

1 Samuel - Commentaries by Christopher Knapp

Staff and Scepter: Six Addresses on Some of the Principle Scenes in the Life of David, Chapter 1: David and Goliath

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(1 Sam. 17:1-29)

As I go about, I meet with many professing Christians who scarcely ever look into the Old Testament. They call it "the Old Bible" and seem to look upon it as they look upon a thing of the past. This is a great mistake. There is but one Bible, made up of two Testaments, the Old and the New. And we must not set up one against the other. The Old Testament is inspired as fully as the New. It is "Scripture" equally with the New Testament. And the Apostle Paul writes that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine" (2 Tim. 3:16). The Old Testament Scriptures were written for our profit, and Christians suffer loss if they neglect them.

The Old Testament is like a great picture-book. And in the New Testament we have the living realities of all those pictures. It is a book of types and shadows. The New Testament contains the antitypes and substance of these types and shadows. Thus what is enfolded in the Old Testament is unfolded in the New.

Now the life of David abounds with typical incidents, and may God, by His Spirit, open them up to our souls as we glance at them one by one. This seventeenth chapter of First Samuel contains a series of animated scenes.

First of all, we have two companies or classes of people. "And the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side: and there was a valley between them" (vs. 3). The Israelites were the people of God; the Philistines were not His people. And so it is today. Before God there are but two classes—the saved and the lost. One class has been converted; the other class still treads the downward road. One class has become "the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus;" the other class is still, as by nature, "the children of wrath" (Gal. 3:26; Eph. 2:3).

There is no middle class. Scripture makes that plain. Listen: "He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already." And again: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:18, 36). You are a believer or an unbeliever; you are free from condemnation or condemned already; you have everlasting life or the wrath of God abides upon you. Which is it? Some say, "I'm on the fence." That cannot be because there is no fence! A valley lay between the Israelites and the uncircumcised. And God has put a distance that no line can measure between His people and the world.

In this hand I hold a counterfeit dollar. In the other is a genuine one. I have no third hand, and I do not need one, for there is no coin between the two. True, some counterfeits may have more silver in them than some others, but if they lack the stamp of the government mint, they are not true coins. And you are saved or lost tonight. Don't begin to tell me of your goodness, your character, etc. New birth puts the stamp of heaven upon God's saints. And if this is lacking in your case, you are lost as much as any thief or murderer. In a certain sense, your character and goodness have some value. I do not mean a saving value. Every bit of silver is of some worth in the counterfeit. But the "one thing lacking" is not a certain amount of silver in the make-up of the coin, but the stamp of the government of the United States. And so it is with you, if unconverted. You are no real child of God at all. It is not a question of your goodness or your badness. Whether you are of the very cream of society or help make up the scum of civilization, "ye must be born again" (John 3:7)!

Quaint John Berridge had this legend chiseled on his tombstone:

We notice next that each of these companies had a leader: King Saul was leader of the Israelites; Goliath of Gath seems to have been captain of the Philistines. And as there are two companies only in this world, so each of these two companies has its leader. The Lord Jesus is the Leader of His own redeemed. He is called "the Captain of their salvation" (Heb. 2:10). And the devil is the "god and prince of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4; John 14:30). "No man can serve two masters" (Matt. 6:24). There are only two, Christ and Satan. If you are unsaved, Satan is your master. If you are converted, you give Christ that place. The human race has been divided in two companies. These companies each stand ranged beneath the leadership of either the Son of God or the devil. One party stands beneath the black flag of hell; over the other floats the golden "banner of love." And you, my friend, are standing under one of these two banners. But which one?

We remark again that there was war between the Israelites and the Philistines. There can be no honorable alliance between the Christian and the unbeliever. There is not exactly enmity between them, but there must be no fellowship or agreement. In the very beginning we have a hint of this. "God divided the light from the darkness" (Gen. 1:4). And the Apostle Paul, writing to the Ephesians, says: "Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord" (Eph. 5:8). The Lord God said to the serpent in the garden; "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed" (Gen. 3:15). The Church and the world are not to walk together. "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" asks the herdsman-prophet of Tekoa. "No," answers the Apostle of the Gentiles; "for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel [or unbeliever]?" (2 Cor. 6:14-15). The world agrees to reject the Son of God. Can the Church agree to this? The Church has agreed to own the lordship of Christ. The world refuses to do this. How then can there be fellowship or agreement? There can be none! As daylight and darkness, as heat and cold, as fire and water, so are "the children of God" and "the children of this world." This important subject will come up again before us as we go along, and so I leave it here.

Next we notice the champion, the terrified and the conqueror. Goliath is the champion, the Israelites are the terrified, and David the shepherd-boy becomes the conqueror.

First we have the champion. He was a mighty giant, more than nine feet tall. He wore "a helmet of brass upon his head" (1 Samuel 17:5), and was armored with "a coat of mail"—like a monster turtle. He was thoroughly prepared to fight, and "the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam." His legs and shoulders were thoroughly protected, and the weight of his armor and his spear's head were something enormous. In all his pride and power, he stands and cries defiantly for a man to fight with him. None dare accept his challenge. "When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, "they were dismayed, and greatly afraid" (vs. 11).

I take Goliath here to be a sort of representative of Satan wielding "the power of death." A massive sword is in his hands with which he terrifies the Israelites. Though terrified, they were Jehovah's people as a nation, and they stood in outward nearness and relationship to Him. Now, in Hebrews 2:14-15, we are told that Satan, before the cross, had "the power of death," and that God's Saints, "through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." That passage throws a flood of light upon this chapter. Unconverted men and even unestablished Christians fear to die. Now, why is this? One verse from the New Testament supplies the answer. "The sting of death is sin" (1 Cor. 15:56). Conscience accuses. Men fear to die, because they know that they are sinners and that God must punish sin. Their conscience tells them this, however indistinctly, and the Bible tells them plainly when they read it. As a result, they seldom read it. Newspapers and novels are crowding out the word of God. But Scripture says, "The wages of sin is death," and "after death the judgment."

But it is saints that we have pictured by the terrified here—children of God who do not know redemption. Unconverted men may tremble at the thought of death, but this is not the devil's work. He wants to keep them unconcerned. He hates to see them get alarmed about the "King of terrors." He blinds their minds and tells them not to be afraid. He would fain persuade them that they are "alright" or that there is no God, no judgment and no hell. And if you are unconverted and have no fear of death, it is just because you are deceived and kept asleep by Satan. May God awaken your conscience before it is too late! Before Christ died and sins were put away, God's people were afraid of death, even the best of them. See good king Hezekiah. The prophet Isaiah announced his death, and he turned his face to the wall and "wept sore" (Isa. 38). All of them feared death, more or less.

They longed to reach a good old age and wished to ward off death as long as possible. Jacob complained to Pharaoh of the shortness of his life. None of them had that confidence that we may have since Christ has come and vanquished death and Satan. In the presence of death, they were like "Saul and all Israel" before Goliath—"dismayed and greatly afraid."

Now the conqueror comes upon the scene. It is David, and he slays the giant. Throughout this section of the Word of God, he is a striking type of Christ.

We now consider, first, the retirement that David enjoyed; second, the refreshment that he brought; third, the reproach that he suffered; then the reward that he was promised.

First, we have the retirement that David enjoyed. Where was David all the time that the champion of the Philistines was frightening Israel? At his father's house in Bethlehem (vs. 15) and far from the scene of strife and battle, he was enjoying the calm and quiet of his father's house. And tell me, where was Jesus all the time before He came to earth to be the "Man of sorrows"? In His "Father's house" on high, above the sun. Let me quote a verse or two from the first chapter of John's gospel. It begins, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made" (vss. 1-3). There you have the answer—He was "with God." There He had the homage of all heaven. Archangel and angels, cherubim and seraphim—all bowed low in adoration at the feet of God, the Son! Do you know the blackest blasphemer God lets live? It is the man who denies deliberately the eternal deity of Jesus. I say and say with joy and triumph in the language of the Holy Ghost, "the Word was God." Isaiah "saw His glory," and he "spoke of Him." He says: "I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple." And the seraphim covered their faces and their feet, and cried, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts." This is their Creator, even the eternal Son of God (Isa. 6).

There is a magnificent passage in the eighth chapter of the book of Proverbs. It is wisdom personified that speaks, and Christ is "the wisdom of God." "The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: While as yet He had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When He prepared the heavens, I was there: when He set a compass upon the face of the depth: when He established the clouds above: when He strengthened the fountains of the deep: when He gave to the sea His decree, that the waters should not pass His commandment: when He appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him; rejoicing in the habitable part of the earth; and My delights were with the sons of men" (Prov. 8:22-31). Christ was in His Father's bosom just as David, the shepherd-boy, was in his father's house.

But David leaves this place. His father sends him to his brethren. And Jesus left His place of bliss on high and came to earth. He was the sent One of the Father. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son" (John 3:16). And again, "The Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world" (1 John 4:14). The world was lost and ruined, yet God loved the guilty sons of men. And He evidenced His love by giving Jesus. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us," John writes, "because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:9-10). And notice, too, that though David's father sends him to his brethren, he went willingly. "David rose up early in the morning" (1 Sam. 17:20). He did not hesitate or start with lagging footsteps. He was not driven, but went gladly. And Jesus, though sent of God, came willingly. He says Himself, "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Paul writes, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. 1:15). It was His mighty love that brought Him down. It was His love that, like a mighty magnet, drew Him to the cross. Love made Him willing.

What is that love to you? How many of you have opened your hearts to that love? How many have believed and been wooed and won by such well-proven love? "The love of Christ, which passeth knowledge" (Eph. 3:19). It passes knowing fully and it passes rightly telling, too. The

tongue fails and lips prove all too feeble to tell out such love. Perhaps some of you have never known Christ's love. Let me tell you how a man once learned that love. The late sorrowful Spurgeon was once preaching to a vast audience in Exeter Hall. When the audience had left the building, a solitary man of advanced years was found weeping in a seat in the rear of the hall. The floor at his feet was wet with his tears. Someone asked him what part of the sermon it was that had so affected him. "Ah," he sobbed, "I am partially deaf and did not hear the sermon. But when they sang that hymn, 'Jesus, lover of my soul,' it was too much. I said, 'If He so loves me, why should I live any longer at enmity with Him? It's such love that makes me weep.'"

Oh, sinner, may that love touch you! Live no longer as an enemy of Jesus. He has never been your enemy! He loved you even unto death. May your poor, cold heart be opened to that love, 'As the rose to the golden sunshine.' Christ came from heaven to win rebel hearts. No man ever loved like He does!

Notice, too, the time that David left the retirement of his father's house. Verse 16 says that the Philistine "presented himself forty days." Immediately, in the following verse, David's father sends him. Now, the number forty in the Word of God denotes the time of trial or testing—man's testing. I will give a few examples. Moses was forty years in the court of Pharaoh, forty years in Midian, and forty years the leader of God's people, Israel. He was forty days and forty nights in the "mount of God." The Israelites were tested forty years in the wilderness. And the Lord Jesus, the second Man, was tested and tried for forty days in the wilderness. And all the time before Christ's advent, man was on trial. This lasted forty centuries—four thousand years. He was first tried in Paradise, (the Garden of Eden) and failed. He believed the devil's lie, in preference to the truth of God, and was driven from the garden. Outside of Eden, he was under conscience, left to himself without God or the Scriptures. The flood, the confusion of tongues and the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah all witness man's utter failure under conscience. This lasted more than twenty centuries. Then for fifteen hundred years, God had a people under law. He took them, a nation of slaves in Egypt, and brought them unto Himself. He established them in the garden-spot of all the world. There they had a temple, priests, a ritual and, best of all, the Holy Scriptures. But they utterly failed to keep the law, and when Jesus, their Messiah, came into their midst, their hearts were full of murder and hypocrisy. The trial of the human race ended with the presence of Jesus in the world. He only came when man had failed and done his worst.

The Apostle Paul refers to this. He says: "When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman" (Gal. 4:4). The "fullness of the time" was the end of man's probation. Now he is no longer on trial—His trial is over. Hebrews 9:26 refers to this same time: "But now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." It is not the end of the world, but the end of the age or ages, of man's trial and testing. Then Jesus came.

And how did Jesus come into this world? Just as David came unto his brethren—loaded down with blessings.

Next we have therefore the refreshment David brought. His father did not send him empty-handed. "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 to thy brethren; And carry these ten cheeses" (vs. 17-18). Now, the good things David carried to the camp are like the temporal blessings Jesus brought to Israel. He raised the dead; He made the blind to see and the deaf to hear; He made the tongue of the dumb to sing and the lame man leap as an hart; He satisfied the poor with bread. He came freighted with grace and blessing, and right and left with lavish hand, He freely gave these good things to the poor and needy.

And why do you think it speaks of "ten loaves" and "ten cheeses"? I will tell you what I think. Israel had ten commandments. If they kept them they were promised earthly blessings. If they broke them they were cursed. And they always broke them, every one, and only earned a curse. But Jesus came to them in grace and brought, as it were, a double blessing, of which they were utterly unworthy, while so deserving of the curse of the insulted and broken law. How precious are these pictures! Oh, for more appreciation of the One of whom they so loudly and so sweetly speak!

But did men care for Jesus when He came? No! He was reproached and refused. This is pictured in the reproach David suffered. When he came into the camp, he met with reproach. "And Eliab, his eldest brother, heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, 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" (vs. 28). He is suspected and misunderstood. He was not wanted there. They were glad to get his loaves and cheeses. I am sure of that. They cared for them, but not for David. And when Jesus came, men took His temporal blessings. They were glad to get the "loaves and fishes." They were willing to have their sick and dead raised up. But they did not want Jesus Himself. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (John 1:11). "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not" (John 1:10). He was rejected from the very first. When He was born, "there was no room for them in the inn" (Luke 2:7). "All Jerusalem" was "troubled" at the tidings of His birth. Herod "sought the young child's life." In the very beginning of His ministry, at "Nazareth, where He had been brought up," He was refused. They "were filled with wrath" "and thrust Him out of the city," and would have cast Him headlong over the precipice. He was refused everywhere and at every turn.

How it must have grieved and wounded David to be reproached as he was. Eliab's cruel taunt must have stung his sensitive heart to the very quick. And it was His rejection and reproach that made the blessed Son of God "a Man of sorrows" here. Israel would not have Him. He knew He was not wanted.

At some time or other in our lives, we have all been in places where we knew we were not wanted. And it is one of the keenest of all sorrows. The Lord Jesus felt this sorrow everywhere. Some places people did not even care to take Him in. He said on one occasion, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head" (Matt. 8:20). Isaiah had foretold "His lonely life of sorrow here below." "He hath no form nor comeliness;" he says in behalf of the remnant who refused Him, "and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected of men, a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted" (Isa. 53:2-4). "He went about doing good," and never spoke an unkind word. "Never man spake like this Man," the officers said who had been sent to take Him.

But He said, "They hated Me without a cause." They were His "enemies wrongfully." He said again, "I am become a stranger unto My brethren." "They that sit in the gate speak against Me; and I was the song of the drunkards." "Thou hast known My reproach, and My shame, and My dishonor." And last and saddest of all, "Reproach hath broken My heart" (Psa. 69).

David's reproach is a faint foreshadow of all this. Twice Eliab speaks of David's coming "down." He did not know that David came to seek his welfare. And so with Jesus. Men did not know what brought Him down from glory. They did not know He came for their eternal welfare. They did not know He came to die. David came to slay the giant and deliver Israel. And Jesus came to vanquish Satan and deliver men from his power and from the "lake of fire."

