lives and their worship. Christ is exalted in such services. Man takes a back seat, and Christ is put in the place of prominence. Calvary becomes the basis of all worship. David did not let his wife discourage him. He had the assurance that he had done the right thing. What assurance faith brings! We have many critics today, who frown on the demonstration of the Holy Spirit. They despise the shouting, the singing, the dancing, of those who are full of the joy of the Lord. They look through windows of unbelief.

Chapter Seven

THE DAVIDIC COVENANT

But My mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever" - II Samuel 7:15, 16. This chapter is one of the most important in this book, because it contains God's covenant to David and to the house of Israel. It does not concern David so much as it does his seed. This covenant, as with all the others in the Scriptures, is dependent upon Jesus Christ. God has gone on record as establishing the throne of David in the hands of His Son Jesus Christ. The house of David will be established, because Christ will sit upon the throne. This covenant corresponds with the one given to Abraham, in that both are unconditional. This one promises David the throne, while Abraham was given the land.

"And it came to pass, when the king sat in his house, and the Lord had given him rest round about from all his enemies; that the king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains" - 7:1, 2. David's heart was full of gratitude for all that the Lord had done for him, and his attention was drawn to the need for a permanent dwelling place for the ark of God. In this desire, we are made to see again why it is said that David was "a man after Mine (God's) own heart." There was nothing wrong with this desire; but, it is evident by this record, that we must seek the Lord for every step that we make. We may undertake a task that would surely glorify the Lord, and perhaps be a blessing to others; but that does not exempt us from getting the mind of the Lord. There is always a time for every move we make concerning the work of God.

Nathan was understandably moved by David's noble desire, and immediately said, "Go, do all that in thine heart; for the Lord is with thee." How easy it is to move because we think it is expedient. How quickly we can support someone's venture just because it seems to be the thing

to do. If it is good, we immediately judge that God is for it too. Even the prophet took things for granted. Everything we do is of importance to the Lord. This was a big project, however; but, whether the task is great or small, it is always wise to ask the Lord, "Should I do this?"

"And it came to pass that night, that the word of the Lord came unto Nathan, saying" - 7:4. The Lord had quite a bit to say to Nathan and David. He had to wait for Nathan to relax enough for him to hear His Voice. No doubt, Nathan and David had been discussing plans, full of the flush of accomplishment. God had a wonderful message for them. In essence He said, "Did I ask you to build Me a house, David? Have not I walked and communed with My people for these many years? Do I need a house of cedar to dwell in, when I have dwelt wherever My people have been? I am well able to continue to bless My people, and I have plans of My own." God made David to know that He was the Master Architect and Builder. He had taken David from the sheepcote, and made him a ruler. He had fought his battles, and cut off all his enemies. He had made David what he was, and He was responsible for His people.

Our zeal quite often blinds our eyes to realities. God blesses us in such a way, that we forget that we had nothing to begin with; and that, without God, we still are nothing. We become so strong in the Lord, that we forget that we still need the Lord. David had become so prosperous, that he thought he could do anything that his heart desired. For a moment, he had forgotten who had made him so prosperous. This is not a great sin, and perhaps is no sin at all. It is a matter of acting like the Creator rather than the creature. Thus David learned that it was not what he could do for the Lord that was important, but what the Lord was going to do for him. And this was plenty! How comforting these promises must have been to him after all his years of waiting and wandering. What balm to his soul after the years of hardship, sorrow, and disappointment! How like God! What a lesson for us!

The important facet of the Christian life is to learn what God wants to do for us. He will show us in due time what we can do for Him. He does not need our assistance as much as we think He does. We are the ones that need to be blessed. We are the needy ones; but we sometimes forget that we still need His help. God has purposes for all of us, and He has a time to make these plans clear. We could never govern our own lives to any real and lasting completion. This is for God to do. We read in Ephesians 1:3, that we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ. All that we will ever receive of spiritual advancement will come through Christ according to God's purpose. We read later, in Ephesians 2:10, that "we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works," which God ordained beforehand. When John Kennedy was inaugurated, he made this statement, "Let us not ask what our country can do for us, but what can we do for our country?" In the Christian life, we need to turn this statement around and say, "Let us not ask what we can do for the Lord, but what does He desire to do for us?"

This is what God promised to David: "Moreover I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime ... And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My Name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever" - 7:10-13. This covenant had a partial fulfillment in David's son Solomon. He was appointed to build the house of the lord. He was instructed to follow the Lord, or he would be chastened for his iniquity. This much pertained to Solomon.

The entire covenant was prophetic of the reign of Christ. It is called, "The Third Mountain Peak of Prophecy." The first prophetic peak is found in Genesis 3:15, and concerns the Seed of the woman which is Christ who was to bruise the head of Satan. This He did at Calvary, and He will finish the job when He returns in great power and glory. The second mountain peak of prophecy is found in Genesis twelve - God's covenant to Abraham. This, too, will be fulfilled through Christ. The land of Palestine and the seed of Abraham, both heavenly and earthly, will come through Christ. Calvary, which was prophesied first, becomes the basis of all other blessings for mankind. Without Calvary, there would be no Israel established in their land; there would be no land; there would be no King over Israel; there would be no heavenly seed, or the Church.

The covenant to David was threefold: 1. David's house should reign forever. 2. David's seed should build a house for the Lord. 3. The kingdom of Israel would be established. Only God could make such plans, and then bring them to fulfillment. As the years went by, it seemed that God could not fulfill the first part of the covenant. After Solomon's death, the kingdom was divided.

There were other kings, not of the house of David. God preserved a succession of kings from the tribe of Judah up to Jeconiah, or Coniah. He was the last one of Judah to reign upon the throne. When Judah was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar, the line was stopped. When Jesus came into the world, He could not have been King then. The Gentiles still had control over the nations of the world.

God is never defeated, though Solomon's seed was not perpetuated on the throne. But the promise did not name Solomon; only that David's seed should inherit the throne. It was through his other son, Nathan, that the promise came; and Mary, the mother of Jesus, came of that line. Jesus is the promised Ruler of Israel and of the entire world, but He is waiting for the end of Gentile times. The years from Nebuchadnezzar have been a great parenthesis in the history of Israel. When they are taken out of the way, it will be as though they never existed. God will establish the throne again to the house of Judah; but the King this time will be Jesus Christ, and His reign shall not be interrupted by invasion nor death.

It was not in God's plan for David to build a house for Him. In I Chronicles 22:7-16, David speaks to Solomon and tells him the reason why it was not for him to build a house for the Lord. Among other things he said, "But the Word of the Lord came to me, saying, Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great ways: thou shalt not build a house unto My Name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in My sight. Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon (peaceable), and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days."

It is plain by these words, that the house and the Ruler of which God was speaking are still future. There has never been perfect peace and rest in this world. Solomon had a peaceful reign as far as earthly rulership is concerned, but his reign was not a perfect one. God was speaking of Christ, who shall reign for one thousand years over this earth in peace and righteousness. Then the real house of the Lord shall be built. The house of the Lord must be built upon righteousness and peace. Israel has never experienced this yet. This will only come through "the Lion of the tribe of Juda" - Christ. When He reigns, then Israel will be established in their land. They have never rested in their land without fear of their enemies. We wonder if the people of Israel today ever read these wonderful words. There is hope for them in the covenant to David. They do not realize, however, that these promises were to be fulfilled in Jesus Christ who was rejected and slain on Calvary. Their hope is not dead, because Christ is not dead - I Peter 1:3. Read these Scriptures also: Acts 2:30; Zechariah 6:12, 13; Luke 1:32, 33; Psalm 132:10, 11; Isaiah 9:6, 7; Jeremiah 23:5, 6; I Corinthians 15:25; Revelation 3:7.

David's reaction to these wonderful promises is one of the most touching scenes in the Scriptures. We read, "Then went King David in, and sat before the Lord, and he said, Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my house, that Thou hast brought me hitherto? And this was yet a small thing in Thy sight, O Lord God; but Thou hast spoken also of Thy servant's house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of man, O Lord God? And what can David say more unto Thee? for Thou, Lord God, knowest Thy servant" - 7:18-20. This is the response to grace. God's grace will always humble the receptive heart. He was overwhelmed with the goodness of God. He realized that this promise was not because of any goodness in him, and he also knew that it was not for him alone. By his words in the Psalms, he had a revelation of Christ.

What a lesson to us! Grace causes us to sit down before the Lord. All the starch of human endeavor wilts away, and we can only collapse and say, "Thank You, Lord, for Your grace." His words to the Lord were praises from a heart that was melted. David took the promises of God, and returned them to the Lord and said, "Do as Thou hast said." We can claim the promises that are given to us, and return them to the Lord and say, "Even so, Lord, amen." God's bank of promises is full; and He has left an abundant supply of blank checks for us to fill in with our names. How wonderful to sit down quietly and contemplate on what God has done for us. We are living in an age when speed and activity are necessary to survive. But, as Christians, we need to take some time and sit down before the Lord in meditation and reverie. We need to speak of these promises to Him. As we think of them, we marvel that we are included in God's plans. Give me God's grace! If we have nothing that we can claim for God, we can claim His grace. No attainment is so wonderful!

Let us take the cue from David, and act likewise. "Therefore now let it please Thee to bless the house of Thy servant, that it may continue for ever before Thee: for Thou, O Lord God, hast spoken it: and with Thy blessing let the house of Thy servant be blessed for ever" - 7:29.

"We hear of many organizations of various kinds of complexions; but no one seems to be ambitious to head an organization to ravish the Son of God with personal love. There is nothing showy in this. It is internal, profoundly hidden, supernaturally real, intensely spiritual, wholly Divine. Love cannot be organized. Love is free. Devotion cannot be controlled. Worship and fellowship cannot be circumscribed."

Chapters Eight and Nine

THE JUSTICE AND GRACE OF DAVID'S REIGN

"And David reigned over all Israel; and David executed judgment and justice unto all his people" - II Samuel 8:15.

In this chapter, we observe God establishing the throne of David. God had given David the wonderful covenant; and now He enabled this king of Israel to conquer his enemies, and make them his servants. We read three statements in this chapter which confirm this. "Then David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus: and the Syrians became servants to David, and brought gifts. And the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went" - 8:6. "And David gat him a name when he returned from smiting of the Syrians in the valley of salt, being eighteen thousand men. And he put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom put he garrisons, and all they of Edom became David's servants. And the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went" - 8:13, 14.

David's victories over these different countries picture Christ's Kingdom during the Millennium. God will seat His Son on the throne in Heaven seven years before He will be manifested to the world as universal Ruler. God has given a covenant to His Son, and declared, "Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion" - Psalm 2:6. During those seven years when Christ has not yet been revealed to the world, the leaders of the nations of the earth will be usurping authority that really belongs to Christ. They will feel the terrible judgments of a righteous God, and they will rebel. Christ will have to take the kingdoms of this world by force, even as David did in his day. You will notice that God gave David the victory over his enemies. He was more than conqueror, because he not only defeated the armies in battle but they became servants to him. He also took of the spoils, and later donated many of them to the building of the temple. This reminds us of the victories that God gives His people today. "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of His knowledge by us in every place" - II Corinthians 2:14.

When Christ's Government is established on the earth, all nations will serve Him. He will be the triumphant Ruler, and all the inhabitants of the earth will be His subjects. All things belong to Him now by right of creation, because by Him and through Him and for Him were all things created. All these things will become His as the Redeemer and King. He will reign from Heaven, the glorified and exalted Man, "the Seed of David." He will be "the Lion of the tribe of Juda," and all knees shall bow to Him.

In the end of this chapter, we find David's officers listed. In their offices and also in the meanings of their names, we have some spiritual truths figured. Joab, whose name means "Jehovah is father," was the captain of the army. He would represent the Word and Will of God. Joab led the army against the enemies. He directed the battle, and was responsible for victory. Thus, God's Word leads us into battle array, and brings us forth victorious. We learn how to fight by the Word of God. We learn who our enemy is and when to go against him. The world, the flesh, and the devil can only be defeated as we let the Word of God dwell richly in us in all wisdom. We take the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word, and actually tear down principalities and powers. Jahoshaphat, "Jehovah is Judge," was the recorder. He wrote down all the activities to be preserved for a remembrance. We have a Scripture which answers to him, in II Corinthians 5:10 - "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Today, the Lord is judging us by His Word. He is keeping an account of our activities. If we let Him and the Word judge us now, we will be assured that we are building with good materials - "gold, silver, precious

stones." When we stand before the Lord in Heaven, then we will receive reward for what we have done.

Zadok, "to justify," and Ahimelech, "brother of the king," were the priests. They represent Christ in His office as High Priest. It is because Christ "ever liveth to make intercession," that we are justified before God. Jesus was "delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" - Romans 4:25. He has also made us "kings and priests" unto the Lord. We are counted righteous by the edict of a holy God; and thus, we are qualified to become priests, along with our Lord Jesus Christ.

Seraiah, "prince of Jehovah," was the scribe or secretary. He seems to represent the Holy Spirit, who is God's Executor during this age. He knows what God's will is, and He is carrying out His wishes. He could be called, "The Executive Secretary." God has put all of His purposes into the hands of the Holy Spirit. He is directing God's will for His people.

Benaiah, "built of Jehovah," seemed to be a steward or ruler over the Cherethites and Pelethites. He was a governor, or undershepherd. He represents God's ministers today, who are God-called and equipped for the ministry He has for them. They are edified and strengthened by the Lord, and are happy to serve for their "David."

David's sons were chief rulers, or princes. God's people are all ministers in some capacity. As belonging to the King, they share in the reign of the King. They share in the authority and glory of the throne. We will share with Christ when He reigns. Some Christians will reign as His Wife.

Chapter Nine

"FOR JONATHAN'S SAKE"

"And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" - II Samuel 9:1. In the preceding chapter, we saw that David executed judgment and justice on God's enemies. In this chapter, we see the grace of God displayed through the kindness shown to Jonathan's son. David's place of authority and honor never blinded him to the needs of others. He had a tender heart that could be touched by the feeling of others' infirmities. He is so like Christ in many ways. It was not only the helplessness of Mephibosheth that touched his heart, but he remembered his covenant with Jonathan.

This touching story of a king's kindness to the grandson of his greatest enemy, Saul, is illustrative of God's grace to all mankind. Mephibosheth never expected that David would do anything for him. He represented the house of Saul, and why should he deserve anything as wonderful as to be brought to the king's house? It is true, he had no reason to expect such a blessing; but that is grace.

Mephibosheth means "breathing shame"; and he was a cripple, an enemy of the house of David, unfit for court duty. He was an outcast. In him, we see the plight of all mankind. We have nothing good to offer to God. We are enemies of His through sin and disobedience. We are unfit for any service whatever. Yet, the grace of God was extended to us in the Person of Jesus Christ. We could expect nothing but death; but, "in due time Christ died for the ungodly" - Romans 5:6. While we were yet enemies of God, Jesus died on the Cross for us, so that we might come and live in the house of the Lord. What grace! Yet it is true.

Mephibosheth realized the hopelessness of his condition as he said, "What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am?" - 9:8. His attitude was that of one who could not help himself, and who cast himself upon the mercy of another. We come to God in that same way, or we do not come to God at all. We realize that it is all of God's grace that we are "accepted in the Beloved." Such an attitude will touch the heart of God. Mephibosheth also showed his humble spirit by accepting David's grace. He did not refuse this offer by continually bemoaning his condition. He took what David offered him, and he was blessed. What a lesson for us!

David said to him, "Fear not: for I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake ..." He remembered their covenant. How expressive this is of God's covenant with His Son. God has promised to bless humanity, but it is dependent upon Jesus Christ. They entered into an agreement, and they have fulfilled their part. We were included in this covenant. We read, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" - Eph. 1:3. Notice that God has blessed us. He has blessed us with spiritual blessings. These blessings are heavenly blessings in Christ.

God took us poor, lame, and needy people unto Himself because of His covenant. He invites us to feast at His table, and dwell in His house. He did not have to do this, but He is gracious. We

can imagine the feelings of Mephibosheth as the news came to him. He had not been forgotten. He came from his place of poverty, right into the palace of the king! "So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and was lame on both his feet" - 9:13. This is our picture. While we are still in these bodies of flesh, we are "lame on both ... feet." This man's feet, though lame, were hidden under the table. While everyone was sitting at the table eating, it was not apparent that this one man was lame. We are never so strong and mature, that we no longer need God's grace. We continually sit at His table, eating of His wonderful provisions; and we never forget that it is because of His grace that we are there. We are still dependent upon Him. We were chosen in Christ "before the foundation of the world," and we know that it is because of this that God has blessed us. Jesus is our Surety, and the Holy Spirit is our Guarantee. We need never fear that some day one of the guards will tap us on the shoulder and say, "You no longer have a right to eat here at the King's table." God can never forget nor deny His covenant. Praise the Lord!

"I WILL NOT LEAVE YOU COMFORTLESS"

John 14:18

"I will not leave you comfortless," child of My tenderest care;
When dear ones die or friends forsake, I'll every sorrow share.
I'll be your Guide and Counselor, your Father and your Friend;
And more than fill the place they filled until your journey's care,
Is that unutterable love which I toward you do bear.

"I will not leave you comfortless." Oh, lonely one and sad;
My Presence shall go with you, child, and I will make you glad.
More tender than a mother's love, greater than father's care,
Is that unutterable love which I toward you do bear.

"I will not leave you comfortless." You nevermore need fear,
When you're in danger or in trial, I will be always near.
When tempests howl and billows roll, I'll make the winds to cease.
My Voice can still the wildest storm and give you perfect peace.

"I will not leave you comfortless, I will come unto you."
How sweet the words, on listening ears, fall like the gentle dew.
We nevermore can be bereft: God is our Help, our Home.
He dwells in us, and we in Him, for He has bid us come.
He will not leave us comfortless. His love encircles us.
Beneath the shelter of his wings our souls securely trust.
Oh, brooding love! Oh, patient care! Oh, tenderness Divine!
I do rejoice, my gracious Lord, that Thou henceforth art mine.

Chapter Ten

DAVID'S THRONE ESTABLISHED

"And it came to pass after this, that the king of the children of Ammon died, and Hanun his son reigned in his stead. Then said David, I will show kindness unto Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father showed kindness unto me. And David sent to comfort him by the hand of his servants for his father. And David's servants came into the land of the children of Ammon" - II Samuel 10:1, 2. In this narrative, David tried to show kindness to Hanun upon the death of his father. David had a kind and tender spirit, and he remembered his friends. These traits are noteworthy in anyone; but, especially so, in a ruler. He exemplifies the humble and compassionate Savior of whom he is a type. One's kindness is not always accepted by others. Hanun had inherited his father's throne, but not his spirit. Nahash was a true friend of David's; and tradition tells us that he had protected one of David's brothers from death. Hanun was not of the same mold as the ruler of Israel, and listened to foolish advice from his princes.

When David saw how his servants had been mistreated, he let his displeasure be known. The Ammonites immediately prepared for war. How easily conflicts and battles can begin! The savage intemperate nature of man is seen in these events. The heart of man is desperately wicked and unstable. A misunderstanding, as slight as this was, led to bloodshed. This should be a warning to us, to guard our minds and control our spirits against this sort of thing. How easy it would have been to have accepted David's message of condolence in the spirit it was sent. However, when there is evil in the heart, nothing seems to be pure. What could have been a step in closer relations between these two nations became the cause of a war which involved other nations

besides.

All of this is typical of Christ's reign, and the gradual establishment of His throne. The Ammonites and the Syrians represent those forces who will be opposed to Jesus Christ when He begins to reign over the earth. The Ammonites were descendants of Lot, and their history was not one which they could be proud of. Although they were related to Israel, yet there was no real affinity between them. This antagonistic spirit has existed between them even to this day. Spiritually, they represent the struggle between the spirit and the flesh.

Dispensationally, these nations represent the forces of evil that will be arrayed against Christ at His coming. The Ammonites could picture the religious forces which make up the false church of the end-time. They were related to Israel, but did not receive the promises of God. They speak of modernists who say that they are Christians, but who deny the power of the Gospel. They claim Christ as Lord or Teacher, and yet they will be joined with political forces who will oppose Him. These forces were present when Jesus was born into this world. When King Herod heard the wise men inquiring - "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" - he immediately took steps to annihilate Him. He took counsel with the Jewish scribes and elders. The same scene took place when it was time for Jesus to go to the Cross. The religious leaders joined with the Roman soldiers in humiliating and crucifying the Lord of glory. History will again repeat itself in the end of this age. In fact, we can see the emerging of this unholy union today.

At no time was God or His people defeated. God miraculously protected His Baby Son from Herod. He allowed these cruel men later to put Jesus on the Cross, but this was in His Divine will; and these men actually became the instruments in carrying out His purpose. David was not defeated. He first sent Joab, the captain of his forces, to battle; and the Ammonites and Syrians fled without much of a battle. This was not the end of the matter; for Hadarezer, of the Syrians, sought additional help and prepared to battle. This time, David accompanied the armies, and complete victory was won.

When Christ takes His throne in Heaven, at the Rapture of the full overcomers of the Church, the world will be in total rebellion to Him. At this time, the nations will have joined together and announced, "Peace and safety." They will be usurping authority that belongs to Christ. Further insult will be added, when the anti-Christ emerges as world ruler and has his image placed in the temple in Jerusalem for all the world to worship. The book of Revelation tells us of the armies gathered around Jerusalem, and of the great battle of Armageddon.

Christ will come Himself, and put an end to all warfare and rebellion of man. He is seen as coming upon a white horse with the armies of Heaven following. In our lesson chapter, Joab sought the choice men of Israel to go to battle. These were the men who had fought with David before, and had been true and faithful to him. Together, they won the battle that day. In the future battle, the same will be true. Christ will go forth to conquer, and His faithful followers with Him.

"And I saw Heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a Name written, that no man knew, but He Himself. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His Name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in Heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations; and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a Name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" - Revelation 19:11-16. We say, "Amen, Lord, may it be soon!"

Not till the loom is silent,
And the Shuttles cease to fly,
Shall God unroll the canvas
And explain the reason why
The dark threads are as needful
In the Weaver's skillful hand
As the threads of gold and silver

In the pattern He has planned. settled this thing in a much better way if David had gone to Him immediately instead of devising hurt for others.

TYPICAL INTERPRETATION

This story carries a wonderful typical picture, if we have spiritual eyes to see. David represents

Christ as King; here he figures Christ as the Last Adam, or the Second Husband. It is marvelous that, even in events that were horrible, God pictures something wonderful and even beautiful. Uriah is a type of the first Adam. Bathsheba figures mankind. When Christ wanted to have fellowship with humanity, He could not because of sin. It had separated man from God. There was only one way that the children of men could have fellowship with Christ, and that was through the death of the first Adam. The Apostle Paul writes of this in Romans 7:1-6. We read that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he lives. The woman is bound to her husband by the law as long as he lives; but, if he is dead, then she is free from the law of her husband. Then Paul declares, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God" - Romans 7:4.

We were bound by the law and nature of the first Adam. We were in sin and could not escape, no matter how much Christ loved us and wanted us. Thus, Christ was disguised as the first Adam in his humanity, and He went to death for us. He put to death the first Adam, our first husband, that we might be joined to Him. David would figure Christ desiring to have fellowship with us, figured by Bathsheba. She was married to Uriah; so the only way that he could have fellowship with Bathsheba was to kill Uriah. Christ took that place when He died on the Cross, but He took our first husband to death too. He freed us from the dominion of the law and the dominion of sin. David died with Uriah - not actually, of course; but he suffered death over and over because of his desire for Bathsheba.