Ah, friend, don't refuse this Savior! He came, and, blessed be His name, He bled and died for your eternal welfare. Receive Him now. Just say, "If He so loved me, a sinner, and suffered so for me, I will put my trust in Him. I will no longer shut my heart against Him. Lord Jesus, be my Savior now!"

But now we come to the reward that David was promised.

"And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen this man that is come up? Surely to defy Israel is he come up: and it shall be, that the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel. And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God? And the people answered him after this manner, saying, So shall it be done to the man that killeth him" (1 Samuel 17:25-27). The reward promised to the man who killed the Philistine was a threefold one—great riches, freedom for his father's house, and a bride. And David slew the giant, so he was entitled to this great reward. And Jesus at Calvary triumphed over sin and death and Satan, and must be rewarded for His victory.

The first thing is "great riches." Paul speaks of the "unsearchable riches of Christ." These He won by the conquest of the cross. He was always rich, as God, of course. Nothing can be added to His riches or His glory in this view of Him. But as Man, He has been here on earth and won high honors—crowns that shall rest upon His blessed brow throughout eternity.

This illustration has been given. There is a mighty prince who, by his birth, has come into possession of vast treasures and estates. These he has by natural inheritance. They are his because of who he is. But he goes forth as a warrior, and, conquering everywhere, wins additional wealth and glory such as he would never have possessed had he remained at home. What he has done secures these for him. Now he has a two-fold glory—one essential and the other acquired. And thus it is with Jesus. As the eternal Son of the Father, He has a glory all His own. It is His essential Godhead glory in which no creature can have part. But as Man in this world, He has won honors, glories and riches such as He can and does share with His own redeemed and loved ones. Such are the riches He has won. And with these "great riches," He enriches all who trust Him as their Savior. "All things are yours," the Apostle says. Again he says, "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. 8:9). "He was rich," it says, yet for our sakes "He became poor." Now, how did Jesus become poor? It may be asked. He became poor in several ways. He was poor in this world's goods. His parents were poor. At His circumcision, they took advantage of the special provision made "in the law of the Lord" for the poor. Too poor to afford a lamb, they offered in its stead "a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons" (Luke 2:24; Lev. 12:8). He was a carpenter's son, without an education (John 7:15). And on one occasion He did not possess a penny, even. He had to say, "Show Me a penny" (Luke 20:24). As He went about fulfilling His ministry, "certain women" "ministered to Him of their substance" (Luke 8:2-3). And His poverty continued to the very end. His coat, for which the soldiers gambled, was such as only the poorest wore. "It was without seam, woven from the top throughout" (John 19:23). So literally He was poor. And He became poor in another sense, too. He was the rightful heir to the throne of Israel, yet (for a time) He gave it up so that we poor Gentiles, through His poverty, might be made forever rich. The wealthiest of men are wretchedly poor without Christ. And the saint, possessing Christ (and with Him everything), is immensely rich, even though compelled to toil for daily bread.

I remember a friend telling me once of a wealthy nobleman. He possessed extensive estates which nearly all lay in a valley. His own residence was also there. In this valley, a poor, though happy and consistent, old Christian also lived. He supported himself by breaking stones on this nobleman's estates. One day, the nobleman came down with a very serious sickness. One night he was very low. The physicians shook their heads and held out little hope. That night the nobleman dreamed an angel came to him and told him that the richest man in all the valley would die that night. This terrified him. "My time is come," he thought, "for I am by far the richest man in all the vale." His conscience was aroused, and he passed a terrible night of mental agony. Every moment he expected the summons that would usher him into eternity. But the night passed and morning came. He was still alive and the fever had taken a turn for the better. All day long he lay wondering at his dream. Could it be, after all, the product of a fevered and disordered brain, and not a message from God at all? He began to think so when word was brought to him that the old Christian stone-breaker had died the previous night. "Ah, now I understand it. My dream was true. The richest man in all the vale did die last night. But it was not I, with all my worldly wealth, but that godly stone-breaker, 'rich in faith,' and 'rich toward God'" (James 2:5; Luke 12:21). Do you have these riches, friend? If you have Christ, then you possess untold treasure!

"In Christ" the believer has everything. His apprehension of it is another thing. Suppose I am a poor beggar, and, by a relative heretofore unknown to me, I am left a fortune. I receive it thankfully. It is mine the moment I receive it, though I am utterly ignorant of its value. But it is all mine, I know, so I proceed to a quiet corner and there open the papers and, step by step, learn what is mine. I count and add, and as I do so, I am amazed at the wealth my benefactor has left me. Now, the moment a sinner receives Christ by faith, He has everything! "All things are yours" is as true of him then as it was of the Apostle Paul when He wrote at the gate of heaven, "I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." And searching the Scriptures and learning the blessedness of all who believe is like the beggar counting out the riches of his inheritance. Christians who do this enjoy their heavenly riches.

So never mind how poor you are in this world's goods, dear fellow-believer. The Apostle says: "As poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things" (2 Cor. 6:10). And the Lord Jesus says to His suffering saints in Smyrna, "I know thy ... poverty, (but thou art rich)" (Rev. 2:9). He, as we sing, "shares all He possesses with His loved co-heirs." Believers are said to be "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17). May some poor sinner be made rich tonight.

Next there was freedom for the conqueror's father's house. Henceforth it was to be a house under special honors. They may represent the elect of God. All who come to Christ are given Him of the Father. They have been "predestinated unto the adoption of children." They were by nature and by practice slaves of Satan and of sin, but they have been set at liberty. Christ died that they might be free. By His glorious victory over death, He obtained freedom for every member of His "Father's house."

The unconverted are slaves of Satan. The Lord Jesus says to Paul, when He commissions him for his work, that the Gentiles were to be turned "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God" (Acts 26:18). The Colossians were delivered "from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Col. 1:13). Satan rules outside the kingdom mentioned here. All outside this kingdom are under the power of Satan. Baptism will not put you in this kingdom; the human rite of confirmation does not do it; taking the sacrament cannot effect it. To "enter into" or even "see" this kingdom, "ye must be born again" (John 3). If unconverted, you are Satan's servant. He holds you in the iron bonds of lust and sin. And he pays his subjects bitter wages. "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23).

Hear an oft-told parable. There was once a certain tyrant. Among his wretched subjects was a blacksmith. One day this poor blacksmith was ordered into the tyrant's presence. "Go to your forge," said the tyrant, "and make a chain link. Make it strong, and bring it to me. I will give you wages for your work." So the blacksmith went to his forge and made the link. He brought it to the tyrant who ordered him to make another like it and to fasten them together. He returned to his forge and did as he was bidden. He was ordered by his master to continue making links until a chain was made. Every day he hoped to get his wages. At last the chain was finished. "Now," said the cruel tyrant, "you shall have your wages." He ordered his guards to bind the miserable blacksmith with the chain his hands had fashioned, and had him cast into a dungeon. The parable is this: That tyrant is the devil. The blacksmith is yourself, if unconverted. Every sin you commit in the service of Satan is like a link to the chain that is to be fastened about your soul as you are cast into the darkness of hell forever. "Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness" (Matt. 22:13), seals the sinner's final doom. May God save any present here from a fate so awful! Christ alone can set the sinner free.

"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).

I read some time ago a newspaper account of a skeleton found in a cave in the Indian Territory. On the bleached wrist bones of the skeleton were a pair of rusty handcuffs. They told a tale: the man had died in bondage. And I thought of men dying with the devil's manacles of sin upon their souls. Oh, poor soul, there is deliverance for you! Jesus, by His death, acquired the right and power to set the captives of the devil free. "Only believe." Paul once groaned out in agony, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Then he looked to Christ, the great Deliverer, and exclaimed: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 7:24-25). "Thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31).

Last of all, the man who killed the Philistine was to have a princess for a bride. Saul's daughter was to be given in marriage to the happy man. And Christ, by His victorious death, has obtained for Himself a bride—the Church. The Apostle says, speaking of the Church under the figure of a wife: "Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it" (Eph. 5:25). Christ's bride is "the assembly of God, which He has purchased with the blood of His Own" (Acts 20:28, JND). This is the Church I believe in, and of this blood-bought Church I am a member. People sometimes say, "What Church are you a member of?" I say, "The only Church there is." "That sounds like bigotry," you say. I reply that it is not bigotry; it is the Bible. "What is the name of this Church?" perhaps you ask. I answer, "It has four names." "Four names?" you say. "Indeed, what are they?" It is called in the first epistle to Timothy, third chapter and fifteenth verse, "the house of God." It is called in the first epistle to the Corinthians, third chapter and seventeenth verse, "the temple of God." It is called, in the same epistle, twelfth chapter and twenty-seventh verse, "the body of Christ." And in the Revelation, twenty-first chapter and ninth verse, it is called "the bride, the Lamb's wife." It is richly endowed, and firmly established; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. This is the only Church of which we read in Scripture.

I am finished for this evening. Tomorrow evening we will see how David meets and slays the Philistine, if God permit.

Life and Times of Samuel the Prophet, Chapter 1: His Parentage

Article from <https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb>

(1 Sam. 1:1-8.)

The life and times of Samuel are replete with wholesome lessons for the people of God in all ages, but especially instructive for us in these days of ever-increasing declension and departure from God. Such were the days in which Samuel was born, when the judges ruled, and "there was no king in Israel; when there was scarcely a magistrate in the land that might put them to shame in anything that they did; every man did that which was right in his own eyes" — much as the times in which our lot is cast, when lawlessness prevails even in the circle of the professing church. It is no more with most, "What saith the Scriptures?" "What does God say in His Word?" but "What saith science?" "What saith the world's leaders?" or "What saith the great men of renown in the church, the 'higher critics,' the professors of theology in the seminaries?" or, lower still, "What saith my own natural intelligence, my own heart?" which God says is "deceitful" (Jer. 17:9). Every man would be a law unto himself, and the "law of the Lord" is either treated with utter neglect, or audaciously set aside as out of date, applying only to a bygone age, having no authority whatever over the conscience in these days of twentieth century enlightenment and advance along all lines, particularly in the denial of the rights of God and His Word over the conscience and conduct of man.

Such too were the days of Samuel's infancy and early life. Yet, in the midst of all the decline and spiritual darkness, how beautiful and refreshing it is to see here and there a family in which godliness prevailed and the claims of the God of Israel were recognized. Such was the family in which Samuel was born. His father, a Levite, though disengaged from active service, manifested his piety by regularly attending the yearly feasts at the tabernacle in Shiloh. Let us read the beautiful account.

"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,¹ an Ephrathite and he had two wives; the name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other was Peninnah: and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children. And this man went up out of his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice unto the Lord of hosts in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the Lord, were there " (1 Sam. 1:1-3).

This godly Israelite was a descendant of the rebellious Korah. (See 1 Chron. 6:27, 34, 37). It is that Korah who, for his " gainsaying " in the wilderness, was destroyed with all his company. " Notwithstanding," we read, " the children of Korah died not " (Num. 26:11) "A debtor to mercy alone," he had good cause to worship. Others might go up to sacrifice, merely, but Elkanah both worshiped and sacrificed. It was no formal or meaningless ceremony with him, for he knew that to Jehovah's distinguishing grace he owed not only the blessings of his life, but his very existence as a descendant of one of the spared children of Korah. It is the knowledge, and acknowledgment of grace, that produces worship and obedience in the believer's life. The law of commandments never produces a loving, willing obedience in the soul; it is the salvation-bringing grace of God that teaches us to " deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world " (Titus 2:11, 12). Elkanah's dwelling was at Ramathaim-zophim 2 of mount Ephraim, but was originally of Ephratah (as " Ephrathite " signifies), near to Bethlehem Judah.

"For mind is apt and quick to wed ideas and names together, Nor stoppeth its perception to be curious of priorities; And there is little in the sound, as some have vainly fancied."

Yet the diligent inquirer will find blessing, if not a direct answer to his inquiry, in some way that is sure to be of value to his soul. The appended " Zophim " distinguishes it from another Ramah (of Benjamin), further to the south. Ramah means the elevated spot; and Zophim, the watchers — a combination of ideas forcibly suggestive of the attitude of soul becoming the children of God everywhere and at all times. While walking on our "high places" of privilege we need to be ever on our guard against the enemy, and "watch unto prayer." (See Eph. 2: 6; 6: 18; and Hab. 2:1; 3:19.)

The times were troublous and unsettled; famine, too, at times prevailed. But if it was under the pressure of circumstances that he left the home of his ancestors, he did not, like the family of Elimelech (who were also Ephrathites, see Ruth 1:1, 2), seek relief in the idolatrous land of Moab, but ascended toward Shiloh, nearer to the tabernacle of his God. He seems to have acted on the principle enunciated in that well-known, though little heeded, saying of our Lord, " Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; " and, according to promise, " all things " were added unto him. Thus, instead of suffering loss and affliction under God's displeasure, as did Elimelech and his sons, he prospered both in his soul and in his circumstances, as is indicated by his generous offering of three bullocks at the presentation of Samuel to the service of the Lord. John, the beloved apostle wished the hospitable Gaius health and prosperity, even as his soul prospered (3 John 2). The first is of little value without the last; and under the Mosaic economy, they were generally inseparable from a godly walk. It was a dispensation of blessings in " basket and store," associated with " the good will of Him that dwelt in the bush " (the burning bush, see Acts 7:30); they were "the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and the precious things put forth by the moon, and the chief things of the ancient mountains, and the precious things of the lasting hills, and the precious things of the earth and fullness thereof " (Deut. 33:14-16). Not always was this the case, however, as the 73rd psalm shows. And in this dispensation we know that the Christian's blessings are " in the heavenly places "not here upon earth (Eph. 1:3).

Elkanah had two wives, Hannah and Peninnah. It was a divided family, and to quote the quaint observation of Matthew Henry, " the divisions of it carried with it both guilt and grief." So we read:

" When the time was that Elkanah offered, he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions: but unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion; for he loved Hannah: but 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. And as he did so year by year, when she went up to the house of the Lord, so she provoked her; therefore she wept, and did not eat. Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? Am not I better to thee than ten sons?" (verses 4-8).

The custom among the Israelites of sometimes taking a second wife was not always based on motives of the lower nature; in many cases it was the desire for children, denied to the first wife. This was the probable reason for Elkanah's double marriage. But " from the beginning it was not so " (Matt. 19:5-8). The institution of marriage originally contemplated but a single companion for man; and plural marriages appear never to have worked well in practice, as witness the humiliating discord in Abraham's family over the inferior Hagar; in Jacob's, the bitter jealousies between the two sisters, Rachel and Leah. Here, too, it breeds strife and vexation of spirit shameful to behold. What otherwise might have presented an ideal Hebrew home is marred by the bitter provokings of the elated Peninnah, and the consequent sorrow of her barren rival.

But it is ever thus; departure from God's order as revealed either in creation, or in His house, brings its sure and painful results. Therefore it behoves the children of God to walk closely by His Word, and so save themselves sorrow and disappointment.

This unwarranted provocation of Hannah by her unworthy associate must have continued for years, according to verse seven. What the poor, childless wife suffered from the tongue of her adversary during those years of " hope deferred," only one in a like position could understand; and it is beautiful to see her unresentful submission to the persecution of Peninnah, the proud, if not happy mother of children. There is no hint of anger on the part of Hannah; she did not "render railing for railing," but poured out the tale of her grief in the ears of the God of Israel. He heard her complaint, and answered, after her weary years of waiting, beyond all her probable expectation, as we shall see.

Before passing on to this, we must not neglect to notice another praiseworthy trait in the character of Hannah — she refused to eat of the sacrificial feast. " She wept and did not eat." In this abstinence she displays her knowledge of and obedience to the law of the Lord, which, it appears, did not permit of the sacrifices being eaten in mourning. (See Lev. 10:19; Deut. 26: 14; Hos. 9:4.) How lovely this subjection of soul! and what vessel more fit could be found in all Israel to give to the nation its long-needed deliverer? Like the godly Mary, of whom she was the figure, she was truly " the handmaid of the Lord," in all things obedient to His word, and submissive to His will. She conformed to the meaning of her name, to bend, both under the continued reproaches of her cruel adversary, and to Jehovah's will.

"So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the Lord. And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore. And she vowed a vow, and said, O Lord of hosts, if Thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thy handmaid, and remember me, and forget not thy handmaid, but wilt give unto thy handmaid a man child, then will I give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.

And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the Lord, that Eli marked her mouth. Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard; therefore Eli thought she had been drunken. And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee. And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord. Count not thy handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto. Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of Him. And she said, Let thy handmaid find grace in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad" (verses 9-18).

It was a tender word from Elkanah to his weeping wife, when he said, "Am not I better to thee than ten sons?" intending to console her in her sorrow; and Hannah, doubtless, appreciated fully the love and sympathy that prompted them, but would not be put off by this from still desiring earnestly from the Lord the only gift that could satisfy the longings of her aching heart — a man child. He evidently did not share her yearnings for a son; he seemed satisfied with children by Peninnah, and Hannah prayed and bore her grief alone. Hers was not a natural longing, merely; she did not cry impatiently like Rachel, "Give me children, or else I die!" (Gen. 30:1). It was not off springs simply that she desired, nor did she, like the "beautiful and well-favored" Rachel, reproach her husband for her lack of fruitfulness; she poured out her complaint to God, and asked, not for a child, merely, but "a man child."

And why a man child? Was it merely a partiality for boys? No; a higher motive moved her — God's glory and the good of His erring people she seems to have had in view. She knew well the condition of Israel; and the doings of the sons of Eli, in highest position, told the sad and undeniable tale of "Fallen! fallen!" and her earnest desire goes up to God for a son who might grow up under the blessing of Jehovah to be a deliverer in Israel.

This, too, seems to be the probable reason why she felt specially moved in prayer while at Shiloh. The sights about the tabernacle doors stirred her devoted heart mightily — the debauchery of the daughters of Belial, the shameless licentiousness and rapacity of Hophni and Phinehas, told a repulsive tale of wickedness, and that before the sanctuary! Sin was flaunted in the very face of Israel's God; "men abhorred the offering of the Lord," and by their transgressions the people were encouraged to lawlessness! Eli himself, who should above all others have understood, and been low in the dust before God for this shameful condition of things, seemed little exercised, and as a "good and easy man," sat tranquilly at the temple entrance not to watch and correct his corrupt sons, but to observe, misinterpret, and rebuke the conduct of a saintly woman at prayer! Oh, where was the nation? Where their highest priest and judge when such a condition could prevail, and none, seemingly, but "a woman of sorrowful spirit" to lay it to heart, and sigh and weep and pray for better things? "She spake in her heart," but Eli only marked her mouth; he judged after the "outward appearance," and adjudged she had been drunken!

It is not the only occasion that those moved by the Spirit have been adjudged as drunken with wine; it was repeated at Pentecost twelve hundred years later. The "spiritual man" is ever accounted "mad" by those who know nothing of the power of God moving the soul. "How long wilt thou be drunken? Put away thy wine from thee," the old man harshly calls to her. Observe her meek reply: "No, my lord," she says, "I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit... I have poured out my soul before the Lord... out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto." She addresses him with all the respect due to his age and office; she does not retort by reminding him of the delinquencies of his sons, and telling him that he had better look to his own house before hastily accusing and condemning others. No, nothing of this; true to her name, she bends again, and tells in the ears of the aged priest the tale of her grief, if not its cause. Her deserved reward is an answer of peace; and she does not despise the blessing of one who had but a moment before charged her falsely. He was at the time God's highest representative on earth, and she took his benediction as the voice of God to her soul (little as he may have understood it himself (see John 11:51), and went on her way rejoicing. "So the woman went on her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad." Blessed conclusion to a day of sorrow, and presage of brighter days to come.

Life and Times of Samuel the Prophet, Chapter 2: His Birth

Article from <https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb>

(1 Sam. 1:19-28.)

The night of Hannah's mourning is ended, the word had gone forth, "The God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of Him," and though as yet without sign or token, she rested in the spoken word. It could be said of her, as was said of her New Testament antitype: "Blessed is she that believeth: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord" (Luke 1:45) So we read:

"And they rose up in the morning early, and worshiped before the Lord, and returned, and came to their house, to Ramah: and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and the Lord remembered her. Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of the Lord.

"And the man Elkanah and all his house went up to offer unto the Lord the yearly sacrifice, and his vow. But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, I will not go up until the child be weaned, and then will I bring him, that he may appear before the Lord, and there abide forever. And Elkanah her husband said unto her, Do what seemeth thee good — tarry until thou have weaned him; only the Lord establish his word. So the woman abode and gave her son suck until she weaned him.

"And when she had weaned him she took him up with her; with three bullock; and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the Lord in Shiloh: and the child was young. And they slew a bullock, and brought the child to Eli. And she said, O my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the Lord. For this child I prayed, and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of Him: therefore also have I lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord. And he worshiped the Lord there."

Like Sarah, the wife of Elkanah " through faith received strength to conceive seed," and the happy mother at last held in her arms "the son of her vows." Elkanah himself, though of less energy of faith than his wife, says, "The Lord establish His word; " it would indicate that he shared with his wife, in some measure, at least, an expectation of blessing coming to Israel through the child of Hannah's prevailing prayer. The words imply the hope of some special mission to be committed to Samuel, and in common with his noble wife, some expectation that better days would come to God's people through the birth of this son.

The glad and grateful mother embodies in her son's name God's great goodness to her in answer to her petition for a son. She calls him Samuel — heard, or asked, of God. And the name was not only intended to be commemorative of the fact that God hears and answers the earnest prayer of the righteous, but seems as a prophecy of the place that prayer was to have in the afterlife of this God-given child. (See 1 Sam. 7:5; 8:6; 12:19, 23; 15:11). And, dear fellow-believer, shall not these examples of prayer, both of this mother and her son, stir us up in the same? We excuse ourselves by lack of time, a busy age, so many things requiring attention, so many duties and obligations resting upon us; how shall we find the time to pray as Scripture exhorts us to do? If we were people of leisure, or dwelling in solitude, we might be men and women of prayer, too. So we think, and so most suppose. But it is not so; we can pray best right in the circumstances where God has placed us; there we see and feel and realize the world's, and the church's, and our own individual need, as we could not know them in some secluded monastery or hermitage. It is the sense of need and what we have to meet with in daily life that drives us to the Lord, or draws us to the mercy-seat. As for the necessary time to pray, what time is better employed than in prayer? And it does not always mean to be on our knees, or in our closets, or in the prayer-meeting. Hannah prayed, though " only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard; " yet what saint prayed more earnestly or really? " I have poured out my soul before the Lord," she says. It is prayer such as this that brings down blessing from above, rather than the stated, formal prayers, read or said on regular occasions. May God give us more Hannahs for supplication, and more Samuels for intercession!

Some of God's servants, like Elijah the Tishbite, come into view suddenly and unannounced, and like stars of first magnitude continue in our field of vision for a considerable time; others, like Samson and John the Baptist, have their coming fore-announced, like those heavenly luminaries whose appearance have been foretold; they come into view gradually, by easy stages, as it were. So with Samuel; we may say, his birth and infancy augur something more than common. He is in some things a type of that great Deliverer, our Lord Jesus Christ, whose early life was in quiet retirement until presented to Israel.

Hannah's words to Eli on the presentation of her child are in marked keeping with her lovely disposition of meekness and unresentment. She does not say, I am the woman you so rashly misjudged at the tabernacle entrance, and this is the child for which I was praying when you charged me with drunkenness. No, there is nothing of this. Her triumph is in God, as one that knows Him as the bountiful Giver of all good. " I am the woman," she says, " that stood by thee here, praying unto the Lord. For this child I prayed, and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of Him."

Christian reader, how much like Hannah are we in forgetting wrongs received at the hands of others? How prone we all are to resent and remember an insult or a misinterpretation of our actions by others — we who offend so much, and have need to be ourselves forgiven wrongs done to others, which we have forgotten, perhaps. May we earnestly seek and cultivate a like spirit of non-resentment, and forget injuries, even when the insult was unmerited, as it was with her. Alas, how often we do wrong, and then indignantly resent and hardly forgive those whose duty it may be to rebuke or correct us. May we learn more of Him who was " meek and lowly in heart," and then shall we indeed " find rest unto our souls."

" Therefore also I have lent him to the Lord," she adds: " as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord." "Lent," should be, rather, "given." She did not selfishly cling to him, nor make a scene at her parting with the loved and lovable " son of her vows " (Prov. 31:2). She gives him up freely, gladly, for was it not for this very purpose that she waited long and prayed earnestly? She was not of those who vow and afterward repent (Eccl. 5:4, 5). Like David, of the following generation, she vowed " unto the mighty God of Jacob," and would perform it promptly.

Three years of age is said to have been the time of weaning with Hebrews; if this was Samuel's age when left with Eli, it exhibits to a marked degree the devotion of Hannah to the interests of Jehovah and His worship, to leave her child at the tabernacle so young. But "all things are possible to him that believeth," and faith rises above nature; she gave him gladly, and doubtless with assurance that the Lord had need of him, and would use him to the honor of His great and glorious name in Israel.

And he worshiped the Lord there," we read. If this refers to Samuel, it would argue that he was considerably more than three years old. The Revised Version says in a foot-note, that several ancient authorities read they for he, which, if correct, would present the beautiful picture of the company — Eli, Hannah, her husband, and others — all together in worshipful praise of the God of Israel for this gift of His love to the nation.

It takes us in thought to that lovely scene in the temple more than a thousand years later, when another group of godly souls, who also "looked for redemption in Israel," gathered round an Infant, to hold in their arms the Redeemer Himself, when aged Simeon adoringly said, " Lord, now lettest Thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation " (Luke 2:29).

Staff and Scepter: Six Addresses on Some of the Principle Scenes in the Life of David, Chapter 2: David and Jonathan

Article from <https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb>

1 Sam. 17:38-18:4; 19:1-7; 20:41-42

David is one of the most interesting characters in all the Old Testament. We can view him in a twofold way—personally and typically. Now I wish you to view him with me only in a typical way tonight. Viewed personally, he is an instructive example of holy courage and confidence in God. But I think it best to look at him only in a typical way throughout these addresses. Viewing him personally, we admire the man; looking at him as a type, we adore the One he typifies, or represents.

I remember speaking once in Canada on David, in this section of the Scriptures, as a type of Christ. At the close an aged Scotch lady said as she grasped my hand, "Aye, wee David were a bonny brave lad when he killet the Philistine." I was disappointed. She had missed the whole drift of my discourse, thinking only of David personally, and ignoring him in his typical character entirely. Too many read the Old Testament only in this way, to their serious loss.

In the closing section of the seventeenth chapter, which I have read, David meets and slays the mighty champion of the Philistines. For forty days, morning and evening, he had been presenting himself, frightening Israel and defying "the armies of the living God." None dared accept his challenge; all feared to meet him. Then David appears in the nick of time and saves Jehovah's cause.

Now, as we saw last night, David slaying the Philistine in the valley of Elah is a type of Jesus triumphing over all the powers of sin and death and Satan by the cross.

Let us notice how he conquers. He does not meet the adversary as a warrior but in the simple character of a shepherd, which he really was. He puts Saul's armor off and lays aside his sword. He takes his "staff" and his "five smooth stones" in "a shepherd's bag." Then with a stone from his sling, he smites the Philistine with death. And as a shepherd Jesus met our mighty foe at Calvary. "I am the good Shepherd," he says, "The good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep" (John 10:11). As feeble sheep we had no power against our wolfish adversary. Our blessed Savior meets him and by death defeats him. And the sheep go free. Thank God for everyone in this room tonight who can say, "The Lord is my Shepherd." Oh, that you, my unsaved friend, might say it before you leave your seat. Jesus would receive you as a frightened sheep. He would rejoice and say, "I have found My sheep which was lost."

David takes five smooth stones from the brook and with one of these he slays Goliath. There have been many speculations as to the meaning of these "five smooth stones." I will give you what I learn from them. Notice where he gets them—in the brook. Now water in Scripture often symbolizes death. For instance, the Red Sea is a type of Christ's death. Jordan also symbolizes death. The waters of baptism strikingly signify death. Believers are baptized unto Christ's death. They are viewed as dead with Christ and confess it by baptism. "We are buried with Him by baptism unto death" (Rom. 6:4). The water there is death. The Lord Jesus went down into death as David went down into the brook. And there He received five wounds as David got five stones. His hands, His feet, and side were pierced. All this, of course, is only a suggestion. I do not ask you if you understand it so. I have a more important question. Can you say, "He was wounded for my transgressions"?

When all is ready, David, with his simple weapon, advances towards the Philistine. But Goliath of Gath disdains him. "And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance. And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. And the Philistine said to David, "Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field" (vss. 42-44). But he never boasts again. A well-directed stone from David's sling sinks into his forehead, and his huge form lies stretched in death upon the ground.

And notice, David did not hesitate. Verse 48 says, "And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine." He "hasted" and "ran." This is like the blessed Lord. "He set His face like a flint to go toward Jerusalem." He knew the awful conflict He would pass through there. But nothing could turn Him back. God's glory and the safety of the sheep necessitate His death and He will go.

Now, let us look at Jonathan as one who reaps real benefit from David's victory. He aptly represents the Christian who has reaped eternal benefit from Christ's victory over death.

Jonathan must have passed through at least three different states of mind on this occasion. He was at first terrified, then satisfied, and lastly, captivated. Let us take them one by one, because they illustrate three different states of soul in Christians.

He was terrified. We are sure of this. It says, "And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid" (vs. 24). "All the men of Israel" included Jonathan. He was terrified like all the rest. Now death has frightened everyone who has been born again. The best of men, without the knowledge of redemption, fear death. Conscience of sins makes men afraid to die. Few care to think of death. Some years ago a Chicago undertaker placed a coffin on the sidewalk in front of his shop. He meant it as an advertisement and it was, but not as he expected or desired. Those who were compelled to pass his place were angry and requested him to take the coffin inside and out of sight. This he refused to do. Then the residents of the street petitioned the mayor, who compelled the unthinking undertaker to remove the casket. That tells a story. The coffin made the people think of death. The covetous merchant, hurrying to his place of business and hoping to become a millionaire, perhaps, and reaching a ripe old age, was shocked to see that grim reminder of "the wages of sin." The carefree young men and women, passing down the street towards the theater or the ballroom did not like to see it. Drunkards and libertines, with any conscience left, were troubled at the sight. And so the unconscious preacher must be silenced by being hastened out of sight. I remember once, when a mere lad, I spent a large part of one day in a cemetery, and that night I slept but little. My conscience was aroused. Awake, or in my troubled dreams, I thought I saw those ghost-like tombstones. I thought of the time when I must die, and I knew at the time I was not fit to dwell with God.

Sinner, death is on your track! Die you must! And after death comes judgment! Death is man's great enemy. Death is after you, my unconverted friend. May you get terrified before it is too late! If you die in your sins, the moment your soul leaves the body, it will descend, like a flash of light to hell. Be awakened now! Don't be like the silly ostrich, that when pursued, they say, sticks its head in the sand and thinks itself safe because it cannot see its enemy. What folly to shut your eyes and go dreaming, in carnal security, on your way to eternal damnation!