God uses all things for His purpose. He makes "all things work together for good to them that love" Him. He uses this terrible sin of David's to picture to us Christ's undying love for humanity, and the extent to which He had to go in order that we might be joined to Him. He tasted death for all men. Uriah was the innocent party in this story. Jesus, as the Lamb of God, was the innocent victim of our sin and transgression. Jesus did not deserve death; and, in this respect, He was the innocent Lamb. As the bullock or burnt offering, He knew what He was doing. He had come to do the will of His Father, and He knew that He must die in order to release this beautiful woman who was to be His Bride. "Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" - Hebrews 12:2.

This is also a typical picture of Israel. Jesus desired to have fellowship with them; but, He could not, as long as they were unregenerate. He can have no concord with the flesh, so the flesh must be put to death. He will have fellowship with the true Israel, the new creation Israel, when they accept Christ as their Savior and Messiah. This, too, is only possible through the death and resurrection of Christ.

The eleventh chapter deals with David's sin, and the next chapter with God's dealing with him through Nathan the prophet. We say again, that David had to pay for his sin; but God overruled his indiscretion, and blessed the union of David and Bathsheba. Although the fruit of that first sin was destroyed; yet God chose the son of David and Bathsheba, Solomon, to sit upon the throne after David. Thus, Bathsheba joins the long line of people who were the progenitors of Christ. Is that not a wonderful expression of God's grace! Does that not prove that God is able for all things! He does not let anything defeat Him or His purpose. He causes all things to serve Him. He can take your life with your mistake, your failure, and make it work good for Him. He can overrule our faults, and use them to work in us where nothing else will do the job. Trust Him with your life, and see what He will do for you. Come to Him just as you are. He likes to repair broken and discarded things.

I WONDER IF WE KNEW?

I wonder if we knew this year
Would be our last on earth -
Would we try to fill it with love and cheer
That came with Jesus' birth?
Would that hasty word be spoken
That makes the tear drops start?
Would that fellowship be broken,
If we knew that we should part?
Would we likely give that cold hand clasp,
If we knew it were the last;

Or would we that hand warmly grasp,
And desire to hold it fast?
Would we the gentle warning heed,
When the Spirit says, "Don't say it"?
Or, would we that other heart cause to bleed,
Because we would not obey it?
But since we do not know the time
That we from earth shall part -
Would it not be well for us to face
Each day with Christ in our heart?
As grace sufficient for each day
He surely will provide,
Why should we go so far astray
Since He will thus abide?

Chapter Twelve

"THOU ART THE MAN"

"And the Lord sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds: But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveler unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die: And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity" - II Samuel 12:1-6.

This touching parable and the scene which follows show us how dearly God loved David, and how much He wanted him to repent of his sin. God knew David and knew what it would take to bring him to the place of humility that was necessary. God reveals Himself differently to different men in different circumstances. What would touch one man's heart, might not have the same effect upon another. Job's heart was touched and his mouth was silenced by viewing God's greatness and power. God began to tell Job about His power and His might in creation; and, when Job measured himself by God's strength, he was rendered speechless and helpless before God - Job 38-42.

Isaiah, in chapter six of his prophecy, describes a vision he had of God's glory. It was this that brought him to the dust; and, he proclaimed himself as a man of unclean lips, living among people who were unclean. The Lord revealed Himself to Peter in this way, through an incident that would touch this fisherman's heart as nothing else would. Luke five records the miracle of the many fish in the net after Peter and others had fished all night and had caught nothing. Peter fell down before the Lord, and confessed his sinfulness and worthlessness. God knows exactly what it will take to bring His men to their knees. He uses providence and circumstance to speak to the individual heart, and there is no set pattern in the way He deals with men.

It had been a year since David's sin, and that had been a dreadful year for him. It is said that Psalm thirty-two describes that year of silence. David describes the blessedness that comes upon a man whose sins are forgiven. He then describes his feelings at that time. "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah" - Psalm 32:3, 4. He knew that he had sinned, and he was seeking forgiveness; but; his heart had not been touched to the point of complete surrender.

Nathan is God's man at this time. He waited until God sent him to speak to David. The last sentence of chapter eleven reads, "But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord." When the Lord did send Nathan, David was ready to receive his message. When Nathan came to David at an earlier time, he had good news for him (chapter seven); and it may have been that David hoped for similar news this time.

As Nathan told this story of the two men and the one little ewe lamb, David's true nature was again revealed. His anger against injustice was kindled; and, he pronounced judgment upon the

guilty man, not realizing that he was that man. How wise and understanding is God! When the story had a chance to touch the tender recesses of David's heart, Nathan spoke, "Thou art the man." The dart had been thrust into David's heart, and he was instantly repentant. In a flash of recognition, he saw himself as the rich man who had indeed defrauded Uriah of his ewe lamb. The enormity of his sin rose up before him in a mountain of shame and guilt. He, no doubt, trembled at the words of God.

Nathan spoke the words of judgment next. "Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised Me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbor, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun."

The remainder of this book records the fulfillment of this judgment just pronounced. David never had a moment's peace from this time on. Even on his deathbed, there was treachery in his own household. God's Word is sure, and certain to be fulfilled. Did this pronouncement of judgment end David's life and his usefulness? Ah, no. God is never defeated. He had blessed David and his throne, and God knew His man. This was a terrible defeat for David, but he was not utterly cast down. Though he had failed, yet he arose in greater personal victory than before.

Instantly he acknowledged his sin, "I have sinned against the Lord." Psalm fifty-one records his repentance at this time. "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight: that Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest" - Psalm 51:1-4. David knew his God. He knew Him to be merciful and tender, and yet just. David did not rush out to confess his sin to Uriah's family, nor to his own people. He acknowledged his sin before the Lord. He said that he had sinned against the Lord and against Him only. God was the One who had been dealt the most unkindness.

We can learn a great deal from David's attitude here. He called upon God's mercy in his behalf, because he knew that he had no ground of his own upon which to stand. He wanted God to judge him, because he knew that only God could justify him! He was willing to bear the punishment of his crime, but he could not bear the thought that God had not forgiven him. He continued his confession and prayer in Psalm fifty-one by saying, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which Thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide Thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me ... Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and uphold me with Thy free Spirit" - Psalm 51:7-12.

David had learned a further lesson in the weakness and instability of the flesh. He had been shapen in iniquity, and he knew that his only righteousness must come from God. We are certain that David was a better man now than he had been before. He had been through troubled waters; and how he must have suffered that long year! He desired victory, but did not know how to obtain it. God's Word had to be brought home to his heart before he could know again the wonderful joy of the Lord. May his experience be our guide in times of need. Though we may have sinned, let us take the same attitude that David manifested. He was utterly defeated, but God brought him to victory. We are never too low but that God's Word can rescue us from the depths. David's experience can bring hope to anyone who may feel that all is hopeless.

God forgave David, and spared his life. The fruit of that fleshly union had to be destroyed, however, and so the child died. David, knowing the immeasurable mercy of God, pleaded for the life of the child for seven days. He thought that perhaps God would relent in this respect. God's principles never change. "The wages of sin is death." The flesh brings corruption. "He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption." There will never be any lasting fruit that comes from the flesh. God will not allow it. We cannot hold to the flesh in any way either. We may cry and pray and mourn, but the flesh is corrupt and must be put away. As long as David thought there was hope, he did not cease to mourn and cry to God; but, when the child had died, he arose and continued as before. The servants could not understand this attitude. Surely he must continue mourning. But, when one judges with God, he does not mourn the loss of the flesh. It is as though he realized the teaching of Paul in Romans six, that we are "dead indeed unto sin, but

alive unto God." He arose from the ground to "walk in newness of life."

Notice the wording of II Samuel 12:20 - "Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat." We see definite steps in David's restoration to full fellowship with the Lord. He "arose" from his place of degradation and filth. He was then "washed," even as he prayed - Psalm 51. He "anointed" himself; that is, he yielded to the power of the Spirit within. He then "changed his apparel," or took on him God's righteousness. He claimed no goodness nor righteousness of his own. Instead, he clothed himself with the new creation. Then he "came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped." God received His portion first. David remembered the Lord before he nourished himself on natural food. This is the path that every sinner takes when he first comes to the Lord. It is also the experience of the child of God who has failed the Lord. Next we read that Solomon was born, and "the Lord loved him." Here is the fruit of the Spirit manifested. When David walked contrary to God's will, he suffered terrible loss. As soon as he began to yield wholeheartedly to God, he realized spiritual fruit. Solomon was God's choice to reign on the throne after David passed away. This is a wonderful type and lesson on the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit - Galatians 5:16-26.

The remaining verses of this chapter speak of the conquering of Rabbah, a city of the children of Ammon. There seems to be another lesson here of making the flesh serve the spirit. The Ammonites represent the flesh, and were always at enmity with the Children of Israel. Now that David was walking in the Spirit, he could conquer the Ammonites. He took the king's crown and wore it himself. This is what the new man does when he takes his place with Christ. He rules over sin, the flesh, the world, and Satan. These Ammonites had to serve the Children of Israel. We must put down the flesh and cause it to serve the new man. We are also to yield our members as instruments of righteousness. This is beautifully illustrated here.

This is also a type of Christ who came down into His enemies' territory, the world, and took upon Himself the form of sinful flesh. When He died, though, He bruised the head of Satan and robbed him of his power over men. He took dominion away from Satan, and brought victory to His people. He also will wear the Victor's crown. Joab could represent Christ in His journey to the Cross; and David, Christ in glory. We also see, as regards the overcomer, the words of Jesus illustrated, "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" - Revelation 3:11.

Let us yield to Christ and the new creation life. There will be victory and continual peace. If we do fail, as is common to man, we know the way to restoration and joy. David's sin has been recorded for our good. May we profit from his experience, and learn that forgiveness and justification come only from the Lord.

There is an eye that never sleeps
Beneath the wings of night;
There is an ear that never shuts
When sink the beams of light.
There is an arm that never tires
When human strength gives way;
There is a love that never fails
When earthly loves decay.

Chapter Thirteen

SIN IN DAVID'S HOUSE

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" - Galatians 6:7, 8.

The Lord had forgiven David his sin, and had restored to him the joy of his salvation; but now he was forced to watch the seeds of sin sprout and grow into maturity. We have illustrated in this narrative the results of yielding to the flesh. It is always sad to see the results of sin in a person's life, and David suffered a great deal. The words of Nathan must have come to him again and again, "Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house." Also, he said, "Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised Me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife."

The flesh in every one of us is a deceitful foe which would rob us of victory. We cannot depend upon our fleshly nature in any way. The Lord Jesus Christ has provided a way of victory over these desires, and happy is the one who finds the secret of victory. We have these truths brought out so clearly and forcibly by the Apostle Paul in Romans six, seven, and eight. These three chapters tell us of the basis of our victory, the struggle, and the triumph. Romans six tells us that we died with Christ provisionally, and that we were also raised with Him to walk in newness of life. We are to count along with God that these things are so, and then to yield ourselves to Christ. When we begin to take our place with Christ, the flesh will assert itself and try to hold the dominion it has had for so long. Romans seven tells the conflict between the flesh and the spirit - the will, the determination, and the failure. But victory is on the way when we trust in the Lord and realize our inability to cope with the flesh in our own natural strength. Then we can say with Paul, "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" - I Corinthians 15:57. Romans eight tells us of the victory that the Holy Spirit gives to us.

The inordinate and unreasonable desires of the flesh are seen in this narrative of Amnon and Tamar. This sort of association was distinctly forbidden by the law. But the flesh is a law unto itself, and it seeks no reason nor justification. The flesh has no conscience, and it is like a ravenous beast that will not be denied. Amnon had the wrong counselor at this time. It is amazing, but true, how the flesh always finds encouragement to fulfill its desires. If Amnon had gone to his father and told him of his sickness, David could have given him some wise counsel based on his own experiences. Amnon, no doubt, was aware of this; and, instead, sought solace with someone who was just as thoughtless as he was.