Death is a fearful thing. It is the judgment of God upon man because of sin. Death came in by sin: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men" (Rom. 5:12). There was no such thing in all the world before Adam sinned. Now we see the stamp of death on everything. Every child born into the world is born under the sentence of death. Men live all their lives beneath its sentence. I know they try to think of death as a sort of accident. Often the innocent physician gets the blame. It is a troublesome intruder, of course, but they must make the best of it. So they summon the florist to their aid. They strew flowers on the coffin and the tomb is decked with roses. And the preacher must not breathe one word about death being the "wages of sin." And I notice, too, that now, instead of solid black, they mingle violet with the crepe. Ah, if only some wonderful man of science could devise means to do away with death entirely, but they cannot! They boast of progress, but I notice men are dying just as fast as ever, if not a little faster. Wonderful strides have been made in surgery and medicine, but men and women die younger, on an average, than they did one hundred years ago, when they were not so smart. Oh, that men would submit to the truth and prepare for what awaits them, instead of painting death in colors, false and cheerful!

At the breaking out of the late Cuban war, a great many Spanish soldiers were attacked with yellow fever. Scores were dying on every hand, and, being Roman Catholics who believe that the priest is a mediator between God and them, they sent for the priests. In one regiment was a great, strapping infidel. At first he enjoyed perfect health and made fun of his comrades' fear of death. But finally he himself was seized with the dread disease and in a very short time was on his deathbed. Then all his bravado was gone. Just before his soul departed from his body, he raised himself in his bed with his little remaining strength and shrieked in the agony of despair: "O my God, I cannot die! I cannot die!" So he died, like multitudes of others who in health appear to scorn all fear of death. Your time is coming, sinner! Oh, prepare! prepare!

After being terrified, Jonathan was satisfied. Everything seems dark till David comes upon the scene. How his eyes follow every movement of the shepherd-boy of Bethlehem as he sees him prepare for the conflict. His weapon seems inadequate—a simple sling. David himself seems like a mere sapling beside some mighty oak, in the presence of Goliath. But the giant falls, and using Goliath's own massive sword, David severs his head from his body. Then he holds it up triumphantly to view, and Jonathan's terror is gone forever—he is satisfied. The giant is dead, and his headless body lies mingled with the clods of the valley. Jonathan is sure and satisfied.

And the believer by faith looks back to the cross, and sees the Savior robbing death of all its terrors. "His death by dying slew." The death of Jesus satisfies the troubled conscience. There is no other remedy. Men have manufactured opiates. These are mostly various forms of religious observances and morals. They may deceive, but they cannot effectually relieve. God's perfect answer to the demands of a troubled conscience is the cross. All who by simple faith rest in what Christ accomplished there have what the Apostle calls "no more conscience of sins" (Heb. 10:2). And they are not afraid of death. I do not mean a physical fear of death. Many who enjoy peace with God about their sins have a kind of dread of the hour of dissolution, when the soul departs the body. But this is purely physical. An unbeliever may be entirely free from all such fear, yet tremble at the thought of meeting God. I read some time ago of a child in New York city that was bitten by its father's valuable dog. He spared the dog, but put a muzzle on him. He could still bark, but he could not bite. But the child was still afraid of him. "You need not fear him," said the nurse one day. "He is muzzled, so he cannot bite you." "Yes," replied the child, "but the bark is in him yet." And the bark of the muzzled dog is like the physical fear of death among believers. It may annoy, but it cannot harm. But I speak of freedom from all moral fear of death. If you fear death as that which will usher you into the presence of God, there is something wrong. You are either unconverted, or a Christian lacking settled peace. There are many just such Christians. They believe in Christ, but know little of His finished work. They are not satisfied. Jonathan was satisfied when he beheld the finished work of David with the giant. And it is only when you see by faith what Christ has done for you at Calvary that you ever can have settled peace.

There is a passage in the second of Hebrews that ought always to be read in connection with this subject.

It says: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy [annul] him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (vss. 14-15). There you have the work of Christ and Satan's utter overthrow. He "destroyed" the devil, or annulled him, as it is in Greek. His power is gone, as far as Christians are concerned. And now, by this accomplished work, they are entitled to deliverance from all fear of death. It was all accomplished for us at the cross. With joy we sing:

If you have faith in Christ, you ought to have this satisfaction. "But," you say, "I am such a stumbling professor. I lose my temper easily. I tell lies if I am not careful, and sometimes I forget myself and say harsh words when tempted." I am sorry that all this is so; but I am also glad that you are not satisfied with yourself; you would be deceived if you were. "But," you say again, "my experience has not been very clear. I have never felt very sharp convictions, and when I received Christ, I did not feel much joy." This may all be true. I would not have you satisfied with your experience any more than with yourself. I have never been fully satisfied with myself. I have never been at all satisfied with my experience. It has never seemed to me to be a very clear one. But I will tell you who and what I am satisfied with. I am satisfied with Jesus and His atoning death at Calvary for my sins. God would have you satisfied with His beloved Son, and Christ desires to have you satisfied with Himself and His finished work for sinners such as you.

I have read somewhere of a young man who really believed in Christ, but had no settled peace. One night he dreamed he saw large crowds of people hurrying excitedly towards a hill. He followed from curiosity, and, to his surprise, he saw a cross upon the hill. And on the cross he thought he saw the Savior. "Why," said he, "I thought you did die once upon the cross. Why are you dying again?" And he thought he heard the Savior say reproachfully: "I did die eighteen hundred years ago, but you are not satisfied, so I am dying for you again." He saw his unbelief. He awoke and confessed it; and he never doubted his salvation after that. He saw it hung entirely on the death of Christ.

Jonathan would have been the laughingstock of the camp had he remained in dread of the headless giant. And had he sought to excuse his fears by saying, "I am not satisfied with my appreciation of what David has accomplished," or "I fear, because my view of David, as he slew the Philistine, was rather indistinct," they would have laughed still louder. It was David's work and not Jonathan's appreciation or distinct views that slew the Philistine and saved the army. And it is Christ's work alone that saves.

Christians who pass all their days in doubt and dread of death are like the man who wished to cross the Mississippi river on the ice. Supposing it to be dangerously thin, he crawled across on his hands and knees, with his heart in his throat, as they say. Just as he reached the opposite bank, a man overtook him with a team of horses and a load of iron. The ice was strong enough to bear an army, and his fears were

groundless. The man's security depended on the thickness of the ice. And your security, fellow-believer, depends entirely on the work of Christ. Can that break down? Will it give way? Thank God, NEVER! Then doubt no more. Go on your way rejoicing, and live for the One who died for you.

"There was no sword in the hand of David" when he won the victory. A sling and stone are not the weapons of a mighty warrior. David himself appeared weak in the eyes of men: "He was but a youth." And the Apostle Paul says of the Lord Jesus: "He was crucified through weakness" (2 Cor. 13:4). "Christ crucified" was unto the religious Jew "a stumbling-block," and unto the learned Greek "foolishness." Through death, by apparent weakness and defeat Christ conquered Satan.

We next see Jonathan captivated. "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" (1 Samuel 18:1). David's work satisfies him, and David's worth captivates him. It is a blessed thing to know Christ's work; for it prepares our hearts to learn His worth. By His work our souls are saved; by His worth our hearts are won. Every Christian loves Christ in some measure. Scripture says, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maranatha"; that is, accursed (1 Cor. 16:22). We cannot but love Him if we know His dying love to us. A child once helped to deepen that truth in my soul. It was in Chicago. I asked her if she loved Jesus. "Oh, yes," she answered quickly. "Why do you love Him?" I asked. "Oh," she replied, with sweet childish transparency, "because He died for me." But Jonathan's love to David was no common love. He loved him as his own soul. David himself speaks of that love in his touching lament for Jonathan. "Thy love to me was wonderful," he says, "passing the love of women" (2 Sam. 1:26). In Jonathan's eyes, David eclipsed all others. To him there was not another like him in all the earth. And his love to David leads to action. "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" (vs. 4). He strips himself of everything. He lays all at David's feet. Everything that might distinguish him as a warrior or as a man among men, he gives to David, as if he alone were worthy of such arms and garments. This action becomes more lovely in our eyes as we remember that Jonathan was a distinguished prince. He had also proved himself a mighty warrior. In the fourteenth chapter of this book he and his armor-bearer display uncommon bravery. As a result, the Philistines are routed, and Saul's armies are victorious. He seems to have been a special favorite with the people, too. In defiance of the headstrong king, they rescued him from death. "And the people said unto Saul, Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought so great salvation in Israel? God forbid: as the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for he hath wrought with God this day. So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not" (chap. 14:45). But, though so great a man, he seems to say of David, as John the Baptist said of Christ, "He must increase, but I must decrease."

Paul strips himself in Philippians 3. He, too, was a great man in his place. He advanced beyond many of his contemporaries in the Jews' religion, he tells us (Gal. 1:14). Here in Philippians 3 he tells us in detail something of what he was. He says: "Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee. Concerning zeal, persecuting the Church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless" (vss. 4-6). He was a distinguished man in the religious world, just as his ancestor, Jonathan, was a distinguished man in the military and the social world. But ah, observe him strip himself! "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God, by faith: that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death" (vss. 7-10). Oh, it is a blessed sight too seldom seen. Everything must go; the circumcised, the Israelite, the Benjamite, the Pharisee, the zealot, the blameless, everything he reckons dross and dung, that Christ may be his only gain. All for Christ, he seems to say. Christ is his only gain; all other things are loss.

Everything goes when Christ captivates the heart. We begin to leave behind our old things as we learn His worth. Suppose, for instance, I am a man of wealth and position in the world. God saves me, and I learn Christ's love. Now "Christ is all." I no longer glory in my wealth and step down from my exalted place to seek the fellowship of the poor and lowly followers of Jesus. I "rejoice," as James says, to be "made low." Or suppose I am a very religious man, as people say. I am a popular preacher or I occupy a high seat in the so-called church. Everybody speaks well of me. But my eyes are opened, and I see it is not popular religion and religious work, but Christ. I come out and esteem reproach for Him and His praise above the "praise of men." Or I may be a young man who excels in athletic sports, or something of that kind. Christ becomes my Savior and my all. I begin to say—

Baseball, football, boxing, all are given up. "Everything," I say, "for Christ." Or I may be an accomplished young lady, a graceful dancer, a splendid musician, a charming conversationalist and all that. I become converted and begin to taste "the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." Now I say, "To me to live is Christ." The world has admired me long enough; I am weary of its smiles. I will begin to admire Christ and seek His smile. So I give up my place in the merry social world and say, "Farewell."

All this is something like Jonathan giving his garments to David. It is the sure result of affection for Christ and occupation with Him. May God give every Christian here to be like Jonathan in this.

Jonathan's love to David was "wonderful, passing the love of women." Strength is the distinguishing characteristic of the man. Affection is that of the woman. In the epistles, husbands are often admonished to love their wives, but the chief admonition to wives is not that, for love is more natural to the woman. She generally exceeds in love. Jonathan's love for David exceeded even that. Oh, for more ardent devotion to our David!

Paul says, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." The heart is the seat of the affections. Christ died to win these rebel hearts to Himself.

He went down into death to secure a place in the heart of His ruined creature, man. Paul's heart was won. He adoringly exclaims, "The Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me!" These lines were once found written on the fly-leaf of a departed nun's prayer-book: "I am nothing; I can do nothing; Jesus, I adore Thee." Precious confession! May it be written in our hearts, and become the language of our lives.

The earnest missionary, Judson, refers in his journal to the devoted life and final martyrdom of a wealthy Burman who was converted to Christ through some Portuguese Roman Catholic missionaries. Judson gleaned the particulars bit by bit, as they were related to him by the natives. Though he only knew Christ veiled and half-hidden by the drapery of superstitious forms and ceremonies, his heart was captivated. He confessed and preached the Lord Jesus boldly, and his goods were at once confiscated. And, like the apostles of old, he was commanded "not to speak at all or teach in the name of Jesus." But he could not be silenced and was banished from his native place. He continued preaching from place to place and was finally imprisoned. He was there put under an instrument of torture called the "iron maul," and ordered to recant. He refused, and every time the cruel hammer descended on his bruised and bleeding body his lips uttered that glorious name that moves all heaven—"Christ." Soon his spirit left its shattered prison to be forever with that Savior he had confessed and loved so well. May every Christian here tonight be stirred by such devotion. Our light and privileges are great compared with this rich Burman's. Light is good, but it is not heat. John the Baptist was "a burning and a shining light;" not "a bright and shining light," as people often quote it. He did shine, but not like an electric light. There was heat as well as light. I know our warmest love is scarcely worth speaking of, but the feeblest spark of real affection has its value in the eyes of Christ. Our love to Him, compared to His own measureless love to us, may be like the sputtering candle in the presence of the mighty, glorious sun at midday, but the sunlight does not quench the candle flame. Let this question of the Son of God, our Savior, search your heart: "Lovest thou Me?"

Before I speak of the verses read from chapters 19 and 20, I want to say a little on Saul's taking David to himself. It says in verse 2, "And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house." David accomplished a wonderful work, and Saul, in his admiration, took him into his house. He did with David just what Christendom has done with Christ. They have taken him under their patronage, so to speak. They have made of Him a kind of religious hero, just as the Turks have done with Mohammed and the Asiatic pagans with Confucius and Bramah. And they propose disgraceful "parliaments of religions" with these Turks and pagans, to compare the various merits of these heroes of their national adoption. And these so-called Christians profess a sort of love and admiration for Jesus, just as Saul professed love and admiration for David. But he had no real love for David. When David's glory eclipsed his own, he hated him and hurled javelins at his head. He was his enemy and sought his life on more than one occasion. And many of those who profess the name of Christ today show their hatred of Him when His real claims are pressed. Under their religious face, the deadliest hatred towards the Son of God is rankling in their hearts. Under their robes of religion are hidden deadly javelins. He is receiving "wounds," as in days of old, in the house of His professed "friends." Some who profess His name deny His eternal deity, others His spotless humanity, and others still deny the authority of His words.

In chapter 19, verse 1, Saul speaks to Jonathan, his son, and to all his servants, that they should kill David. And in the next verse we read that "Jonathan, Saul's son, delighted much in David." How precious! Saul hates him, but Jonathan delights much in him. And he seeks to save his life. In verse 4 we read that "Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul, his father." He vainly seeks to turn the heart of Saul towards David. It is useless. Saul's hatred increases, and David becomes an outcast and a fugitive. And here is just where Jonathan, with all his love and delight in David, fails. He does not follow David but remains in the house of Saul, where "David's place was empty." David becomes a wanderer among the mountains of Israel, and Jonathan remains in Jerusalem to enjoy his own position and his father's palace. After the touching meeting of Jonathan and David recorded in chapter 20, David "arose and departed, and Jonathan went into the city" (vs. 42). He went right back among the enemies of the one he loved so well. And what was the end? Jonathan lost his life on the mountains of Gilboa. He was slain with the enemies of David, and his body, with theirs, was nailed in dishonor to the walls of Bethshan. He refused to share the rejection of David, and suffered loss in consequence.

All this has its lessons. Christ is the rejected One. Christians are called to share His rejection. To you, beloved fellow-believer, the house of Saul may be a circle of worldly friends, or it may be one of the various fraternal orders or societies. It may be a religious organization where Christ's name is professed, but His authority is denied. You need to withdraw yourself from these unscriptural associations, as Jonathan needed to leave the house of Saul to be in David's company. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach" (2 Cor. 6:14; Heb. 13:13). Jonathan ought to have gone forth unto David. In doing so he would have suffered loss and reproach from Saul, but he would have had the company of David, then high honor in David's kingdom. He did well in delighting much in David. He was right in speaking of David to his father Saul. But he lacked one thing. He shrunk from the path of separation with David. He was not with David in the mountains and the woods of his rejection. Perhaps he thought he could "do more good," as people say, by remaining in the house of Saul. He might put in a good word for David now and then and use his influence in behalf of the rejected one at Jerusalem. Christians often argue in this way when seeking to excuse themselves from the path to which truth points. But God's Word is plain: "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord" (2 Cor. 6:17).