Tamar was the one who was injured, and she had to bear this reproach for the rest of her life. The flesh will always injure another, and quite often an innocent party. In the heat of passion, there is no room for cool reasoning; but there is only the urgency to feed the desires that burn so fiercely. This is why God did not try to curb the desires of the flesh, and give men the opportunity to do the best they could. He knew the total depravity of the flesh; and, He put it to death in the Person of His Son Jesus, on the Cross. He silenced, forever, the claims of the flesh.

David failed again, and this time because of two things. The Septuagint adds some words of explanation to verse twenty-one - "Though King David heard all these things, and was very angry, yet he would not grieve the spirit of his son Amnon, because he loved him as being his firstborn." David had an exceedingly tender heart, and this is seen in his dealings with his children. He could not bring himself to judge this deed from the king's throne; but, instead, he treated it as a father. He seemed to love Amnon very much, as also he did Absalom. The law stated that one who had committed such a deed as Amnon did should die. This was more than David could admit to, and we can understand how he must have felt. There was the second reason, also, that seemed to temper his anger. He had been guilty of the very same thing, and had even committed murder to conceal his crime. He was in no way able to give a just decision. The guilty cannot judge another. His mouth was sealed because of his own guilt.

If David had dealt with this problem according to righteous judgment, he would have saved himself further trouble, no doubt. As it was, Amnon's life was taken from him anyway. This sin and the failure to judge it properly brought further sin and judgment. Absalom nurtured his hatred of Amnon for two years; and, as the days went by, this bitterness increased. It must have burned into his heart with an indelible impression. No one would look on his handsome face, and ever suspect that he had hatred and murder in his heart.

Deceit, lust, and murder continued to follow David's footsteps. No sooner had one incident faded away until something greater followed. As a result of Absalom's plan to kill Amnon, he fled from Jerusalem and went to live with his mother's father Talmai at Geshur. "And the soul of King David longed to go forth unto Absalom: for he was comforted concerning Amnon, seeing he was dead" - 13:39. Absalom was here for three years, and during that time David suffered the loss of both Amnon and Absalom.

I may not know what time will bring,
Nor paths that I must tread;
Perhaps it may be countless joys,
It may be tears, instead.
But this I know, "Whate'er God's plan,
Through mountain top or dell,

I know that I am in His care,
And He doeth all things well."

Chapter Fourteen

JOAB'S PLEA FOR THE FUGITIVE

Now Joab takes things into his own hands. Everyone gets into the act, or so it seems. When things are taken out of God's hands, then men try to fix things up as they think is proper. That has happened in the affairs of the Church. When men have failed to let the Lord judge them according to the Word of God, they have devised plans of their own. The results are as disastrous as they were in this case. This can also happen in an assembly, when the Lord is not allowed to judge sin or strife. Everyone seems to have a solution; and, when all begin discussing a certain situation, chaos develops. How much better to commit things into the hands of the Lord for His righteous judgment! David's failure to judge Amnon immediately brought confusion that lasted for years. Jesus is not slack, as David was; but is faithful to search open hearts, and judge according to the Word.

Joab hired an actress to present a theoretical case to the king. In this parable, she was pleading for a guilty party, because it was her only remaining son. This is deliverance of the guilty without repentance and restitution. She presented her case very effectively before the king, and he promised that her son should be spared judgment. Then, she came to the climax of her charade, by speaking to the king the words that Joab had instructed her to say.

"And the woman said, Wherefore then hast thou thought such a thing against the people of God? for the king doth speak this thing as one which is faulty, in that the king doth not fetch home again his banished. For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect any person; YET DOTHE DEVISE MEANS, THAT HIS BANISHED BE NOT EXPELLED FROM HIM" - 14:13, 14. These words enlightened David's eyes, and he suspected that Joab was behind this visit. They are wonderful words; and this woman innocently preached the Gospel that day.

We were all as guilty as Absalom - away from God, separated by our sins. We had no right to return to the Father, and there was no hope that we ever could come into His Presence. God devised means, however, by which we the banished ones could return to God. This is called, "Reconciliation." Jesus brought man back to God through His death upon the Cross. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation" - II Corinthians 5:19. This plan of God was perfect; and the righteous Judge justified us only after our guilt was taken by Jesus Christ and He was judged for our sin. God's righteous law was executed by the slaying of the guilty one. Although Jesus was the innocent one, He stepped forward and assumed our guilt. Since the penalty for our sin was met, we were freed from our guilt and judged innocent by a righteous Judge. This is "Justification." As the Scripture says, "For He hath made Him (Christ) to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" - II Corinthians 5:21.

This plan of Joab's was faulty, and in no way cleared Absalom from his guilt. No one had paid the penalty for the death of Amnon. The guilt was still there. Absalom was brought back into his father's favor without restitution being made. This would never stand up in God's court of Divine justice. God could only clear the guilty and show mercy after the penalty was paid.

Righteousness and peace did not kiss each other until the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ - Psalm 85:10. Absalom's reunion with his father was not based upon justice at all, but only human compassion and forgiveness. This horrible crime was as a shadow in all of their associations. It clung to them and hindered complete and free fellowship. Not so with our relationship with God. There is no shadow between us. This treatment of Absalom would represent justification without regeneration and sanctification.

We are reminded of the parable of the two sons of Luke fifteen. The wayward son returned, but he repented first; and, when his father saw him, he commanded a calf to be slain. This was a picture of Calvary, where the Lamb of God was slain for us. We come to God only when we acknowledge that we have sinned, as the prodigal did, and ask for mercy. This Absalom never did. One would have thought that David was being spiteful, by not restoring Absalom before he did. We notice that David tried to be discreet, and restore his son by degrees. This was to lessen any criticism from the people. He was also trying to justify his own actions in this matter. When the flesh is left unjudged, nothing is right from then on. Judgment must take place, and there

must be repentance on the part of the offender.

Absalom's presence in Jerusalem did not bring any joy and peace to David, nor to the kingdom. In fact, it was a terrible mistake, as David was to learn later. What satisfaction did David have in Absalom's return? There was no fellowship. "And the king said, Let him turn to his own house, and let him not see my face. So Absalom returned to his own house, and saw not the king's face" - 14:24. What kind of fellowship would this be? If this were our relationship with God, we would have very little peace or joy. We would know that God had allowed us to come out of hiding, but we would always be afraid that He would banish us for our wrong. This would be fear, not love; and yet some people have this idea of God and His forgiveness. No, we have a perfect relationship with God when we are justified. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" - Romans 5:1.

Later, Absalom did come into the king's presence, but it seems to be an unsatisfactory welcome. We read, "So Joab came to the king, and told him: and when he had called for Absalom, he came to the king, and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king: and the king kissed Absalom" - 14:33. This is a show of humility and a show of affection, but it lacks reality. We do not read that the "father" kissed his son, but rather the "king" kissed Absalom. This is a much different scene from the one in Luke fifteen. There the father rushed out to meet his son, and embraced him, and brought him into the house. This scene between David and Absalom is full of ceremony. This, too, is seen in many places of worship today. People will kneel before an altar, but one wonders just how much fellowship is there.

Absalom's heart was not right, and it did not take long for all Israel to find out. He was a handsome creature, and had the most beautiful hair on record. How true he was of the whispered advice given to Samuel many years before this when He said, "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature: because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" - I Samuel 16:7. Anyone who looked upon Absalom could not see any corruption in such a beautiful creature; but it was there. The bitterness and envy had eaten away all the beauty that may have been within. He had only a shell that glistened; but inwardly he was corrupt. This is the condition of all men who are self-righteous, and who claim righteousness without repentance. All people were deceived by him, even David. It is the same today in religious circles. Anyone with a pious air, and a pleasing personality, can deceive the multitudes. Deceit and impersonation will be the rule in the end days. Satan will deceive Christendom by these means. It is evident even now. Absalom, through his devious ways, was headed for destruction.

HOW IS YOUR APPETITE?

Alice S. Mooneyhan

"NOW AN OMER IS THE TENTH PART OF AN EPHAH" - Exodus 16:36.

Some of God's children have a voracious appetite for His Word, while others eat very little of it. In Exodus sixteen we read that the Children of Israel gathered manna, each one according to his eating. Though some gathered much and others gathered little, when it was measured there was an omer for every man.

The omer represents the measure of the gift of Christ which each of us is able to receive in the wilderness journey from Egypt to Canaan. The ephah speaks to us of the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ into which we all may come by feeding on the Word of God day by day. It is represented in Joshua 5:11 by "the old corn of the land." Corn was measured by the bushel (ephah), not by an omer. "And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the Children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year" - Joshua 5:12.

Chapters Fifteen and Sixteen

ABSALOM'S DECEIT AND TREASON

"And the king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favor in the eyes of the Lord, He will bring me again, and shew me both it, and His habitation: But if He thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let Him do to me as seemeth good unto Him" - II Samuel 15:25, 26. The rebellion in David's house continued and Absalom, his most attractive son, stole the hearts of the men of Israel by his devious ways. It is always so, that evil arises early and stands in the gate. It has been said that error is halfway around the world by the time truth gets his boots on. Satan has always found willing tools in his fight against God and His servants. There have been the Absaloms, the Ahithophels, and the Judases; but there have also

been the Davids, the Ittais, the Hushais, the Zadoks, and the Abiathars to stem the tide of wickedness. This was a dark period in the life of David; but, out of it, the overcoming life of the king was manifested. David sinned. The Lord forgave him, and restored him to favor. The results of sin remained to haunt him the rest of his days.

The first six verses show us how Absalom won the hearts of many people. The flesh is weak and susceptible to failure. The people's allegiance to David was not as strong as one would expect. They knew of their king's failures, no doubt. But how could they forget all that he had done for them? They must have known some of Absalom's character, too; but a winsome personality, clothed with an attractive face, can deceive others easily. This is so true with the flesh. We may believe that we are loyal to the Lord and will follow Him all the days of our lives. If the flesh comes along arrayed in beautiful apparel and a forceful personality, our allegiance is tested. We need to be spiritual to withstand the wiles of the devil. He has deceived many in these last days with such tactics. The Church has been deceived by Absaloms who have deceived the people into following them. This satanic deception will continue, and culminate in the anti-Christ after whom the whole world will wonder.

The message of Absalom's treachery finally reached the ears of the king. It had been four years since Absalom began his plan. (Most translators give the time in verse seven as "four" years and not "forty"). When David heard the message - "The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom" - he answered, "Arise, and let us flee." He did not have the heart to stay and fight his son. What a blow! Psalms forty-one and fifty-five were, no doubt, written at this time. His first impulse was to escape; but he also gave the reason that he did not want the city to be involved in a bloody battle. He felt that if he were not there, Absalom would have no reason to make an assault upon Jerusalem.

We read that all his household and servants and allies went with him. His true friends showed their allegiance by sharing his exile. This was not the first time that David found out that he had loyal followers. This is a picture of the loyalty that some people show toward Christ. There are some who go with Him outside the camp. Jesus is in exile today, because very few own Him as Lord and King. We have a touching scene between David and Ittai. "Then said the king to Ittai the Gittite, Wherefore goest thou also with us? return to thy place, and abide with the king: for thou art a stranger, and also an exile. And Ittai ("with me") answered the king, and said, As the Lord liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be" - 15:19, 21. This is the kind of loyalty that Jesus expects from His followers; and He has always had a few who, though they were exiles, yet chose to be with the Lord. Jesus said, in John 12:25, 26 - "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve Me, let him follow Me, and where I am, there shall also My servant be: if any man serve Me, him will My Father honor."