Christians must not remain in fellowship with those who refuse and reject the Lord Jesus. The social world rejects Him. Go to its balls and parties and attempt to "speak good" of our David, and see if they want Him.

They do not even wish to hear of Him. The political world refuses Him. He was God's candidate over eighteen hundred years ago, and they cast their vote against Him. Instead of the throne, they gave Him a cross and wrote in derision over His head, "THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS." And the religious world does not want Him. They want "earthly things" and the things which gratify the senses—they want to be entertained. They shut out the men who would preach only Christ, and prefer such as suit their "itching ears." O Christians, come forth! "Come out of her, My people" (Rev. 18:4).

Where Christ is not wanted, the Christian may not remain.

There is just one thought more I wish to notice before we close. In verses 41 and 42 of chapter 20, David and Jonathan weep one with another and kiss one another, until "David exceeded." Jonathan's love "was wonderful," but in affection as in all things else, "David exceeded." It is written of Christ "that in all things He might have the preeminence" (Col. 1:18). However great our love to Him, His love exceeds our own as an age exceeds an hour. In love, as in everything, "He might have the preeminence." All that love of His rests upon us, beloved brethren. As for you, dear friends who may yet be unsaved, it is all spread out before you—that your hearts also may be won to Him. Early in the seventh century, the good king Oswald of Northumbria requested the Scots to send a missionary to his people. The brethren of Iona sent them an austere, though well-meaning man named Cormac. He soon returned dispirited, saying the people were too obstinate to be converted. "Ah," said Aidan, standing by, "had Thy love been offered to this people, O my Savior, many hearts would surely have been touched. I will go and

make Thee known—Thee, who breakest not the bruised reed!" He went and told the Anglo-Saxons of the Savior's love. Wondering multitudes listened, wept and were won. May that unfathomable love win you tonight. God grant it for Christ's sake. Amen.

Life and Times of Samuel the Prophet, Chapter 16: His Death and After

Article from <https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb>

(1 Sam. 19:18-24; 25:1; 28:7-20.)

After the anointing of David we hear no more of Samuel, except incidentally, till the day of his death, some sixteen years later. David, driven out from the court of Saul, and forced to flee from his very wife and home, turns for refuge, not to his kindred in Bethlehem, nor to the many thousands in Israel who had lauded him so loudly for his exploits, but to his aged and trusted friend Samuel. Even his wife Michal (though she really loved him and braved her royal father's wrath to screen him) unthinkingly adds to the odium his enemies heaped upon him by saying, "He said unto me, Let me go; why should I kill thee?" As another has said, "David suffered both from friends and foes," as did his Lord after him.

"So David fled, and escaped, and came to Samuel to Ramah and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth."

He felt that the man of God was one in whom he could implicitly trust, and would prove himself to be indeed "a friend in need." Samuel is not like the priest Ahimelech in chapter 21, who "was afraid at the meeting of David, and said unto him, Why art thou alone, and no man with thee?" No; he was in the current of God's thoughts and well understood how matters were between Saul the rejected of God, and David His anointed. Unhesitatingly Samuel received David and identified himself with him, "not fearing the wrath of the king." He changed his quarters from Ramah to Naioth — a suburb of Ramah, probably, and a school of the prophets, some think.

"And it was told Saul, saying, Behold, David is at Naioth in Ramah. And Saul sent messengers to take David." But when the messengers arrive and see Samuel standing in the midst of the prophets, overcome by the power of the Spirit they all begin to prophesy. Saul sends yet other messengers and it happens to them as to the first; when he sends the third time it is the same with these.

"Then went he also to Ramah..., and he asked and said, Where are Samuel and David? And one said, Behold, they be at Naioth in Ramah. And he went thither to Naioth in Ramah: and the Spirit of God was upon him also, and he went on, and prophesied, until he came in to Naioth in Ramah. And he stripped off his clothes also, and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day, and all that night. Wherefore they say, Is Saul also among the prophets?" (chap. 19: 22-24).

"Where are Samuel and David?" the king demands in his wrath. He links their names together as joint traitors to the crown, and it is to the prophet's everlasting honor that he was classed with David's enemies as being one with him—identified with the man — rejected one in his life's darkest hour. It had been the crowning act of his life to anoint him, and it is now the closing act of his life to protect him from the rage of Saul, whom he was soon to supersede.

The next notice of Samuel is his death.

"And Samuel died; and all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah. And David arose, and went down to the wilderness of Paran" (chap. 25:1).

In the wise ordering of God, Samuel's decease just at the time of Saul's partial or pretended reconciliation to David, is recorded in the previous chapter. This lull in the storm of persecution against his friend was a suited time for the prophet's demise. Matters in the kingdom were quiet for the moment, and would not only give the prophet opportunity to say his farewell words of advice and affection to David, and other of his friends, but it permitted also his having a national burial at which all Israel might attend. David was evidently present, as may be gathered from the final clause of the verse, "And David arose and went down to the wilderness of Paran."

How gracious of God thus to let His aged and faithful servant end his days in peace and quietness, and be buried in a manner befitting one worthy of the highest honors the nation could bestow. So in him we see fulfilled the faithful word, "Them that honor Me I will honor, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed."

Would that we might leave this friend of God, and ours, resting in honor and peace in the sepulcher of his fathers. But once more he is to appear in the sad circumstances of Saul's apostasy and utter rejection by God, when in his desperation he once more inquired of him whose godly counsels he had refused.

In the gruesomeness of the story of "the witch of Endor" we find Saul in extremity desirous of communicating with the dead, and he asks, "Bring me up Samuel." To her surprise and consternation, Samuel appears, and she cries to Saul, in her terror, "Why hast thou deceived me?—for thou art Saul."

"And the king said unto her, Be not afraid; for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth. And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself" (chap. 28:18, 14).

Yes, he bows himself now before the spirit of the prophet; but too late. He had refused his admonitions in life, and now from the grave he is to hear his final doom pronounced.

"And Samuel said to Saul, Why halt thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do" (chap. 28:15).

Poor wretched man! He asks advice now of him whose counsels he had hitherto refused to obey, but like Esau who had despised the blessing," he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." " Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the Lord is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy?" Samuel asks the God-abandoned man. He then reminds him of the words he had told in his unwilling ears many years before:

" The Lord hath done for himself (margin) as He spake by me: for the Lord hath rent the kingdom out of thy hand, and given it to thy neighbor, even to David: because thou obeyedst not the voice of the Lord, nor executedst His fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the Lord done this thing unto thee this day" (chap. 28:17,18).

He then tells him of the overthrow of the host of Israel on the morrow, and the death of himself and his sons. Poor Saul! He feels the pangs and bitterness of death before-hand. He reaps already something of his sowing. "Moreover," the prophet says, " the Lord will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me." Saul is made to know, not only of his approaching end, but that of his sons also, that he might know for a surety that his house should not continue.

Twice he is told of the coming defeat of his army and the triumph of the Philistines. Thus he is to carry with him to the grave the knowledge of the utter ruin into which his departure from God had plunged the nation.

" Then Saul fell straightway all along on the earth, and was sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel." Alas! for many weary years he had despised the counsel of the Lord through His holy prophet; now his end is near. He is made to know it, and terror lays hold upon him, prostrating him to the ground like one dead. The pangs awaiting him in the future have begun, as a glimpse of the life to come.

Our tracings of the life of Samuel end here. His holy, blameless life, replete with wholesome lessons of fidelity, devotedness and trust in God was not an uneventful, quiet one. He rests from his labors, but it is ours to continue the conflict against the powers of darkness, and like him, may we stand in the breach, do what in us lies to serve God, and love and intercede for His beloved though oft straying people.

Life and Times of Samuel the Prophet, Chapter 3: His Mother's Song

Article from <https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb>

(1 Sam. 2:1-10).

"And Hannah prayed; "so begins our chapter. She prayed; but it was not the prayer of petition now, but of praise, of thanksgiving — a celebration of the divine perfections and glorious attributes of Jehovah the God of Israel. The petition had been, in the mercy of God, granted, and now it is worship welling up in her happy heart. She has, for the time being, nothing more to desire: to see her child installed in the Tabernacle, started in his life-time service to the Lord, was the very culmination of joy to her, and the fulfillment of her fondest aspirations. Again she pours out her soul before the Lord, not as a suppliant now, but fully satisfied, her desire fully met.

" In that day ye shall ask Me nothing," Christ said on one occasion to His disciples. When with Him, our blessed and glorious Redeemer above, we shall be fully and forever satisfied, and have need of nothing. We shall have no need, as now to " watch and pray," nor ask for anything; neither shall we cry as now, "Come, Lord Jesus." Faith shall give place to sight. Hope's desire will then be fulfilled. Love alone shall abide, calling forth our adoring praises, world without end! Amen. That which is in part shall be done away when that which is perfect is come. The 7 ad psalm ends with this (to some) singular expression, "The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended." He had been celebrating in song the glories of Messiah's millennial reign upon earth and its blessedness. He has sung of the might, the majesty and riches of Him whom " Solomon in all his glory " was the type; and when the paeon is ended, with his harp's last note he exclaims, " The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended " He had been celebrating

in song the glories of Messiah's millennial reign upon earth and its blessedness. He has sung of the might, the majesty and riches of Him whom " Solomon in all his glory " was the type ; and when the paeon is ended, with his harp's last note he exclaims, " The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended" — his hopes are fully realized, and the happy Israelite asks no more. But the Christian's anticipations are higher, and beyond anything of earth; he has the " better hope " of Heb. 7:19; and only in " that day " of heavenly bliss and immediate association with Christ will his desires be fully realized and his prayers forever ended.

But we return to Hannah and her song. When she poured out her petition in sorrow, " only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard." She prayed " in secret " to Him who " heareth in secret," and He had rewarded her " openly; " but this prayer becomes a song of joyful praise, for she has indeed glorious things to tell of Him who is " fearful in praises." Her song begins with the celebration of the glorious perfections of Jehovah. Only a brief word, by way of introduction, does she speak of herself at all. "My heart rejoiceth in the Lord," she says. Out of her heart's abundance of gratitude to God her mouth speaks His praise. " Out of the heart are the issues of life " (Prov. 4:23). " Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight," prayed the Psalmist when celebrating the power and perfections of God as displayed in creation and in His Word (Psa. 19:14). He did not merely wish that his words might be acceptable in his Redeemer's sight, but that the thoughts of his heart might be pleasing to Him as well. And if our heart be not right, surely all else is wrong. It is the source whence flows either bitter or sweet water, bearing blessing or a curse in the world.

" My heart rejoiceth in the Lord," she sings. Her joy was not so much in the gift (Samuel) as in God the Giver. Hers was not a merely natural joy, but the joy of the Lord, a joy of the Spirit. How often we are more occupied with the thing given than with Him who graciously gave it. Not

so with Hannah here; much as she might and did rejoice over the child of her vows and prayers, she rises above the level of nature to Jehovah Himself. All else is, for the time being, forgotten, and like the disciples on the holy mount, when " they saw no man save Jesus only," she speaks only of Him, not once mentioning the child whose birth gave occasion to it all. Jehovah filled her enraptured soul.

" My horn is exalted in the Lord," is her second word. In 1 Chron. 25:5 we read, "All these were the sons of Heman the king's seer in the words of God, to lift up the horn." They were, together with the sons of Asaph and Jeduthun, the temple-court musicians; and the part of the sons of Heman was to lift up the horn, to sound aloud the praises of the God of Israel. So here Hannah declares her horn exalted in the Lord; she sounds not the trumpet to her own praise, as did the Pharisees of a more favored day, but lifts it in celebration of the infinite perfections of Him who alone is worthy.

And then she says, " My mouth is enlarged over mine enemies." It is Israel's and God's enemies she has in view, not Peninnah. Speaking for all Israel, she looks on in faith to the time when the enemies of her people, the Philistines in particular, probably, would be subdued and become subject, as under the rule of David. Filled with the spirit of prophecy, she sees beyond " the long, dark night " of Israel's departure from God and consequent humiliation, even to the day of "great David's greater Son," as the close of her song makes manifest. This deliverance of Israel from her enemies was yet for many days to come, but faith sees it as done already, and Hannah fore-rejoices in its accomplishment. She speaks something after the manner of Paul in Rom. 8:30, " Whom He justified, them He also glorified." So sure of accomplishment is the purpose of God that he can speak of the believer as already glorified. Yet some would have it that the believer may still fall away and be lost. But those whom God justifies (by faith) them He "also glorifies!"

Having spoken of her joy and triumph, her song proper now begins. She makes no more mention of herself; it is all Jehovah, in His character and wondrous ways. She speaks His name nine times in her song of ten verses. She seems wholly lost in Him, and scarcely alludes to herself or circumstances, or that particular mercy (the gift of Samuel) that had prompted her anthem of praise. In their praises and thanksgivings to God, believers may be too much occupied with what concerns themselves — their necessities and circumstances. This is not the highest form of worship; it is not what occupies Hannah here; she rises above her own blessings; she is absorbed in the varied and majestic attributes of the Divine Being. She alludes to His holiness, His omniscience, His sovereignty, His omnipotence, His faithfulness, and His justice.

His holiness is first: " There is none holy as the Lord," she says. Holiness has first place in this cluster of glories. It is, we may say, one of the essential attributes of Deity; and without it, who could adore or even reverence Him? Yet it is the very trait of His nature to which men are most averse, and which they are most likely to overlook. He has therefore reminded us over and over again in His Word that He is holy. In this attribute of His being He is incomparable. The seraphim veil themselves as they cry one to another, " Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts " (Isa. 6:3). " There is none beside Thee; neither is there any rock like our God," she sings. " Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like Thee, glorious in holiness ?" sang Moses at the Red Sea (Ex. 15:11)." Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness," said the " sweet psalmist of Israel " (Ps. 30: 4). Yes, this very unpopular doctrine of the perfect holiness of God is the very truth that the Spirit of Christ in David calls upon His saints to give thanks for. Thirty times in the Old Testament is Jehovah called " the Holy One of Israel."

Hannah next alludes to God's omniscience; " Talk no more exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth; for Jehovah is a God of knowledge, and by Him actions are weighed." Being omniscient He is unerring in His estimate of men; and not merely does He take knowledge of their doings, but weighs their thoughts in the balances of the sanctuary. He reads the heart and weighs motives, rather than outward acts. " Judge not according to appearance," says our Lord, the appointed Judge of all (John 7:24). And in 1 Cor. 4:5, His servant Paul forcibly reminds us that He will in " that day," the day of the revelation of the thoughts of many hearts, make manifest motives — He will weigh purposes as well as actions. O reader, let this solemnize our hearts and make us less careful of what men may think or judge, and cause us to be anxious only to please but One. There is no more beautiful description anywhere of God's omniscience (and His omnipresence, too) than that given by David in the 139th psalm. It is little wonder that he, a man like unto ourselves, should in deepest humility say, " Such knowledge is too wonderful for me."

Hannah dilates on God's sovereignty, and then she enumerates the sudden changes, the felicities and vicissitudes of life: the seemingly invincible mighty suffer defeat, and those that stumble in weakness as if about to fall, rise suddenly to strength and victory. " The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength." The men of the world, in their self-sufficiency, say with Napoleon, that " God is on the side of the heaviest battalions; " but no; when it is agreeable to His purpose, "the lame take the prey " (Isa. 33:23). In men's circumstances of life also the sovereignty of God is seen; "They that were full have hired themselves out for bread; and they that were hungry ceased [to be so]" — not always because they are improvident or wasteful; nor do others, once hungry, cease to lack merely because of their superior industry or frugality. These are often but secondary causes, and behind all is the purpose of the supreme Ruler of the universe, without whom not one insignificant sparrow falls dead to the ground. It is not " luck," or " fortune," good or ill, nor are these mutations in the circumstances of men to be ascribed solely to themselves, their wisdom or their folly, or chance or opportunity. " I went out full and the Lord hath brought me home empty," said the sorrowful Naomi. She acknowledged the sovereignty of God in her altered circumstances; and Scripture abounds with illustrations of this bed-rock truth. God is sovereign, controlling the ups and downs of life.

This is further enlarged upon in what immediately follows: " So that the barren hath borne seven; and she that hath many children is waxed feeble." Once flourishing and influential families become minished, even to extinction sometimes, while others increase to a multitude. It is He, the Lord, that "maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children " (Psa. 113:9). This will be demonstrated in Israel in the coming day of her promised increase. (See Isa. 54:1-6). " Lo, children are a heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is His reward " (Psa. 127:3). Would that this word were pondered more in this age of increasingly small families.

This thought is closely connected with the question of life and death: " The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up." Not only is our coming into the world completely under God's control, but when born, our life is in His hand; death, too, is amenable to His will. This is the sobering declaration of the prophet Daniel before the impious king Belshazzar: " The God in whose hand thy breath is." He is " the sovereign Lord of life and death." He killeth; death is His black-winged messenger. It is He who " turneth man to destruction, and says, Return, ye children of men " (Psa. 90:3), and who in "the last day" will cause His voice to be heard by all that sleep in the grave. He " maketh alive," and " bringeth up " from the grave. Resurrection is the sovereign act of His power.

Riches, too, and poverty, are alike at His disposal: " The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich; He bringeth low, and lifteth up." He gives the one or the other as suits His purpose. The knowledge of this should keep the rich humble, and make the poor content. Beloved fellow-believer, let us, as Scripture admonishes us, " be content with such things as we have," for our God, who has revealed Himself to us in grace, has said, " I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee " (Heb. 13: 5).

" He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill," again says Hannah, " to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory." We have illustrations of this in Scripture all the way from Joseph to Lazarus. The former was raised up from the condition of a slave to rule over Egypt; and the latter, a beggar on earth, was taken to "Abraham's bosom " in paradise.

Hannah next ascribes to God almighty power: " For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and He hath set the world upon them." This is a poetic figure of speech, though none the less forceful for that. Who but He whose "strength is infinite " could suspend and sustain this globe in its circuits as if it had no more weight than "the small dust of the balance?" as it is beautifully expressed in Job 26:27, "He hangeth the earth upon nothing, " In His wisdom, grace, and power,. He is able to keep us without falling: "He will keep the feet of His saints," she confidently says O child of God, weak, failing, and needing much mercy, rejoice in this which our Savior has said: " They shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of my hand " (John 10:28), And may the certainty of this make you, not more careless in your walk, but the more careful not to grieve such love; for if He keep the feet of His saints, His eye is upon them to see every misstep they make, and observes when they wander into forbidden paths.

His justice is the next attribute noticed: " The wicked shall be silent in darkness, for by strength shall no man prevail." The judgment of the sinner is sure, though God bear long with him in his rebellion and unbelief. " Where is the God of judgment? " men ask to-day, as they unbelievably asked of old (Mal. 2:17). We answer, He is bearing long with man's impenitence, but His Word declares He " will by no means clear the guilty!" His righteousness is one of His many glories; even the gospel of His grace declares it (Rom. 1:17). " It is," as another has aptly expressed it, " the rectitude of His nature His infinite agreement with Himself, and the equity of His government and judgment in the administration of both." Puny man would thwart the execution of His judgments; but though they join hands to resist the purposes of God, though they bind themselves with an oath, as it were, to keep the earth for themselves in their pride, at the exclusion of God's Christ, its rightful Heir, " by strength shall no man prevail." " Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished " (Prov. 11:21). " The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken in pieces; out of heaven shall He thunder upon them."

This is the grand finale of Hannah's oratorio: "The Lord shall judge the ends of the earth; and He shall give strength unto His King, and exalt the horn of His anointed." This is not Saul, nor even David, but He whom David in Spirit called " LORD." This " King" to whom Jehovah gives " strength " is He who " was crucified through weakness." Now, all power on earth and in heaven is in His hand, and in the coming day of His kingdom and power, the horn of His royalty will be exalted above the kings of the earth, as it is written in the 2nd psalm.

So the song closes with that one only Name, which strikes an answering chord in every loyal heart, both Jewish and Christian — " His Anointed! " It is Hannah's, as it is God's last word to man. " What think ye of Christ? " This is the test. Reader, what is He to you?

It is remarkable that both the expressions, " The Lord of hosts," and the " Anointed " (Christ's title) frequently found further on in Scripture, are used first by Hannah, the once barren and sorrowful woman (see chaps. 1:11; 2:10). Such are God's ways. He uses the things that are weak and the things that are despised, to proclaim His praise, that no flesh may glory in His presence.

Hannah's song, though a true magnificat, and perfectly suited to the age and circumstances in which it was uttered, does not rise to the height of Mary's. Hannah begins: " My heart rejoiceth in the Lord," Mary says; "My soul Both magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior." The heart is connected more with earth and the body; the soul and spirit have closer links with heaven and eternity. But this makes the song of Hannah none the less perfect or profitable to us; this very difference proves to our minds how very perfect it is, and wholly in keeping with its time and place.

We shall now pass on from poetry to history, none the less profitable for being more prosaic.

Life and Times of Samuel the Prophet, Chapter 4: His Childhood

Article from <https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb>

(1 Sam. 2:12-26.)

The expression, " And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house," following immediately on the conclusion of Hannah's song, would indicate that it was uttered in the presence of the priest Eli and others at Shiloh. This pious couple having returned to their home, we then read, " And the child did minister unto the Lord before Eli the priest. Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the Lord; " and the rest of the chapter is a continuation of the beautiful conduct of Samuel set side by side with the willful wickedness of the sons of Eli. It is like a mosaic set in white and black, with the black largely predominating — a black of deepest dye, with here and there a tiny patch of pure white. It is largely the human history, alas, and the history of Israel in particular. The evil of men in the mass is everywhere seen, while only here and there shines some noted exceptions; but the exceptions, as here in the child Samuel, shine only the brighter in contrast. And it is only the distinguishing grace of God that makes any to differ, for, by nature, " there is no difference." So the record given here is not that we should glorify Samuel, but his God, and the grace that provided and set apart for Himself this chosen vessel of His testimony, and His instrument for the accomplishment of His designs towards His people.

So we have in the passage before us the record of the dark doings of Hophni and Phinehas, with here and there a word as to the lovely behavior of the child of Hannah.

Let us examine the account in detail. "The child did minister unto the Lord before Eli." Note the expression: it is not said that he ministered unto Eli before the Lord, but the reverse — he ministered unto the Lord in the presence of Eli. Though himself but a child, he ministered to the Lord — a little Levite indeed, serving Jehovah as best his infant years permitted, caring for the things about "the tent of testimony," the holy vessels and utensils, all of which were intended to express God's glory under various figures. (See Psa. 29:9, marg.) Little Samuel was not there merely in the capacity of servitor to Eli, but in training for his life-work; and while in training, he was serving diligently; his young mind developing, and his intelligence in holy things enlarging, under the Spirit's influence, for he was, according to his mother's vow, a Nazarite from his birth, and for life. No razor came upon his head, no wine or strong drink touched his lips, nor was he even to eat any fruit of the vine. The symbols of natural joys and dignity were denied him, that his heart might be the more occupied with Him to whom he had been dedicated. He must learn that "with Him is the fountain of life," and the wellspring of joys that neither cloy in life nor end with death. Happy child! and happy all who have found in Christ the fount of all their satisfaction and the sweet solace of their every sorrow.

"But the sons of Eli," we read, "were sons of Belial." What a reflection on the name of him who at that time was both high priest and supreme judge in Israel! His sons, the "sons of Belial!" Could anything be worse — children of "worthlessness and corruption!" Truly we see here emphasized the truth of the adage, "The corruption of the best is the worst of corruption." Though priests of the Lord, they descended to depths of evil. Instead of magnifying their office, they degraded it, till "men abhorred the offering of the Lord."

Their sin was of a three-fold character: sacrilege, greed, and uncleanness; for,

"The priest's custom with the people was that, when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was in seething, with a fleshhook of three teeth in his hands; and he struck it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the fleshhook brought up the priest took for himself. So they did in Shiloh, unto all the Israelites that came thither. Also before they burnt the fat, the priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the priest; for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw. And if any man said unto him, Let them not fail to burn the fat presently, and then take as much as thy soul desireth; then he would answer him, Nay; but thou shalt give it me now; and if not, I will take it by force. Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord: for men abhorred the offering of the Lord."

How great was their sin! For with their profanation of the sacrifices of the people, they added shameless gluttony, though God had made ample provision for their maintenance: "For the wave breast and the heave shoulder have I taken of the children of Israel from off the sacrifices of their peace offerings, and have given them unto Aaron the priest and unto his sons by a statute forever from among the children of Israel" (Lev. 7:34). But no, this was not enough; they must have more; and if not given willingly by the poor, brow-beaten people of God, they would take it by force. They lived luxuriously among a people of primitive habits; they kept servants, and "made themselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of God's people. They became "as fed horses," and the crime of unbridled lust laid at their door, in ver. 22, is but the natural consequence of such sensuous living. Stopping at nothing to gratify their carnal appetites, they robbed both God and His people in their shameless greed. And the people, to their honor be it said, though they submitted to being themselves deprived of that which was theirs of the sacrifices by right, objected when the priest's servant took the fat, which, according to Lev. 3:3-5, 16, was to be wholly burnt upon the altar, "an offering made by fire, a sweet savor unto the Lord." "Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?" (Isa. 7:13) might have been asked of the house of Aaron here, as it was asked of the house of David centuries later.

It is a dark, humiliating picture. "They knew not the Lord" is written of these profane men, who occupied the office of priests, but whose hearts were far from God. It was said of Samuel, later, that he "did not yet know the Lord" (chap. 3:7), but that was a very different thing. He was in the way of knowing Him "whom to know is life eternal;" but these sons of Eli had hardened themselves past remedy, and there remained for them but the just judgment of God. Alas for them, and for all like them today, who make a gain of godliness and profane their office to fill their bellies and indulge their lusts.

Following the account of the shameful practices of Eli's sons, we have recorded, in refreshing relief, the lovely conduct of the child of Hannah: "But Samuel ministered before the Lord, being a child, girded with a linen ephod." It shows by contrast the difference between the rejected priests and the child chosen to be the prophet of the Lord. That "but" comes in at this juncture as a star shining out of the night of Shiloh's low estate, and the degradation of its priesthood.

Young as he was, the linen ephod marked this child for service about the holy things of God. Had the sons of Eli ordinary discernment, they might have read in this garment the displacement of themselves by the more worthy successor in training before them. The "little coat," too, brought him year by year by his devout mother was not the ordinary garment worn by children of his age and station, but rather a robe, a garment also worn by the high priest with the ephod. All this bore its own testimony to the gracious purpose of God, to all who had eyes to see and hearts to understand. Yes, better days were coming for the nation, though the time was not yet, and further chastenings were to be experienced before a time of recovery and revival came, some twenty years later.

"And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife, and said, The Lord give thee seed of this woman for the loan which is lent to the Lord. And they went unto their own home. And the Lord visited Hannah, so that she conceived, and bare three sons and two daughters. And the child Samuel grew before the Lord."

Here we see the grateful Eli pronouncing blessing on the parents of his young assistant. His heart was no doubt touched with the constancy and devotion of the child to the interests of Jehovah, and as a token of his appreciation he would give his parents an old man's blessing — a favor never to be despised. The benediction was medially through the lips of Eli, but behind it was the Lord Himself. Hannah lost nothing by offering her firstborn on the altar of service to Jehovah; He repaid her in kind fivefold. It was after Abraham offered Isaac his son, his "only son," upon the altar on the heights of Moriah that God promised him children as the stars of heaven and as the sand upon the seashore for multitude (Gen. 22:16-18). He will be no man's debtor, for He who commands His saints to "owe no man anything," will certainly Himself give the example.

And the child Samuel grew before the Lord." The devoted Hannah might have feared the acquaintance and the corrupting influence of Hophni and Phinehas about the tabernacle at Shiloh, but God preserved Samuel to be an holy vessel, "sanctified and meet for the Master's use." He is able to keep His own, and guard the interests of His cause, whether His instruments live banished and alone, as John in Patmos, or among

the evil influences of the court of Nero. (See Phil. 4:22.) Circumstances are nothing to God, and it is not our surroundings that should give color to our testimony or affect our condition of soul. His sustaining grace and power are able to keep us in holy triumph over evil.

Our chapter on Samuel's childhood ends with Eli's mild chiding of his ungodly sons.

" Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people. Nay, my sons; for it is no good report that I hear: ye make the Lord's people to transgress. If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him? Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the Lord would slay them."

The outraged people had probably brought their complaints to Eli, and the too indulgent father mildly reproves them for their scandalous conduct, calling it simply "evil dealings," and referring to the scandal of their disgraceful doings as " no good report." Oh, how easy and natural it is to be lenient with ourselves and our own children — who are, after all, but our second selves — while all too ready to censure others severely, as Eli, who rudely rebuked poor, praying Hannah, and softly admonished his profligate sons! True, he warns them of the danger of incurring the just displeasure of an insulted God, but in such an indirect and forceless way as to carry with it no conviction, and consequently no reformation. " They hearkened not to the voice of their father."

But " the child Samuel grew on, and was in favor both with the Lord, and also with men." How delightful it is to observe the development of this lovely flower of the Lord's planting! May we, too, grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Life and Times of Samuel the Prophet, Chapter 5: His Predecessor

Article from <https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb>

(1 Sam. 2:27-36.)

"And there came a man of God unto Eli, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Did I plainly appear unto the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house? — and did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest to offer upon mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? — and did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel? Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice, and at mine offering which I have commanded in my habitation; and honorest thy sons above Me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people?"

We have before remarked that Samuel has been called the first of the successional prophets which the grace of God raised up and maintained throughout the monarchies and among the remnant after their return from the captivity in Babylon. The priesthood was ordained to maintain the nation in direct communication with God. Having broken down completely in the days of Eli, men of God, called seers, or prophets, were raised up to bring God's messages to the people and plead with them on God's behalf. This was pre-eminently the mission of Samuel. Previous to his call, " there was no open vision " — no public manifestation of God's presence in their midst.