The Apostle Paul shows the same fidelity and shameless servitude in his life and ministry. He was proud to be called the "prisoner of Jesus Christ." He was not ashamed of the lonely path that the Savior had trod before him. He wrote to the Philippians, "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death" - 1:20. We can have the same love for the Lord Jesus, that we will want to be with Him regardless of where He is. Today, we must share His sufferings and His reproach. We must go to death with Him; but all of this is the way to life and victory. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him" - II Timothy 2:12.

It was a sad procession that went out of Jerusalem to the top of Mount Olivet. The people were crying, and were in great distress of spirit, Zadok the priest also followed David, and with him the ark of the covenant. David made a strange request of Zadok and the priests - "And the king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favor in the eyes of the Lord, He will bring me again, and show me both it, and His habitation: But if He thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let Him do to me as seemeth good unto Him" - 15:25, 26, What faith David shows! Here is the real overcomer revealed in the time of trouble, In one part of this narrative it would seem that David was a tired old man who did not have the courage to face his son in battle; but, this was not the case. David's faith was in God. He left Jerusalem to save the city from destruction. He also knew that he did not need the ark of the covenant to have God's Presence and blessing. He knew that, if God wanted him to remain as king over Israel, then he had nothing to fear. He knew that God would restore him to the throne in due time; and, if not,

then it was God's choice that mattered to him.

It is in times of distress and need, that a person's true character is revealed. David proves here why he is called "a man after Mine (God's) own heart." He is the overcomer who, though beset by many fears and tears, yet retains his faith in the Lord. We see Christ in this record. In His darkest hour, He went outside Jerusalem; first to the Mount of Olives, and then down to the foot of Olivet into a garden called Gethsemane. Here He fought His greatest battle; and here He proved Himself to be God's Man, the Overcomer. We cannot but feel the depths of suffering that David must have felt at this time. The words are full of pathos - "And David went up by the ascent of mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot: and all the people that was with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up" - 15:30.

Another messenger came with news that only added to his sorrow - "Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom." This reminds us of those who forsook Jesus in His time of need. Paul had the same experience, as he wrote to Timothy, "All they which are in Asia be turned away from me." David must have felt that his entire kingdom was slowly crumbling. God does not let us suffer intensely without some soothing balm. Hushai came to him with his allegiance. David appointed him as a spy, and sent him back to Jerusalem. He is called David's friend, and he could depend upon him. There is always some comfort to be found in the time of trial.

In chapter sixteen, David is called upon to overcome some more. God was not through with His refining of His servant David. First Ziba, Mephibosheth's servant, came to him with a story that this son of Jonathan's was disloyal; and had remained in Jerusalem to see the kingdom restored to Saul's house. David did not know the entire story, so he had to bear the burden of this news along with the rest. His greatest test came next. This was the time for him to break completely, if he were going to do so. This was a supreme test.

"And when King David came to Bahurim, behold, thence came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera: he came forth, and cursed still as he came. And he cast stones at David, and at all the servants of King David: and all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left. And thus said Shimei when he cursed, Come out, come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial. The Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned; and the Lord hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son: and, behold, thou art taken in thy mischief, because thou art a bloody man" - 16:5-8. Abishai wanted to take off his head immediately, and would have done so if David had not stopped him.

David shows the character of an overcomer here, when he ignores the taunts of Shimei. His words show that he had victory in his spirit. With all the blows he had been receiving, this one too must have come from the Lord. He had learned to take all things from the hand of God, and he knew that "all things work together for good." David answered, "Let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so? ... Behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more now may this Benjamite do it? let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him. It may be that the Lord will look an mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day" - 16:10-12.

The cursing continued, but David did not stop him. He took it, because it came from God's hands. He realized that all of this was of God, and that it was for a definite purpose. If we can just realize this truth in our lives, we can go through anything that God allows. This is a truth that Job learned through suffering intense pain and humiliation. The Apostle Paul learned this truth, and that God's grace was sufficient for him. Jesus seemed to be impervious to the taunts and insults of the people of His time. These all knew that God was for them, and who could be against them! David's rejection is typical of Christ's rejection; not only now, but when He attempts to set up His Kingdom upon the earth. Jesus will be reigning in Heaven; but His own people, Israel, will follow the false prophet and anti-Christ. They will laugh at the true witnesses who will warn them of the dangers they face. They will show the same spirit that they showed at Christ's death. In both times, the answer is the same, "Away with Him."

The rest of this chapter deals with Hushai's assignment in Jerusalem. It is a fascinating story, and has much drama. Hushai convinces Absalom that he will be loyal to him; and, vain as Absalom is, he cannot believe that anyone would not want to follow him. His words in verses sixteen and seventeen could very well be meant for David and not for Absalom.

Ahithophel, whose name means "brother of folly," gives some advice to Absalom which was predicted by Nathan the prophet many years before. David was further humiliated by the impudent act of Absalom in the sight of all Israel. The concubines belonged to David; but Absalom was saying that not only were these women his now, but also the whole kingdom was his. This refers to the attitude of the nations at the end time, when they will claim what really belongs to Christ.

Ahithophel seemed to be a wise man, and everything he said made sense. He was growing in favor with Absalom and the people, and this led to his downfall. Remember, David had prayed that his counsel would come to naught. God was still on the scene here, and He had all things still in His power. This is what David knew and acknowledged. What a good lesson for us!

OBEDIENCE

I said, "Let me walk in the fields."
He said, "No, walk in the town."
I said, "There are no flowers there."
He said, "No flowers, but a crown."
I said, "But the skies are black,
There is nothing but noise and din."
And He wept as He sent me back -
"There is more," He said, "there is sin."
I cast one look at the fields,
Then set my face to the town.
He said, "My child, do you yield?
Will you leave the flowers for the crown?"
Then into His hand went mine.
And into my heart came He.
And I walk in a light Divine,
The path I had feared to see.

Chapter Seventeen

GOD RULES IN THE AFFAIRS OF MEN

"Lord, how are they increased that trouble me! many are they that rise up against me. Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God. Selah. But Thou, O Lord, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head. I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and He heard me out of His holy hill. Selah. I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the Lord sustained me. I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about" - Psalm 3:1-6.

While Absalom, Ahithophel, and the elders of Israel were plotting the defeat of David, he was appearing before the Lord of heaven and earth. He presented his case to the only One who could help him in this time of trouble. Psalms three and four record his attitude and his faith in God. Even though he probably realized that this rebellion of Absalom was a result of his earlier sin, yet this did not keep him from fleeing to the place of safety. How wonderful is the realization that one's "transgression is forgiven, that one's "sin is covered." David realized that he had a perfect right to claim protection of the Lord. Though there were ten thousands of people against him, he had such trust in the Lord that he could lie down and sleep.

There is quite a contrast between David and Absalom. The father had faded; but he had acknowledged his wrong, and had received blessed forgiveness from the righteous Judge. The son had also sinned, but he never sought forgiveness. His heart was evil, and this was proved by his actions in seeking to overthrow his father's throne. In doing this he was also rebelling against God's will. God had given the throne to David; and to try and overthrow David was in reality an attempt to defeat God. This is why David went to the Lord. He knew that God was His Shield, and that there was no need to be afraid. His faith in God was stronger than his fear of his enemy.

In this chapter, we also see one of David's prayers answered. When he learned that his adviser, Ahithophel, had gone over to Absalom's side, he prayed, "O Lord, I pray Thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness." David had his man on the scene, too; and God overruled the counsel of Ahithophel, and gave Hushai favor with Absalom and the elders. This is remarkable, and shows that God can rule in the minds of men even when they are unaware of it. He rules in

the lives of leaders of nations today, in much the same way. He is not asleep, nor unconcerned with world affairs. He is very interested in the movements of men and nations; and is gradually arranging the nations for the final international conflict that will end Gentile dominion. He was not through with David; and no one, no matter how great or powerful, could defeat His purpose. It is the same today, and will be when Jesus Christ begins His universal reign.

Poor Ahithophel! How sad to make the wrong choice. He decided against his king, and this was his undoing. David ordered the death of the Amalekite who had dared to put forth his hand against Saul, "the Lord's anointed." If David considered Saul to be the Lord's anointed even in defeat, how much more dangerous was the action that Ahithophel took! He was treading on sinking sand, and he found this out too late. His death warrant is found in 17:14 - "And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel. For the Lord had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon Absalom." The word "appointed" is also translated "commanded" and "ordained." Thus, God was back of his defeat. His name, which means "brother of folly," surely illustrates his decision to follow Absalom - God's enemy.

Here is a lesson for us. We are taught to honor and remember those who have the rule over us. We are not to put a hand on any of God's chosen ministers. They are God's servants; and they are in His hand to receive chastisement if they are wrong. The Lord arranged David's life, and He took care of all the necessary training and refining. He never asks us to help Him in His task. We also learn to never listen to the flesh. Perhaps Ahithophel was swayed by Absalom's attractive appearance and winning personality. He was, no doubt, seeking a better place. Whatever it was, his greed or lack of spiritual insight, it led him to defeat.

Ahithophel is a type of Judas Iscariot who passed up the chance of a lifetime to gain thirty pieces of silver! He lived in the Presence of the Lord of glory, and yet was blinded to that fact. He had no faith in Him whatever - the miracles and gracious words having no effect on his heart. We cannot understand how some people can hear the precious Gospel Message without being touched; but it is so. "And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass, and arose, and gat him home to his house, to his city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father" - 17:23. This was the end of Ahithophel, but David lived on. His enemies, one by one, were defeated. Had Ahithophel cast his lot with David and chosen to suffer with him, he would have lived to enjoy the fruits of victory. The flesh will always rob us of our place of victory if we continue to yield to its demands.

Hushai sent the message of his plans to David through the priests Zadok and Abiathar whom he had instructed to remain in Jerusalem. It is always good for someone to stay by the stuff. These men were much more effective in Jerusalem than if they had remained with David. The two young men, Jonathan and Ahimaaz, delivered the message to David. It is interesting to see the different ones God used to deliver Absalom into David's hands. A servant girl was used to take the message from the priests to the young men. They had to hide in a well. But God had a loyal follower of David to hide them and divert the men of Absalom. Some criticize this deception on the part of the mistress of the house at Bahurim. Who are we to criticize something that God uses? He used the harlot at Jericho in a similar manner, and later protected her from the judgment that came upon that city. We need to think as God thinks, and lean not on our own understanding.

When David came to Mahanaim, three of his friends met him with provisions for his people. The Lord always has someone to meet the needs of His people. If there are no human instruments available, He will use other means as a raven or perhaps an angel. He never runs out of instruments to do His will. David had some trouble with another son of Nahash, Hanun - II Samuel ten. This was another son, and one who remembered David's friendship with his father. The Lord gives us friends, too, who will come to us in the time of need. We learn that true friendship never wears thin; and a real friend is there when everyone else walks out. Jesus is our True Friend.

Chapter Eighteen

ABSALOM'S DEFEAT

"And David numbered the people that were with him, and set captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them" - II Samuel 18:1. He found that he was not alone; there were many who had rallied to his side. When he declared that he would go forth also with the army, they refused to let him go; and their reply must have cheered his heart. He would need these words of comfort

in just a short while. "But the people answered, Thou shalt not go forth: for if we flee away, they will not care for us; neither if half of us die, will they care for us: but now thou art worth ten thousand of us: therefore now it is better that thou succour us out of the city" - 18:3.

The army was divided into three divisions, led by Joab, Abishai, and Ittai. David instructed them concerning his son, "Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom. And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains charge concerning Absalom" - 18:5. His heart still ached for his son, even though he knew of the treachery of Absalom. A parent's love cannot be quenched by the actions of his children. How many parents have lain awake at night, praying and longing for one word from their wayward child? Though a child may speak hateful words, they cannot kill the love in the parents' hearts. We cannot criticize David, because he was manifesting the same love that God puts in every human heart toward his offspring. This is how God feels about His children, even though they are wayward and turn away from Him. He still loves them and longs for their return. Did He not illustrate this in the parable of the prodigal son? The father saw his son a way off, and ran to meet him. Perhaps, if parents were to show more of this kind of love and concern today, there would not be so many runaway children.