That there were men of God, or occasional prophets, previously, we cannot doubt. " The angel of the Lord " who came from Gilgal to Bochim, and reproved the nation for their disobedience, may have been a prophet, for in the marginal reading the word " angel " is messenger (Judg. 2:1). The messenger here sent to Eli is called " a man of God." This honorable title is not bestowed indiscriminately on all the servants of God. Moses is called " the man of God " five times; David, three times. Samuel, Elijah and Elisha, with a few other prophets, are thus designated; and in the New Testament it is applied to Timothy, showing that we also may covet this title, or the character that merits it. There never was a greater need than now for such men, and we can say, as Moses said to Joshua, concerning the prophesying of Eldad and Medad in the camp, " Would God all the Lord's people were men of God! "

This man of God comes to Eli unannounced. Of his name and origin we know nothing. Three others like him were sent, each with God's message, to a king: the " man of God out of Judah " was sent to apostate Jeroboam; another was sent to the weak and wicked Ahab; and still another, to the militarist Amaziah. Their words only have come down to us. God would not have us occupied with His messengers, but with their message. They shall be known in due time, and receive the due reward of their service. Let us be satisfied, beloved fellow-servants of Christ, to labor unnoticed and unknown, content to deliver our message, bear our testimony, and leave the rest to Him and to "that day." There are many in the sacred chronicles whose record we might envy, but whose names we do not know. In Hebrews 11 what a wonderful catalog of unnamed worthies is given, whose deeds are inscribed in God's " Hall of Fame Enduring." The secret name on the white stone of Christ's approval is the thing to be desired above all else. " To him that overcometh... will I give a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it " (Rev. 2:17).

The man of God comes to Eli with the message: " Thus saith Jehovah," he begins. He needs no apology for the message he bears. He is relieved of all responsibility in the matter; it was his to deliver the communication regardless of any consequences to himself. Men might call him brutally abrupt, lacking in tact and consideration of the effects of the terrible words on the venerable priest. But he was to deliver God's word, " not in words which man's wisdom teacheth," but in the words which God had given him to say. And those to-day whose business it is to reason with sinful and lost men " of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come," must not tone down God's truth, nor shun to declare to a sinful world what lies before it. The sweet tale of the gospel of our precious Savior dying for ruined and guilty man, of pardon for rebels and salvation for the lost, this is indeed the burden of their testimony, and is to be always duly emphasized; but they have also to bring God's warnings to the wicked, and tell of judgment for the impenitent, of hell for the Christ-rejector, and of the fire that never shall be quenched. To declare the whole counsel of God is the solemn responsibility laid upon the man of God. Let the example of these men of God of old embolden every servant of Christ to bear faithful testimony to a dreaming world that more and more demands of the ministers of Christ that they prophesy " smooth things " to them.

The terse message of the man of God to Eli has three distinct parts. He first reverts to the past, dwells for a moment on the present, and then foretells the future. The past sets forth the privileges of Eli's priestly ancestry; the present establishes the fact of the utter failure of his branch of this favored house; and the future proclaims the sure and sweeping judgment about to fall upon it.

He first reviews the origin of the priestly family. Speaking as the mouthpiece of Jehovah, he says:

" Did I plainly appear to the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house? and did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to offer upon mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before Me? and did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel? Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering? "

Eli is reminded of the high honor put upon the house of his fathers: the great I AM appeared to Aaron while in the land of bondage, and without any revealed reason, but His sovereign choice, selected him for the honorable post of high priest to Israel. It was for no distinguishing merit on Aaron's part, but of God's freest grace, and this privilege was entailed on his posterity forever. He gave them ample and generous provision also for their maintenance — " all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel." These distinguishing favors should have incited them to faithfulness in the discharge of their official obligations, and prompted them to hearty obedience to all His will. This is ever God's way with His own, and often with sinners too. He reminds them of His past dealings in grace and favor towards them. The review of His " goodness" is designed to " lead them to repentance; " if this fails of its desired effect, the goodness bestowed becomes but an aggravation of the guilt, and cannot but bring down heavier judgment. It is a most solemn and serious thing to trifle with, or abuse, the grace of God, as many have learned to their sorrow and eternal loss.

Having prepared the way by recalling to Eli's mind the high and holy privileges conferred on him and his house, the prophet proceeds to charge home on his conscience his failure and sin: " Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering... and honorest thy sons above Me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people? "

There are three points in the indictment: they " kicked," or rebelled, as if God's sacrifices were a thing of contempt, or the regulations concerning it onerous; he honored his worthless sons above the great and glorious Jehovah, God of Israel; and they " made themselves fat " with the very best brought by Israel to His altar. It is a grave and awful charge to bring against such a man as Eli! Oh, how it must have cut him to the heart as he stood dumb before the accuser, in mute acknowledgment of the charge! Think of it, he honored his wicked sons above Jehovah! Could sin be greater or guilt more grave? Those that allow and countenance their children in any evil way, and do not use their authority to restrain and punish them, do in effect honor them more than God, being more tender of their reputation than of His glory, and more desirous to honor them than to honor Him.

This was the deep fault of the too indulgent father, though himself innocent of the disorders about the Tabernacle. Being both high priest and chief magistrate over the land, he was invested with full powers both to depose and punish them, but failed utterly to do it. How much failure there is of this, alas, amongst Christian parents to-day. There are good men, who are fathers, who seem to have neither eyes nor ears for the shortcomings of their children, and disastrous results follow. Some grow up unbelievers, if not profligates; and instead of becoming an honor and ornament to God and their parents, they bring down their gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. God said of Abraham, " I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him." He did not, like Eli, weakly expostulate, or in easy tone admonish, but he commanded. We like the word; it has the ring of discipline, and savors of authority and order; and this is the very thing Eli failed most to do, and had, consequently, to hear from the lips of the man of God the doom pronounced against his family: "Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before Me forever: but now Jehovah saith, Be it far from Me; for them that honor Me I will honor, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed."

The priesthood was promised to the house of Aaron forever (Ex. 29:9). " The priest's office shall be theirs for a perpetual statute;" but it was in a way conditional, that they " walk before" Jehovah; this they ceased to do, and were consequently " put as polluted from the priesthood." This eventually became true of the whole house of Aaron (see Mal. 2:1-9), and it became displaced by that Priest "after the order of Melchizedek, who abides continually." He could say in faithfulness, as no descendant of Levi ever could say, "As for Me, Thou upholdest Me in mine integrity, and settest Me before thy face forever " (Psa. 41: 12). Our willing hearts delight to have it so. Our God has laid help upon One that is mighty: " the government shall be upon His shoulder," " and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and He shall be a priest upon his throne " (Zech. 6:13). God speed the day of His appearing!

" Them that honor Me, I will honor, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed." Here is a most weighty principle, seen in all God's governmental ways; and it was to be illustrated in a solemn way upon the house of Eli. They had daringly despised Him of whom it is written, that " He is mighty, and despiseth not any " (Job 36:5); and for their insolence flaunting itself in the face of the Almighty, they must suffer the severest punishment which the Jewish mind can conceive: " Behold, the days come, that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house, that there shall not be an old man in thy house; and thou shalt see an enemy in my habitation... and all the increase of thy house shall die in the flower of their age." This came to pass in the very beginning of the glorious reign of Solomon. Abiathar, the last official representative of the house of Eli, and his son Jonathan, took part with the ambitious Adonijah, in collusion with the veteran warrior Joab, in conspiracy against Solomon, for which he was deposed and disgraced (see 1 Ki. 2:26, 27), and from that day the priestly office returned to the house of Eleazar, in the person of Zadok. After sharing the afflictions of David in his rejection, and bearing with him the burdens of a not untroubled reign, he slipped at the last, and lost the place of honor just as Solomon's reign was about to begin.

"And this shall be a sign unto thee, that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day shall they die both of them. And I will raise me up a faithful priest, that shall do according to that which is in my heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed forever. And it shall come to pass that every one that is left in thy house shall come and crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, in one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread" (verses 34-36).

Abject poverty and humiliating beggary was to be the lot of Eli's descendants. It is a picture fearful to contemplate, and it must have struck Eli with horror. But his sons had reveled in luxury and power, and it was meet that their offspring should grovel in disgrace and penury. They had lived luxuriously at Jehovah's expense, robbing Him of that which was His due, and their children should come to beg a piece of silver

(the word is said to signify the smallest coin), and a morsel of bread.

How painful all this is! Had Eli honored God above his sons, and dealt with them accordingly, he would have escaped this sorrow and humiliation. But thus it is in the equitable government of God. He "is a consuming fire," and a jealous God, and woe to those that set aside His word.

Now, here again, a bright light is shining out of the gathering gloom: God was to raise up for Himself a "faithful priest," His "Anointed." This evidently looks beyond either David or Zadok; it is God's glorious King-Priest, who on earth ever did that which was according to God's heart and mind. So, in wrath, God ever remembers mercy; but it is mercy which can only be ministered through the merits and mediation of His "merciful and faithful High Priest." Blessed surety and pledge of eternal blessing for all who by grace believe.

Staff and Scepter: Six Addresses on Some of the Principle Scenes in the Life of David, Chapter 4: David and the Young Man of Egypt

Article from <https://bibletruthpublishers.com/bible-truth-study-bible/btsb>

1 Sam. 30:1-25

Some of these incidents in the life of David are like the "puzzle pictures" most of us have seen. When you first glance at them you only see a tree or an animal or something of the kind. But as you examine it more closely, you begin to see a great variety of pictures in it. You see men and birds and beasts and fishes and trees and many other things. And the more you look the more distinctly they appear. And you wonder that you did not see them all at first. A casual glance would not detect them.

Now, that is something like these verses I have read. A careless reader would see nothing in them but an interesting historical incident. But there is more. There is a wealth of gospel illustration in them, and I think no very lively imagination is required to see it, either. Just keep the eyes of your heart open, and your ears, too. As Peter preached in the house of Cornelius "the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the Word." Some present may have been gazing about the room at Cornelius' splendid furniture and the magnificent pictures on the wall, or studying the fashion of some lady's latest bonnet, or absorbed in thought about their business or their pleasures. Only those who heard the Word were blessed. May you hear in your hearts tonight the "Gospel of Christ" foreshadowed in this narrative. "Hear and your soul shall live."

David and his men had been away from Ziklag for a time. When they return, to their surprise and dismay they find their city burned, their property stolen, and, worst of all, their wives and children carried off. After recovering somewhat from the shock, they start in pursuit of the Amalekite invaders. Some of the band become exhausted on the road and are left in charge of the stuff by the brook Besor, while David and four hundred of his men continue the pursuit. They find a half-starved abandoned slave—an Egyptian—in the field, who, after being fed and somewhat revived, promises to guide them to the marauders' camp. But he first exacts an oath from David that he will neither take his life nor deliver him up to his old master. They set forward again and surprise their enemies in the midst of their festivities. Most of them are slain, and David recovers all—the wives, the little ones, and all the stolen property.

This young Egyptian represents the sinner. They find him in the field, just where Jesus finds poor sinners. "The field is the world." By nature we belong to Satan's world. Christ must seek and find us, as the shepherd sought and found the poor lost sheep.

Notice three things in connection with this "young man of Egypt." They are his citizenship, his condition, and his captivity.

First, his citizenship. In verse 13 David says to him, "Whence art thou?" He replies at once, "I am a young man of Egypt." He frankly acknowledges his citizenship; Egypt was his native land. Now, Egypt is a striking and instructive type of the world. I do not mean this physical world or earth on which we exist, but this moral scene in which men live and seek for satisfaction. It is that moral order of things which had its beginning in Cain's day, when he "went out from the presence of the Lord," and he and his descendants built cities, sought out witty inventions of brass and iron, manufactured musical instruments and looked for a good time, generally in forgetfulness of God. And that continues to the present day. The Word of God shows the land of Egypt is a picture of this. There Pharaoh (type of Satan) ruled and tyrannized. There, too, the elect nation of Jehovah were groaning in bondage beneath the cruel lash of their taskmasters. It was a place where the true God was unknown, and the inhabitants worshiped and served the creature instead of the Creator.

Then, too, they were, in a way, independent of God. They had the Nile River to irrigate the country and were not at all dependent on the dews and rains of heaven. Twice a year the river overflowed its banks. They built dykes along the riverside, and here and there canals were cut in them. When the river was high they opened these canals. This overflowed the fields and meadows all along the Nile for miles and miles. Then when the river began to fall, they closed the canals, which prevented the water escaping from the inland. After a while, the sun evaporated what water the soil did not absorb, and they reaped abundant harvests of grain and hay without a drop of rain or dew. This is like the world. They have no need of God. Their springs are all down here. Christians can say, "All my springs are in Thee." God is the source of all their joys. All their hopes are centered in Christ above. They look to heaven for everything. "The ungodly are not so." Their resource is some "river." For some it is gold and stocks and houses and land. Give others the ballroom, the theater, the cards and the novels, and they are satisfied. They have no care for Christ! Egypt had its river, and the world (which spiritually is called Egypt) has its river, too.

Christians are not of the world. The Lord Jesus says so. "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:14). Paul says, "Our conversation (or citizenship) is in heaven" (Phil. 3:20). They are "citizens of no mean city," even "Jerusalem which is above," where gold is trodden under foot and where there are "pleasures forevermore." "The Lamb is the light thereof," who, the Apostle says, "gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil world" (Gal. 1:4). If you are unconverted, you belong down here where Satan is "god" and "prince." As "god," men worship him (unwittingly); as "prince" they serve him. Christians, Thomas-like, say of Jesus, "My Lord and my God."

Where is your citizenship, my friend? "Whence art thou?" Must you answer, "I am a young man of Egypt"? Would you, in truthfulness, be compelled to say, "I am a young lady of this moral Egypt; I am a woman of the world"? Come now, be honest. You belong to one place or the other. It is morally impossible to belong to earth and heaven. Some professing Christians do not seem to know this. They say, "We're going to make the best of both worlds." They remind me of the fable of the bats. The birds and the beasts were at war, and the bats determined to remain neutral. To the birds they declared themselves to be birds, and to the beasts they confessed themselves to be beasts. Once they were birds of the air, and once again they were beasts of the field. God will not have such shifting and neutrality. The Red Sea rolled between the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan. Canaan represents the heavenlies, where the saints of God belong. There they had no Nile to overflow its banks. They were entirely dependent on "the early and the latter rains."

The Red Sea typifies the death of Christ. It is Christ's death that separates Christians from the world. The cross divides the human race. It was by the cross of Christ that the world was crucified to Paul and he unto the world (Gal. 6:14). It stands like a mighty barrier between the justified and the condemned. It is like a wall of fire between the servants of Christ and the subjects of Satan. Remember this, beloved fellow-Christian. Act upon it. God saved a certain man, and he came clean. His break with the world was complete. When enticed to return to the world and his old companions, he used to say: "No; when I left the rebel ranks I burned the bridge behind me." He had in his mind the old generals who, to make sure of success, used to burn the bridges behind them, so as to cut off all opportunity for retreat. This is the practical side. The doctrinal side is that God is taking "out of the world a people for His name" (Acts 15:14). The man or woman who dies a citizen of this world must go to hell. Let this question search your heart: "Whence art thou?"

The next is his condition. This was deplorable. Three things may be said of him: he was sick, starving, and abandoned.

First, he was sick. He says, "Three days ago I fell sick" (1 Samuel 30:13). He was just like you, my unsaved friend. You are sick with an awful disease. It is sin, and it ends in eternal death: "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). The poison of sin is in your soul and doing its deadly work. You are like the people in the desert, dying of the serpent-bite. You commit sin. "And sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:15). This is more than the death of the body—it is eternal death in the lake of fire!

But thank God there is a remedy for sin! It is the gospel. The Apostle says, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" (Rom. 1:16). You may be cured of your disease of sin tonight, my friend! "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). Do you want salvation? If so, get healing for your soul tonight!