Joab was ever the practical military leader. Personal feelings never swayed him from his duty as a captain. He knew that, as long as Absalom lived, David would never be secure. He did not have the personal feeling that David had, and so his act can be understood. It seemed that the Lord had trapped Absalom so that he would be easy prey. Joab could have captured him and taken him back to David; but he remembered how easily Absalom escaped once before, and he was not taking any chances.

"And Absalom met the servants of David. And Absalom rode upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth; and the mule that was under him went away" - 18:9.

According to Deuteronomy 21:22, he had forfeited his life. No man touched him to hang him on a tree, but Divine justice caught him and hanged him. One of the things that brought him attention, his long hair, also became the means of his destruction. It seemed that God had cursed him for his rebellion and murder. The Scripture says, "For he that is hanged is accursed of God" - Deut 21:23; Galatians 3:13. Joab took three darts, and pierced his heart while he was yet alive. He feared Absalom more than the wrath and displeasure of David. His loyalty was to Israel, and to the throne of David. Victory was wrought that day, and once again the throne was established in the hands of David. In Absalom, we have a picture of the deceivableness of the flesh. He was awed by his own beauty and personal power. He found that he could sway the hearts of people. He found it easy to yield to his carnal nature. He did not take thought of the consequences. He was not like his father. He was not spiritual. He probably had no dealings with the Lord. The flesh will bring ruin and destruction every time. We are taught the subtleties of the flesh, in Paul's Gospel. He said, "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption" - Galatians 6:8. He also gave the other side, "But he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." The Christian can make the mistake of yielding to the flesh. He will find that victory is snatched from him, and his life will end in defeat.

NEVER GIVE UP

M.F. Tupper

Never give up! It is wiser and better
Always to hope, than once to despair;
Fling off the load of doubt's cankering fetter,
And break the dark spell of tyrannical care.
Never give up! or the burdens may sink you;
Providence kindly has mingled the cup,
And in all trials or troubles, bethink you,
The watchword of life must be - Never give up.
Never give up! There are chances and changes
Helping the hopeful a hundred to one;
And through the chaos High Wisdom arranges
Ever, success - if you'll only hope on.
Never give up! for the wisest is boldest,
Knowing that Providence mingles the cup,

And of all maxims the best, as the oldest,
Is the true watchword - Never give up!
Never give up! though the grape-shot may rattle,
Or the full thunder-cloud over you burst;
Stand like a rock, and the storm and the battle
Little shall harm you, though doing their worst.
Never give up! If adversity presses,
Providence wisely has mingled the cup,
And the best counsel in all your distresses
Is the stout watchword - Never give up!

Chapter Nineteen

DAVID RESTORED TO THE THRONE

"So the king returned, and came to Jordan. And Judah came to Gilgal, to go to meet the king, to conduct the king over Jordan" - II Samuel 19:15. The conquest of Absalom and his rebellion was not as difficult a task as informing David of his death. Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok the priest, wanted to bear the tidings to David; but Joab would not permit it. Perhaps he thought that Ahimaaz would always be associated with the news that brought such sorrow to David. Ahimaaz had already been of great service to David. Joab chose an Ethiopian slave, Cush, to bear the tidings.

Ahimaaz, full of youthful zeal, continued to seek permission to run to the king anyway. He was granted his wish; but, when he arrived where the king was, he could not tell him how Absalom had fared. This little incident has always been pictured as one who has much zeal for the Lord, but little knowledge. Some people want to carry the Message, without knowing what is in that Message. We need to know the Word of God before we can tell others.

David received the news of Absalom's death as Joab knew he would. "And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" - 18:33. This is one of those sorrowful scenes when words are inadequate to express how David felt. He uttered words that he as king should never have said. Sorrow clouds the mind to clear thinking. If David had been slain instead of Absalom, Israel would have gone down into defeat; and God's promise to David (chapter seven) would have been broken.

David's heart was, no doubt, sorrowful; not only for his son's death, but for the fact that he had not raised him properly. Absalom was such a beautiful child that David had never said, "No," to him. He had been allowed to have his way; and what terrible results came from this permissiveness. What a lesson to us in child-rearing. Children need discipline. They want discipline; and they depend upon a firm hand to give them the stability to mature, and take their place in life.

David forgot that he was king, in his hour of grief. He gave in to his feelings, and forgot that other people were involved. He forgot the men who had hazarded their lives for his sake. He forgot that they spared him the ordeal of fighting his own son. "And the victory that day was turned into mourning unto all the people: for the people heard say that day how the king was grieved for his son. And the people gat them by stealth that day into the city, as people being ashamed steal away when they flee in battle" - 19:2, 3. This should have been a joyous occasion, but the king's son was dead.

This was the time for some straight talk, and there was no one better equipped for this than Joab. "In that thou lovest thine enemies, and hatest thy friends. For thou hast declared this day, that thou regardest neither princes nor servants; for this day I perceive, that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well" - 19:6. This shook David out of his mood and he went and sat in the gate.

The king returned to Jerusalem in glory and honor. Even Shimei, who had cursed David as he fled Jerusalem, now asks forgiveness. David manifested his spirit of graciousness, even as he did when the cursing was done. He had the victory over Shimei long before, so his apology did not mean much to him now. He was above bitterness and petty revenge. He was king of Israel. Mephibosheth met him, and told his side of the story with Ziba; but again we see that David had more important things on his mind than personal rivalry between these two men. No doubt, they both were at fault. David invited Barzillai, his dear friend, to come to Jerusalem and live with him.

He refused, saying that he wanted to return to his home and live a quiet life until his death. He did allow his son, Chimham, to accompany David to Jerusalem. We have a spiritual truth in this episode. In himself, Chimham had no claims upon David; but he stood in the merits of another, his father. His title to the king's favor consisted entirely in his being the son of Barzillai. We have no claims on the blessings of heaven, but we are blessed in Christ. We are "accepted in the Beloved." We are as blessed as Christ is. We have a place in heaven and around the throne because of Christ.

THE NEGLECTED GUEST

John Wright Follette

I do not know the reason - false or true -
That ruled the heart of him who kept the inn.
It was enough howe'er to shut the door,
And answer that there was no room within.
How little did the keeper realize
What privilege and honor waited there,
Brought by the strangers to his very door,
If he but open it and room prepare.
It was not that he sought to do them harm;
In turning them aside he had no plot.
His time of visitation waited him
But, dead to Heaven's touch, he knew it not.
What reason rules the keeper of your heart?
Are all the doors unbarred and opened wide?
Is room prepared for Him who waits without?
Or do you answer still, "No room inside"?
It is not that you wish to do Him harm;
It may be that you hold Him in respect.
But even so, if He remain outside,
You suffer fatal loss in such neglect.
Then open wide the door and make Him room.
He comes to give you peace where woe has been.
Let open hearts be made His natal place,
That He might reign as King within the inn.

Chapter Twenty

RIVALRY BETWEEN JUDAH AND ISRAEL

"And there happened to be there a man of Belial, whose name was Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite: and he blew a trumpet, and said, We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to his tents, O Israel" - II Samuel 20:1. When there is strife and contention, you will always find someone who is willing to make the most of it. There were those of the tribe of Benjamin who had remained loyal to Saul. Sheba's words reflect the attitude of Israel at the time of Jesus' first advent. He is also typical of the false leaders of Israel in the end of this age, who will lead the people into an alliance with the nations. Their attitude will be, "We have no part in Christ." Psalm two, also, illustrates the rebellion in the hearts of Israel and all men.

David had removed Joab from his post as captain over the army, and appointed Amasa. In his desire to rid himself of Joab, David made a bad choice in Amasa who had proved incompetent under Absalom. Amasa's loyalty should have been suspect. Joab had killed Absalom, and it was difficult for David to forgive him. Joab had also talked sternly to the king. These may have been sufficient reasons for his dismissal; but David's choice of a successor is puzzling. This reminds us of people today, who rebel against the Word of God. David was smarting from Joab's words; and so, to find solace for his hurt feelings, he turns to a most unlikely person. We also do this at times, when we do not want to yield to the correction of the Word of God. We try to find someone who is sympathetic to our feelings. It does not matter whether the person is spiritual. We make excuses for them; and, when once we thought them to be carnal, we now invite them into our confidence. It is not always pleasant to have a Joab around, but we can

always be sure of his loyalty to the Truth.

When Amasa delayed, David sent Abishai out after Sheba and his men. He did not ask Joab directly to take up the pursuit; but, down in his heart, he probably knew that Joab would not stay out of the conflict. Joab took care of Amasa, as he had done with so many who were not one hundred per cent for David and the kingdom. He rallied the soldiers under one banner and set out after Sheba.

When Joab and his men came to Abel of Bethmaachah to batter down the walls and destroy the city, a wise head saved the people from destruction. First, it was the wise head of the woman, who made Joab cease his attack. She delivered the head of Sheba to Joab. "And he blew a trumpet, and they retired from the city, every man to his tent. And Joab returned to Jerusalem unto the king" - 20:22. It is always good when we listen to someone who has wisdom. Joab shows himself to be a great man, because he was willing to listen to someone else. Thus, one head saves many other heads.

Joab returned to Jerusalem unto the king. Faithful Joab. He had been relieved of his duties by the king; yet, in his heart, he knew that as long as he lived he would never forsake Israel nor the king. He had the strength that David needed. How we need leaders of his type today.

Chapter Twenty-One

DIVINE RETRIBUTION

"Then there was a famine in the days of David three years, year after year, and David enquired of the Lord. And the Lord answered, It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites" - II Samuel 21:1. There is no mention of this famine in any other portion of Scripture. No word of it is found in I Chronicles which parallels this section of the Bible. David felt that this famine must be judgment from God, and so he sought the Lord for the reason. David is outstanding in this regard, and it is the reason that he was "a man after Mine (God's) own heart." He took things from God's hands, and sought the Lord for the solution to his problems and for those of Israel. He was a magnificent ruler, type of the Lord Jesus Christ.

God gave the reason for the famine. It was Saul's bloody treatment of the Gibeonites. The only Scripture that we have for this slaughter is found in I Samuel 22:19. It was a senseless killing of innocent people. Saul's satanic hatred of David led to the killing of eighty-five priests and the entire city of Nob. God does not forget the inhuman treatment of one nation toward another. He will bring judgment upon this world, because of the nations' treatment of His people Israel. National judgment seems to follow crime. No nation, who has ignored the Lord and His sovereignty, has escaped judgment. History will testify to this.

The Gibeonites were not Children of Israel, but were inhabitants of Canaan when Joshua led the Children of Israel into that land. We read in Joshua 9:3, that the Gibeonites had heard of the judgment of God upon the cities of Jericho and Ai; and so they deceived the princes of Israel. A covenant was made with them, because Israel thought that they were friends of the nation, who had come a long distance to be with them. After the covenant was made, it was discovered that the Gibeonites were neighbors - close to Gilgal. Joshua made them servants, "hewers of wood and drawers of water"; and they were to remain servants of Israel forever. They were not to be harmed, but allowed to live among the Israelites.

This is a wonderful picture of the body of a believer. We are to count with God that our body is dead unto sin, but alive unto God. We yield our members as instruments of righteousness - temples of the Holy Ghost. The body is to serve the new man, or new creation life. Saul, who was not at all spiritual, did not recognize this truth in his own life; and he did not honor the covenant of the fathers of Israel. We would say that, in this incident, the flesh decided to do the work that God had already accomplished on Calvary. The flesh will always try to perfect itself - put its desires to death. God does not care for the works of the flesh in any degree, nor in any shape or form. We are to count with Him that He has done it already. The flesh is not to serve itself.

Anyway, God allowed this judgment to be fulfilled. We know that He does not ask for human sacrifice; but we also know that the flesh has no part in the things of God. The fruit of the flesh is not allowed to remain either. As long as Saul's family remained, David would have trouble. As long as the flesh remains alive and active, we will have trouble.

The Lord permitted the Gibeonites to name their own justice. Seven descendants of Saul were to be delivered into their hands. "And he delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them in the hill before the Lord: and they fell all seven together, and were put to death in the days of harvest, in the first days, in the beginning of barley harvest" - 21:9. There is to be a

harvest in the time of the end. Wickedness and rebellion will be judged, so that righteousness can reign. Jesus often spoke of the end of the harvest; and this incident is, no doubt, a little picture of that time.

We might explain about verse eight which states, "... and the five sons of Michal the daughter of Saul, whom she brought up for Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite." Michal, who was David's first wife, never had any children of her own. This should read that the five sons belonged to Merab, Saul's other daughter - I Samuel 18:19. She was promised to David, but instead was given to Adriel. Evidently, Michal raised the children for Adriel.

We read of the love of a mother for her children, in II Samuel 21:10. Rizpah was one of the innocent parties who was injured. She had nothing to do with Saul's hateful actions. The flesh always injures others when it has liberty to reign. Corruption always accompanies the flesh and its deeds. Rizpah watched over the bodies of her two sons for the duration of the famine. She let neither the birds nor the beasts disturb their bodies. She cannot reconcile the death of her children with the judgment of God. It is only the very spiritual who can say, "Let the will of the Lord be done." Even David could not readily admit that the death of Absalom was right.

This love and devotion of Rizpah touched the heart of the king. David not only gave these seven proper burial; but also brought up the bones of Saul and Jonathan out of the land of the Philistines and buried them in the sepulchre of Kish. The flesh must be judged and put to death; but, it also must be buried from sight, so that the new man might reign. Jesus judged sin at the Cross and put it to death, as taking the place of the first Adam. He was buried, having accomplished redemption. When God raised Him from the tomb, He came forth the Head of the new creation.

"Moreover the Philistines had yet war again with Israel; and David went down, and his servants with him, and fought against the Philistines: and David waxed faint" - 21:15. The remaining verses of this chapter tell us of the battle Christians have with satanic forces. This is the battle that follows the war with the flesh. We read of the warfare and our armor, in Ephesians six. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood," Paul tells us, "but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places (heavenly places). This is the fierce battle; it is not to be compared with the struggle with the flesh.

David was growing old, and not physically able to fight such a battle. He grew faint; and, he would have been killed, if Abishai had not come on the scene suddenly and protected David with his shield and killed the giant. This is the protection we receive from our spiritual armor including "the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." We would be vulnerable to Satan's attacks, if we went out without this protection. Even Jesus armed Himself with the Word of God against Satan. We surely are no match against the forces of Satan in our own strength. We, too, will grow faint. The men of David then declared that he should not go forth to battle anymore. He was needed in Jerusalem. He was their leader; and, without him, the light would go from Israel. We have another wonderful typical picture here. Christ our Leader has gone to Heaven as the Intercessor during this Church Age. He is needed there, but He has left us some battles to fight ourselves. He will always succor us when it is necessary; but, we must learn to put on the armor and fight against the forces of evil, even though our Leader is absent.

There were more battles with these giants, but they are no match for men of faith. We can stand against the foes of the Lord, and we can conquer them. We are told to - "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" - James 4:7. Just because one battle is won, that does not mean that the war is over. Goliath had been slain by David, but his brother was still alive. He, too, though was slain by Elhanan - 21:19. The greatest battle is recorded last. The largest man was yet to be subdued. "And when he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimeah the brother of David slew him" - 21:21. He refers to Satan who will be cast out of heaven, and all his hosts with him. He will later be chained in the bottomless pit for one thousand years.

"These four were born to the giant in Gath, and fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants" - 21:22. In Ephesians 6:12, our enemies are divided into four groups - principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness, and spiritual wickedness (or wicked spirits). Notice that these all fell before David and his servants. Christ has conquered Satan and the forces of evil through His death and resurrection. He shows that victory today through His servants. They fight against these same forces, and conquer through the victory of Christ.

In the days to come, the powers of darkness will become more pronounced, but the power of

God will be sufficient. When we reach Heaven, the forces of evil must depart. Woe to the world when this happens. Judgment will be poured out upon the inhabitants of the earth, but rejoicing will be heard in Heaven. The rejoicing always comes after the battle. If we are arrayed in the strength of our Captain, the Lord Jesus Christ, we will always be triumphant. Our song of rejoicing will follow, even as David's song follows in the next chapter.

". . . mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Luke 2:30

Chapter Twenty-Two DAVID SANG TO THE LORD

"And David spake unto the Lord the words of this song in the day that the Lord had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul" - II Samuel 22:1. "And he said, I ever love Thee, O Lord, my Strength" - Psalm 18:1 Hebrew. This song of David was written toward the end of his life, and then he edited it and gave it to the chief musicians to be placed with his other songs. It is found in Psalm eighteen. It is a song of deliverance. Many of these expressions are David's own experiences during his life as king of Israel. We believe though that this song is almost entirely prophetic of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have seen through our studies that David is a wonderful type of the Lord, and so what else could be expected from this song of praise to the Lord?

The first verse from Psalm eighteen is not quoted in Second Samuel. No doubt, after David reread his words, he could not express himself any better than by saying, "I ever love Thee, O Lord." Out of his innermost being came this song. He felt the power and reality of these words. They were his own experiences; and, in his joy and rejoicing, the Holy Spirit took control of his pen and caused him to write wonderful truths about his Lord and ours. He wrote, in introducing Psalm forty-five, "My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer." As he sang, he wrote. His praises were to the Lord alone. He needed no other audience. His diction and tone quality were perfect. He sang unto the Lord.

There are many points we could discuss in this chapter, but we shall endeavor to bring out some of the high points of interest. In verses two and three, David tells us nine things the Lord was to him: "The Lord is my Rock, and my Fortress, and my Deliverer; the God of my Rock; in Him will I trust: He is my Shield, and the Horn of my salvation, my High Tower, and my Refuge, my Saviour; Thou savest me from violence." These were not merely words to David; the Lord had manifested Himself to David in these different ways. He experienced the joy of having the Lord rescue him from his enemies. We have studied the various ways in which God rescued him and exalted him above all his enemies. God spared no power in delivering David from death and destruction. The Lord had put His hand upon His anointed, and no powers of evil could touch him beyond God's permission.

As we read through this song, we cannot but see the reference to Christ. Verses five to nineteen speak of Christ's death and resurrection. "When the waves of death compassed me ... The sorrows of hell compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me; in my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried to my God: and He did hear my voice out of His temple, and my cry did enter into His ears." We can hear Him cry out from the Cross, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Death and hell were covering Him, as He hung there upon the cursed Cross. Our sins were pulling Him down into torment. Though His body met death, yet His spirit went down into upper sheol - Paradise - where He talked with the departed spirits of believers - I Peter 3:18, 19.

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of the terrible storm that came and of the darkness from the sixth to the ninth hours. The people must have fled in terror at the display of the anger of a righteous God. Jesus was paying the penalty for us during that time. He became the sin offering, and darkness had to hide Him from the brightness of Heaven. He was even rejected for that time by God, who must exact the price of redemption.

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Verses twenty through twenty-two speak of Christ as the Head of the new creation. This is His place as Man. "He brought me forth also into a large place: He delivered me, because He delighted in me." Jesus was faithful in His life toward God and toward men. He never failed in one thing. He always did what His Father wanted of Him. His Father testified of this by saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." He was the perfect sinless Lamb of God. The Lord has rewarded Him by making Him the Head of the new creation, the Head of the Church. "And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and the men of David then declared that he should not go forth to battle anymore. He was needed in Jerusalem. He was their leader; and, without him, the light would go from Israel. We have another wonderful typical picture here. Christ our Leader has gone to Heaven as the Intercessor during this Church Age. He is needed there, but He has left us some battles to fight ourselves. He will always succor us when it is necessary; but, we must learn to put on the armor and fight against the forces of evil, even though our Leader is absent.

There were more battles with these giants, but they are no match for men of faith. We can stand against the foes of the Lord, and we can conquer them. We are told to - "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" - James 4:7. Just because one battle is won, that does not mean that the war is over. Goliath had been slain by David, but his brother was still alive. He, too, though was slain by Elhanan - 21:19. The greatest battle is recorded last. The largest man was yet to be subdued. "And when he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of Shimeah the brother of David slew him" - 21:21. He refers to Satan who will be cast out of heaven, and all his hosts with him. He will later be chained in the bottomless pit for one thousand years.

"These four were born to the giant in Gath, and fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants" - 21:22. In Ephesians 6:12, our enemies are divided into four groups - principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness, and spiritual wickedness (or wicked spirits). Notice that these all fell before David and his servants. Christ has conquered Satan and the forces of evil through His death and resurrection. He shows that victory today through His servants. They fight against these same forces, and conquer through the victory of Christ.

In the days to come, the powers of darkness will become more pronounced, but the power of God will be sufficient. When we reach Heaven, the forces of evil must depart. Woe to the world when this happens. Judgment will be poured out upon the inhabitants of the earth, but rejoicing will be heard in Heaven. The rejoicing always comes after the battle. If we are arrayed in the strength of our Captain, the Lord Jesus Christ, we will always be triumphant. Our song of rejoicing will follow, even as David's song follows in the next chapter.

". . . mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Luke 2:30

Chapter Twenty-Two

DAVID SANG TO THE LORD

"And David spake unto the Lord the words of this song in the day that the Lord had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul" - II Samuel 22:1. "And he said, I ever love Thee, O Lord, my Strength" - Psalm 18:1 Hebrew. This song of David was written toward the end of his life, and then he edited it and gave it to the chief musicians to be placed with his other songs. It is found in Psalm eighteen. It is a song of deliverance. Many of these expressions are David's own experiences during his life as king of Israel. We believe though that this song is almost entirely prophetic of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have seen through our studies that David is a wonderful type of the Lord, and so what else could be expected from this song of praise to the Lord?

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DAVID'S MIGHTY MEN - MEN WITH A RECORD

The remainder of this chapter lists the names of the men who cast their lots with David while he was in exile. They are men with a record, but what a record! They claim a place in God's hall of fame. They are not forgotten. Here we see another aspect of David's sterling character. He did not forget those who stood with him. He did not always agree with them nor their actions, but he remembered their faithfulness. This is the character of Christ. He remembers the loyal ones - the faithful ones who take sides with Him.

We must go back to First Samuel twenty-two, to find the first mention of these men. "David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him. And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men" - I Samuel 22:1, 2. David was in exile, and had to escape from Saul. He had been anointed king of Israel; but the usurper, Saul, was still reigning in Israel. There were a few people who recognized the fact that David was king though he was in exile. They decided that their destinies were with him. They were going to follow him, no matter where it took them. They disregarded the dangers and the privation that accompanied them; they were with their king.

This is a perfect picture of Christ and His followers today. Jesus has already been anointed King, but He has not yet taken His throne. There are usurpers reigning over the nations today. The kingdoms of the world really belong to the Lord Jesus Christ; but the time has not come for Him to assume the authority that God intends for Him to have. He has been content, even as David was, to wait for the proper time. The usurpers and all of His enemies must be dealt with, even as Saul was.

Jesus has some followers, even today who recognize the fact that He will reign. They have purposed to follow Him, no matter where it leads them. They have chosen to suffer reproach with Him, because they know who He is. They do not blindly follow the leaders of this world. Their eyes have been enlightened, and they want nothing else but to be close to their Captain. Jesus seems to attract the same kind of people that David did. We come to Him out of our discontent, our debt, and our distress. We are His "D.D's." We find no satisfaction in the "courts of Saul." We may live in a cave; but, if that is where Jesus is, it is like Heaven to us.