There are three ways of treating God's remedy for sin. You may reject it, neglect it or accept it. Let me illustrate it. Suppose a fearful plague is raging in this city. Thousands die on every hand. No physician can help the stricken ones: it produces fatal results in every instance. Remedies seem useless. I myself am smitten with the plague. A stranger comes just as I am at the point of death and leaves me three bottles of medicine, saying it will cure me if I take it immediately. I take a bottle and am cured completely: I am overjoyed! I have two bottles left and think of others dying without hope. There are Mr. Black and Mr. Brown. I will hurry off to tell them of my remedy and give them each a bottle. So I hasten down to Mr. Black, who is almost gone. I go to his bedside and say: "I have good news for you." "What is it?" he faintly asks. I tell him of the remedy and of my own remarkable recovery. To my surprise, he rises in his bed and cries angrily: "Be gone with your quack remedies! It's all a humbug. You are a medical fanatic. Talk no more nonsense to me. I will not have it!" He rejects it deliberately, and I sadly turn away. In a few hours he is in the throes of death. He is like the atheist who would take Christ's servants by the shoulders, throw them out of his house and fling the Bible after them. He rejects the Gospel and insures his soul's damnation!

But all are not atheists. There is another class, and Brown represents them. I hurry to his house. Time is precious, and he may soon be gone. I say to him, "Brown, rejoice! You need not die. I was once as low as you, and I have a remedy. It cured me, and here it is. Take it immediately, if you value your life!" He politely thanks me and tells me I may leave a bottle on the stand. I do not wait to see him take the medicine. I have one bottle left and hurry off to a Mr. White whom I know to be dying. Brown intends to take the remedy, but it is nearly teatime, so he puts it off till after tea. After tea he takes a quiet smoke. Then he glances over the evening paper, dozes, falls asleep and never awakes. He has died with a remedy within easy reach, but neglects it. Scripture says, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" (Hebrews 2:3). Someone has said that the road to hell is paved with good intentions. Men and women intend to have the question of their souls' salvation settled someday. And it will be, but with most ... just too late. It will be settled contrary to their expectations, with heaven closed against them, and hell, with all its horrors, open to them as neglecters of God's great salvation. "The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing" (Prov. 13:4). Desiring the salvation of your soul is not enough—you must lay hold of it at once! "Behold, now is the accepted time" (2 Corinthians 6:2). Do you think lost souls in hell ever expected to be there? Only a few of them. If we could descend to those deplorable regions of remorse and question those who heard the Gospel as you hear it now, most of them would say they never thought they would be lost. Nearly all expected to be saved before they died. But death suddenly overtook them or their hearts grew hard and calloused as the years slipped by. Then, before they knew it, they were past all hope. "I am lost, lost, lost; yet I always meant to be saved!" a young girl cried as she lay in the agonies of death. O man, woman, child—do not delay! NOW is the golden moment!

Well, I leave the neglecter, and turn towards the house of Mr. White. I enter his room and say: "Thank God, you need not die, my man! Here is a remedy. It has cured me, and it will cure you!" "Thank you," he gasps, as he takes a long, deep draft and is saved. He accepts the remedy!

Sin-sick soul, accept God's remedy tonight. It is within your reach. "Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven (that is, to bring Christ down from above)? Or, who shall descend into the deep (that is, to bring Christ up again from the dead)? But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. 10:6-9).

Paul at Athens had three kinds of hearers. "Some mocked." They were the rejecters. "And others said, We will hear thee again of this matter." They were neglecters. "Howbeit, certain men clave unto him, and believed." They accepted and were saved (Acts 17:32-34).

Which class are you in, my friend? Oh, be wise in time. "Why will ye die?"

The young man of Egypt was starving. For "three days and three nights" he had eaten nothing. How like the prodigal of Luke 15:17 this is. "I perish with hunger." Hunger makes a man dependent. He is thus made willing to be ministered unto. For a season, souls in this state are

likely to seek to satisfy the cravings of their hearts with "husks." And the devil helps them. He wants to keep them somewhat satisfied, if possible, short of the Bread of Life. He fears to have them turn towards God for satisfaction, for he knows they will find it there. So he entertains them to the best of his ability with everything the world affords. And he has plenty of ministers to do this kind of work. They can do it beneath the cloak of Christianity, too. Such are "transformed as the ministers of righteousness" (2 Cor. 11:15). They appear as ministers of Christ, but they don't preach Christ. The world seeks entertainment. So these men apply themselves to the art of entertaining, so that even starving souls are caught for a time. They are like Nero, who, when Rome was starving, sent to Egypt for shiploads of sand for the arena, instead of corn for the famishing inhabitants. He would amuse a starving people. What the poor world needs is Christ—the Gospel. Would to God there were faithful men in every corner of Christendom who would preach only Christ as the bread of life to perishing souls. There are actors, lecturers and clowns enough in the world to tickle the ears of perishing men and women, without the professed servants of Christ attempting to do the same.

Turn from the chaff and the straw of a mock Christianity, with its ceaseless round of entertainment. Christ alone can meet the deep and desperate need of your perishing soul. He not only saves, but, glory to His name, "He satisfieth the longing soul" (Psalm 107:9).

Then, the young man of Egypt was abandoned. He says, "My master left me, because three days ago I fell sick" (1 Sam. 30:13). His heartless master left him in the field to perish when he could not use him any longer. And that's the way the devil treats his servants. He uses them as his tools as long as he can. Then, when he cannot use them anymore, he leaves them to their fate. Thus he treated Judas and hosts of others before and since.

But it is not so with Christ. He never turns away from any. He saved a Mary Magdalene. He revealed Himself as a Savior to the Samaritan woman. He assured a dying robber of a home in paradise with Him. He saved a mad inquisitor called Saul—the very "chief of sinners." His call to the very worst of Adam's race is this: "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." George Whitefield used to often cry out in his preaching: "Christ will even receive the devil's castaways." A poor wreck of a woman was once passing the door of the tabernacle just as the great soul-winner uttered this startling declaration. They struck her; hope revived in her breast, and the next day she called on the earnest evangelist to ask him if it was really so that Christ would receive such castaways as she was. He assured her from Scripture that He would, and she became "a brand plucked out of the fire." Thank God, I say, for such a Savior to proclaim and such a Master to obey and serve. Is He Savior and Lord to you, my friend, or are you still lost and Satan's slave? You belong to either Christ or Satan, as we shall see.

The last is his captivity. The young man of Egypt confessed himself to be a servant to an Amalekite. "And David said unto him, To whom belondest thou? and whence art thou? And he said, I am a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite" (vs. 13). He was a bond slave. He belonged to this Amalekite. Now, Amalek is a type of the flesh that is in us and by which Satan enslaves the sons of men. By "the flesh" I mean man's evil nature—that which in us produces the various lusts and passions. Amalek was Israel's most bitter and implacable enemy, and the Lord had sworn that He would have war with Amalek forever (Exod. 17:8-16). So also now, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other" (Gal. 5:17). Now Christ came not only to deliver us from the terrors of death, as we have already seen, but also from the enslaving power of sin—from serving that indwelling sin, that we may live unto God.

When David's men discovered this young man of Egypt, they brought him to David. Thus true servants of the Lord always aim to bring both sinners and saints to the Lord Himself, knowing well that none but He is able to meet their various needs. Andrew found his brother Simon. "And he brought him to Jesus" (John 1:42). To make the Church a sort of Noah's ark for safety is a huge delusion. Christ is the ark and the sinner's only refuge. You must be brought to Christ, my friends, or perish. You must always be in contact with Christ, my brethren, or starve and grow worldly.

The Egyptian brought to David is assured by him of his safety. Then he enters David's service. He begins to serve him. "And David said to him, Canst thou bring me down to this company? And he said, Swear unto me by God, that thou wilt neither kill me, nor deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will bring thee down to this company" (vs. 15).

Now note the order. Assurance of salvation first, and service afterward. It is not first service, and then security. The young man will not make a move in David's service till he has the assurance of his own security. He was wise in this. Are you as wise, my friend? Have you the assurance of your own salvation? If not, you have no business doing so-called "Christian" work. Security is not gained by service, though hosts of men have that idea. "By grace are ye saved, through faith...Not of works lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9). If man were saved by works, heaven would be a wretched place. I'll tell you why. Heaven would be filled with boasters. One hears boasting and bragging enough down here, until it almost makes him sick. How blessed to be in a place one day where there is no boasting! Why, if sinners were saved as some men preach and as the majority of people suppose, we might hear conversations like this in heaven: "Who are you?"

"Oh, I lived in the days when Noah built his ark."

"And how did you succeed in getting here?"

"Well, I'll tell you. I had a good deal of sympathy with Noah, and took an interest in his work. I worked a number of weeks for nothing on the ark, and I donated several thousand feet of lumber and a good many kegs of spikes and nails. That's how I got here."

Such boasting would be heard on every hand; every man praising himself and outdoing his neighbor. Thank God, there will be no boasting there. "Where is boasting, then? It is excluded. By what law (or principle)? Of works? Nay; but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Rom. 3:27-28). We are saved by the grace of God on the justifying principle of that faith which clings to Jesus and the blood of His cross, and not of works or anything of us, lest any man should boast.

Christ has done the work that saves. Behold Him on the cross between two mocking thieves, though His rightful place is on the throne of God, the center of adoring hosts of angels. Though "King of kings," He wears a crown of thorns. The Creator of heaven and earth, He hangs in shame between the two, as if unfit for either place. He cries, "I thirst," though He made the gushing springs and cooling brooks and all the mighty rivers. The cup of the wrath of God is pressed to His stainless lips, and He drains it. The sword of divine justice is uplifted, and He bares His spotless bosom to receive the stroke. The storm of God's anger against sin is bursting upon Him, and He bows His blessed, sinless

head beneath the blast. Hear that cry that comes from the very depths of His suffering spirit: "My God! My God! why hast Thou forsaken Me?" God makes Him sin for us—He who knew no sin. He is made a curse for us, that He may become the eternal source and fountain of all blessing. The heavens become black and the earth is quaking. The very rocks are rent as Jesus, the Savior, makes atonement. Three awful hours have passed, and in triumph He exclaims: "It is finished!" Then He bows His head, yields up the spirit, and the mighty work is finished! All praise be His! The anthem of the redeemed is this: "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood ... to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever" (Rev. 1:5-6). To the Son of God belongs all glory and all blessing. And to the sons of men is offered free salvation.

Works follow faith. The Egyptian serves when he is assured of his security. We believe and are saved apart from works. Then we begin to serve. A little verse expresses it:

Scripture says, "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10). But many there are who try to serve the Lord before they have salvation. There must be the tree before you can look for fruits. Who ever saw a crop of apples growing on a telegraph-pole? Unconverted souls are just as dead as any telegraph-pole. Scripture describes them as being "dead in trespasses and sins."

The young man of Egypt enjoyed assurance of his safety, David's oath assured him. He trusted David.

Do you have assurance, friend? Do you know for certain that you are saved? You say, "I hope so," or "I think so."

Indeed! And are you satisfied with uncertainty on a subject this serious? Were you starting on a long journey and one asked you, "Do you have your ticket?" would you answer, "I hope so"? Could you rest short of being sure?

God's word alone can make us sure, as David's word assured the young Egyptian. It says to them that believe, "By grace ye are saved" (Eph. 2:5). Also, "Who hath saved us ... not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2 Tim. 1:9). And also, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us" (Titus 3:5). I am not left to my feelings. I know it from the Scriptures. If I am in a dark cellar, I must feel my way. A man in the dark must be guided by feeling. But if I have a light to go by, I do not have to trust to feelings. God's word is the lamp that gives us light and makes us certain. I dare not trust my feelings. Isaac trusted his feelings and was deceived. "And Isaac said unto Jacob, Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou be my very son Esau or not. And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father; and he felt him, and said, The voice is Jacob's voice but the hands are the hands of Esau" (Gen. 27:21-22). He made a disastrous mistake. He went by feelings, instead of being guided by the voice. The voice of God alone can give us certainty. And the Scriptures are the voice of God. Listen. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life" (1 John 5:13). "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (John 3:36).

The Egyptian felt much different after eating the "bread," the "piece of a cake of figs," the "two clusters of raisins," and drinking the "water." No doubt of that. But I am sure he did not say, "I know my life is going to be spared and that I am not going to be given up to my old master, because I feel so refreshed and strong." No, he had the word of David—David's oath to make him certain. God's word is as good as His oath. And that Word assures all true believers that their souls are saved, and that forever! "But," says someone, "I have seen converts go back and fall again beneath the power of Satan." And I have seen skyrockets in the sky at night that looked like falling stars. But they were not. God's almighty power suspends the stars in empty space. They never fall. Sky-rockets are not stars. They are from beneath—earth-born, and they are man-made. Stars are heavenly and the work of God's creative hand. Man-made Christians will go back. They may look like Christians, and, like rockets, they may even make a brilliant show. But "sky-rocket converts" never hold out. God's converts always do. They are said to be "kept by the power of God through faith" (1 Peter 1:5). Peter's light grew dim. He stumbled, but his faith continued. There was a work of God in his soul, and he did not fall away and perish. Thank God we are saved with an "eternal salvation" (Heb. 5:9).

I'll notice briefly two words, and then I'm done. They are the Amalekites' enjoyment and their judgment. They were making merry in fancied security when David swooped down upon them like an eagle on its prey. "Behold, they were spread abroad upon all the earth; eating and drinking and dancing....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" (1 Samuel 30:16-17).

They were having a "merry time," as people say, when the vengeance of David was threatening to destroy them. Those Amalekites are like this God-hating, Christ-rejecting, Spirit-resisting, grace-abusing world. The awful judgment of God is threatening them, but they eat and drink and dance and sing as if it were not so. The Apostle says, "When they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape" (1 Thess. 5:3). He describes this impending judgment. "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power" (2 Thess. 1:7-9). Jude says, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him" (Jude 14-15).

Christ is coming, sinner. Are you prepared to meet Him? If not, what madness to be making merry! Many years ago, a servant of Christ named Samuel Whiting was itinerating about the states of New England. One night he stopped at a tavern where a company of young men and women were spending a merry evening. As Mr. Whiting passed them on his way to his room, he said to them, with deep solemnity: "Friends, if you are sure that your sins are forgiven, you may be wisely merry." His words dropped like a thunderbolt in their midst. They soon dispersed to their homes to think about the danger of their unsaved souls. Are your sins forgiven? If not, beware. You are not "wisely merry." Think, I beseech you, of the awful danger to which you are exposed. No man knows when Christ may come. I solemnly believe the hour of the world's impending judgment is about to strike. "The end of all things is at hand," the Apostle Peter writes. "The time is short," Paul says. Soon, very soon, will the long-delayed and threatened stroke descend. Woe to you then, poor sinner!

The indifference of men is appalling. Thirty-five or forty years ago, this country was shaken from Maine to California, and from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico. Now all seems still as death. Is it the calm before the storm? the hush anterior to the tempest? In the days of Noah and Lot, they were living in easy unconcern, as they are to-day. But the flood came and the fire descended. "Sudden destruction" came upon them in the midst of their festivities. My unconverted hearers, "Flee from the wrath to come!" The Amalekites perished without warning. But God has warned the world, and it stands without excuse!

The young man of Egypt was with David when he came upon the Amalekites. He once belonged to their company and was one of them. Had he not been separated from them, he would have surely shared their fate. If unconverted, you are of that world of sinners, "whose judgment now for a long time lingereth not, and whose damnation slumbereth not." Turn from it now, before the vengeance of God destroys you with it. God has borne with it long. The sins of Christendom reach up to Heaven and cry for vengeance. Christ is your only refuge. Come to Him now, and, like Noah in the ark and Lot in the mountain, you will be safe from the sweeping storm. Like the young man of Egypt, you will be taken out of the world and away from this scene before the stroke descends. You will appear with Christ, along with those ten thousand holy ones who accompany Him when He comes to earth to war and judge.

"Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him" (Psa. 2:12).

One question before I close. It is the first clause of the thirty-eighth verse of the twenty-first chapter of Acts: "Art not thou that Egyptian?"

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