These men who followed David, not only gave up the comforts of a home, but they put their lives in peril. They endangered themselves to fight with David. They are divided into groups, and mentioned in that way. David honored them all, but he singled out some of them for a greater honor. This is not ungodlike either. He does the same with those who follow Him wholeheartedly.

We will not lose anything by forsaking all to follow Jesus. We will not be left bereft of all things at the end of our lives here. Jesus even spoke of this to His apostles; and He said that anyone, who would forsake those things that were dear to him, would receive an hundredfold in return. This is exactly what happens. Many are following Jesus today, and many have from the time of His revelation; but some will be singled out for special honor. "Kings' daughters were among thy honorable women: upon their right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir" - Psalm 45:9. Everyone who follows the Lord will be honored in some measure. But some will receive the highest honor - to reign with Him as Queen.

The first three men of our study chapter stand out above the rest. They are Adino, the Tachmonite; Eleazar, the son of Dodo; and Shammah, the son of Agee the Hararite. There is little said of these men except what is found here, and also that which is detailed in First Samuel twenty-two. We not only read what they did, but also that most important step of which we have been speaking - 23:13. Not only did these men hazard their lives on the battlefield, but they also showed their love and devotion to David by trying to bring comfort to him. He wanted so much to be able to go back home and drink of the water from the familiar well. These men slipped through the ranks of the enemy to bring water to David. He had not asked them to do this, nor would he have even suggested it. He had voiced a desire, and these men wanted to help fill it.

Jesus has desires, too; and we can gladden His heart by putting aside our own desires in favor of His. He, too, will remember our labor of love and our sacrifices of love. He will not forget; and, when it comes time to acknowledge all the honorable men, our names will be there. We will be glad then that we listened to our hearts instead of our heads.

We can often glean some spiritual truths from the meanings of the names of Bible characters. The first is Adino, whose name means "his ornament." He was the Tachmonite, or one who "sat in the seat, chief among the captains." Tachmonite means, "thou wilt make me wise." Already, we can see much truth in this one man's name. His ornament was his loyalty and love for his captain. We can adorn the Lord and the Gospel, by our lives of service and sacrifice. As a result, he was one who sat in a chief seat. He was an adviser. This speaks of that company of people, known as the twenty-four elders, who sit upon thrones in glory. They have earned this right, by choosing to follow the Lord with their whole hearts. They will be rewarded. They are made wise. When we yield ourselves to the Lord, He will give us the spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that we will know His will and desires for us.

The second man named is Eleazar, and his name means, "God is Helper." The son of Dodo, he is called; and we have a term applied to people who are not so bright as a "dodo." That is not bad at all, because the meaning is "His Beloved." To know these two things - that God is our Helper, and we are His beloved - takes us out of the realm of the natural. We are lifted above our circumstances and rejoice in Him. All of our joys are found in Him. This truth reminds us of the other company found in Revelation four, the living creatures, who fall down and worship Him whom they adore. They have entered into the truth in the Song of Solomon, and know of the love that Christ will have for His Bride.

The third man named is Shammah, the son of Agee, the Hararite. The meanings of these names illustrate the result of the work of grace in our lives. Shammah means "desolation." Hararite means "the curser." This is our background. Perhaps this man was a wicked man before he found the Lord; this we do not know. We do know, however, that all of mankind's background is desolation. We have nothing in which to boast. We cannot bring any good works to God in order to find His favor. Grace is never extended to the self-righteous man. Grace is extended to those who need the favor of God. We will never receive anything from God, until we acknowledge that we are in need. The meaning of Agee is also significant, as it means, "I shall increase." We have nothing to begin with; we have nothing to offer God. But, when we come to Him and accept His grace, we will increase. We cannot help but increase. The moment we accept Christ as our Savior, we increase. Every step we take in the will of God, we increase. We continue to increase, adding to what we have already received. We increase from faith to faith, from strength to strength, from grace to more grace. Our lives can be that of increase.

These three men represent full overcomers of the Church Age. They are the ones who receive a hundredfold. They are the ones who have the highest place with Christ in His Kingdom. They share a closer place with Him than others. Do not scoff at this until you have studied the Scriptures and listened to the Voice of the Spirit. It is not foreign language to the Scriptures, when we make such statements. Some people will enjoy greater blessings and honor in Heaven than

others. They deserve such a place, and God is not unrighteous to forget their lives of complete surrender.

The next three men named are overcomers, but yet we have the statement, "He was more honourable than the thirty, but he attained not to the first three" - 23:23, 19. Only two are named here - Abishai the brother of Joab, and Benaiah. We are sure that the other one should be Joab. These men are honored and their works are mentioned, but they were not of the same rank as the first three. Joab was not always in the favor of David. He was mightily used by God, and was a loyal subject to the kingdom. Many things that he did may not have always been for David's sake, but for his own honor. He was looking out for himself. The first three looked out for David only and always. There is a difference. Why do we sacrifice ourselves for the Lord? Is it the reward we will receive, or is it because we love Him supremely? We will receive a reward. But what is preeminent - the reward, or the Rewarder? The twenty-four elders will cast their crowns at Jesus' feet, and say, "Thou art worthy, O Lord." They will not feel comfortable with the crowns upon their heads. It will be enough to know that they have received a crown, but the crown belongs to the One who brought them through.

The names listed in the remainder of the chapter would probably afford some spiritual good, if one would take time to look up each name. They were honored, and David gave them a place befitting their station. We have the same scene pictured in Heaven - the twenty-four elders and four living ones being the first three. The second three could denote the one hundred and forty-four thousand or the Man Child. The rest of the thirty could represent the innumerable company. There might be another interpretation too. All these mighty men could represent the full overcomers, but three degrees of usefulness and honor - thirtyfold, sixtyfold, and one hundredfold. We will leave that with God. He is the Judge and the Rewarder

GOD'S WORD

Fanny J. Crosby

No book is like the Bible
For childhood, youth, and age;
Our duty plain and simple
We find on every page.
It came by inspiration,
A light to guide our way,
A voice from Him who gave it,
Reproving when we stray.

Chapter Twenty-Four

DAVID, THE INTERCESSOR

"And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he (Satan) moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah" - II Samuel 24:1.

"And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel" - I Chronicles 21:1.

The last chapter of Second Samuel seems to be out of place, as it follows the tribute of the mighty men of valor of chapter twenty-three. No one likes to see failure, but God has let this one be recorded. His wisdom far exceeds ours, and we know that these things are for our learning and for our good. It would seem by this verse in Second Samuel, that God had moved David to number the Children of Israel; but the next verse quoted shows us that it was Satan who provoked David. We are sure that this is correct, because we read in James 1:13, 14 - "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed."

David was enticed by some reason that Satan promoted. Perhaps this wonderful king felt so secure and complacent, that he wanted the whole world to know of the strength of Israel. He forgot for a moment that the strength of Israel was not in their numbers, but in their God. David had come a long way from that day when God took him from the sheepcote and from following his father's sheep, to be ruler over Israel. He had advanced in every way; and, at the end of his life, he let himself slip into a trap which Satan laid so conveniently in his way.

God had a reason for allowing this thing to happen; and it was probably because all Israel were lifted up with pride. They thought that the nations were frightened because of their numbers. They

were flying high. This is a dangerous state, because they were forgetting God. Humility is a trait that exceeds all others. Pride always separates men from God. This is the trait that was found in Lucifer, the star of the morning.

Joab tried to reason with the king, but David refused to listen. How easily does pride blind our eyes to the Truth! The Word of God may try to speak to our hearts; but pride puts up a barrier so that understanding will not come. We are warned several times in the Scriptures, against trusting in the arm of the flesh or in the strength of man. David knew this. But we are allowed to see that David, though the anointed of God, was also in a body of humiliation. He still had to contend with the flesh, to the end of his days. We cannot boast in any measure, neither by our spirituality nor by our length of service. The Apostle Paul wisely states, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" - I Corinthians 10:12.

Israel and Judah were numbered against the will of God, and judgment came upon the nation. Understanding came to David, and he realized that he had faded. The Lord had correctly said of David, "I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after Mine own heart, which shall fulfill all My will" - Acts 13:22. David's heart smote him, and he cried unto the Lord. He did not blame Satan; but he put the blame on himself and on his own foolishness. He was a true leader, and he shouldered the responsibility.

The prophet Gad came to David with God's answer. He was to have a choice of three judgments. David showed his wisdom and knowledge of the Lord by his reply. "And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the Lord; for His mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of man" - 24:14. One would think that David had exhausted God's mercy and grace by this time; but this is impossible. He put himself and all Israel into God's hands. There is no better place for correction, as well as for blessing. He is righteous and His ways are perfect; so there is no other place to be.

Judgment came in the form of pestilence, and seventy thousand men perished with the first assault. When the death angel approached Jerusalem, the Lord stayed the hand of the angel. Here David became an intercessor, and he pleaded with the Lord to vent His anger upon him. All the real men of God took the place of mediator. Moses pleaded with God when He was ready to destroy the Children of Israel for their idolatry - Exodus 32. Paul said that he could wish himself "accursed" for the sake of his kindred.

There was only one way that the judgment of God could be averted, and that was through a sacrifice. We have a wonderful picture of Calvary in this record. David becomes a type of Christ, in that he purchased the threshingfloor and also presented the offering. Notice the words, "And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver" - 24:24.

The lesson here is that Calvary cost a great deal. The penalty for sin was exacted by the law; and it was death. Jesus had to assume that debt, and He paid in full. He bought the Cross upon which He died. His sacrifice at Calvary meant that judgment for sin fell upon Him, that others might go free. This lesson was portrayed in Egypt, the night of the passover. Death was coming upon the inhabitants; but the death of the lamb protected the inhabitants who put its blood upon their doorposts. Christ died for us, and His shed blood is our protection from the judgment of God.

"And David built there an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the Lord was entreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel" - 24:25. This site was on Mount Moriah where, many years previously, Abraham had raised his hand to plunge the knife into the throat of his son Isaac. It was a mount of sacrifice. This was the place where, later, the temple was built. David bought the ground, and prepared the stones for this temple; but he did not have the joy of building the temple.

This, too, is a type. David represents Christ of Calvary, who became the Sacrifice for sin. He gathered the "living stones," as it were, by His meritorious death on the Cross. Solomon represents Christ of resurrection, and the King of kings. As the Head of the new creation, Christ is placing the living stones into the holy habitation of God. Christ is not only the Gatherer of the stones, but also the Builder.

Mount Moriah is much in the news today. At the present time, an Arab temple is there, the Mosque of Omar. It is a polluted site today, and Israel has no temple of worship or sacrifice. They must wait until Jesus the King, who will sit upon the throne of David, returns and enables Israel to

build their temple. Judgment must come first, pestilence must fall again upon the land; but Israel has an Intercessor in the Person of Jesus Christ. He will fight for them; and they will accept Him as their Savior, and as the Substitute for their transgressions.

We end the book of Second Samuel on a happy note after all. David's death is recorded in First Kings. He lived to an old age, and he lived long enough to know that Solomon was crowned king of Israel. God's Word was fulfilled in and through him as long as he lived. He was a wonderful king, and a prolific type of Christ. If he had not faded, we might have worshiped him. He shows us that frail humanity can become great in God's sight. His life proves to us that we, too, can fulfill the will of God.

The End

WE SEE A LITTLE

We only see a little of the ocean,
A few miles distance from the rocky shore;
But, oh, out there beyond the eye's horizon
There's more - there's more!
We only see a little of God's love
A few rich treasures from His mighty store;
But, oh, out there beyond - beyond the life's horizon,
There's more - there's more.

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