

The Christian Arsenal

www.christianarsenal.com

1 SAMUEL 21:1-24:22

Last week we saw how God brought David and Samuel together. We said last week that God had to deal with both men. He had to train David so he would be equipped to take the throne at the proper time and He had to allow the sin of Saul to run its course.

We saw last week that we were laying two foundations...one based on a contrast between men and one based on a covenant between two men. In today's lesson, we're going to build on that foundation.

Chapter 20 tells us of another covenant that Jonathan and David made. The covenant we saw them make last week was really a covenant that Jonathan made with David. But, in **chapter 20**, Jonathan wants something from David. Jonathan asks David to remember his descendants...to allow his loving kindness to extend to Jonathan's house forever...and we know that David did this for Jonathan.

If we had the time, we would go to **2 Samuel** where we would see David's provision for Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth. What a picture this covenant is of the way God provides for us and also provides for our family members.

Saul had developed a real hatred for David.

Saul knew the kingdom had been taken from him and it was only a matter of time before he would not be king of Israel any longer.

Saul also knew the people of the kingdom thought David was a hero. After David killed Goliath the women came out to meet King Saul and they began singing a song...

But their song wasn't pleasing to Saul. In fact, their song made him very angry...

***"Saul has slain his thousands, and David
His ten thousands."***

And the Bible says, ***"and Saul look at David with suspicion from that day forward."***

Saul also knew that **Jonathan** loved David, and he hated the fact that his son loved the man he considered his enemy.

Those were Saul's "natural" reasons for hating David, but there was something "supernatural" going on in Saul's life as well. **We saw last week that the Spirit of God departed Saul and an evil spirit from God came upon him.**

Saul was a **jealous** man. He was a **vindictive** man. He was a **violent** man and he was a **mad** man and at times, he was a **demon-possessed** man.

In **chapter 20**, which we didn't really have time to cover last week, we see the incident of the arrows.

Saul had already attempted to kill David and David felt that one day Saul **would** kill him or **have** him killed. However, I don't think Jonathan quite believed that his father would do that. So a plan was devised that if Jonathan learned that indeed Saul was out to kill David, Jonathan would let David know.

The Christian Arsenal

www.christianarsenal.com

David hid in a field and Jonathan came out to the field with his armor bearer under the pretense of doing some target practice. They had decided that if Jonathan found out from his father that David's life was **not** in danger, Jonathan would shoot an arrow and if Jonathan said, "The arrow is to your left or your right," then David would be safe to come back to Saul's house.

But, if Jonathan said, "The arrows are beyond you," then David would know he must flee for his life.

Well, **chapter 20** tells us Saul got very angry because David had not appeared at dinner for a couple of nights and he asked Jonathan where David was. Jonathan told Saul that David had gone to Bethlehem to attend a sacrifice with his own family and let's look at

1 Samuel 20:30-34...

Saul must have been a pretty poor shot with a spear. He had already missed David twice and here he misses Jonathan. But, I believe this gives us a good idea of Saul's state of mind, doesn't it?

The rest of this chapter tells us that Jonathan shot the arrows **past** the little armor bearer and thus warned David that his life indeed was in danger.

After Jonathan sent the armor bearer back to the city, David and Jonathan said "goodbye" to each other and David fled for his life.

So, David has begun a life on the run...a life of running from Saul and his men. David knows he will someday be king...he believes God, but his flesh cries out for safety and so he runs from Saul...

One thing we can be certain about the Word of God...it never hides from us the flaws of God's men, does it? God doesn't gloss over the rough parts...He lets us see all the **warts** and **failures** and **spiritual deficiencies** in the lives of His men.

David was a man of unusual courage and great faith in Jehovah. **But, at this point in time, all was not well in David's heart and life.** A change was gradually taken place. **Little by little his faith in God's protection was being replaced by fear of what one man could do to him.**

And we're going to see today how this fear began to control David...how this same man who as a young boy had come against the giant, Goliath, in the name of the LORD of Israel simply ignored God's ability to protect him against Saul...and how he allowed that fear to keep him from relying on God and made him take matters into his own hands.

David is running and he's running because of fear...and fear never has been a friend of faith, has it? God has not given to us the spirit of fear...

See, God was not only doing a work in **Saul's** life, but He was using what He was doing in Saul's life to **train** David. He was allowing Saul in his obsession to come against David so David would be drawn closer to God...**God wanted David to learn to trust Him and rely on Him completely!**

But, do you see what's happening here? David is forgetting God! He's forgetting God's **promises** and he certainly isn't seeking God's **direction!** He's letting his fear take control of him.

Has this ever happened to you?

The Christian Arsenal

www.christianarsenal.com

Remember Elijah! After Elijah had defeated 450 prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel and then what did he do? Not only that, he was given **power from God to control the rain**, and he called upon the rain to come and end the drought. Not only that, but God gave him **supernatural power to outrun the king's chariot**...a chariot that undoubtedly was pulled by at least two horses...all the way from Mt. Carmel to the Jezreel.

Then, what happened? Well, if you'll remember, he heard that Jezebel threatened to kill him and he ran for his life! Now, think about it...he just finished killing at least 450 men, and he's running from one woman.

I remember J. Vernon McGee telling the story of how he would counsel folks that God was right there with them...how when folks came to him with their problems and illnesses, old J. Vernon would say, **"Well, you know, God hasn't left you...He's still right here with you...everything's going to be alright!"** And then, one day J. Vernon went to the doctor and the doctor told him that he had cancer and that great old saint went out to his car and hung onto the steering wheel and said, **"God, You are still there, aren't You? Everything is going to be alright, isn't it?"**

21:1-6...

The Tabernacle was at Nob at this time...and the question comes to us...Why did David go to Nob in the first place? Did he go because he knew he needed to go to the tabernacle and seek God's presence and direction? Well, that might have been his initial intention...All we know is what happened when he got there...

Verse 2...

Was David on a mission for the king? No, he was **running** from the king. Rather than **standing** and **trusting** God to do what He said He would do...**fear has gripped David and he is really out of fellowship with God at this point.**

I want us to look at three things David did that prove to us that he was out of fellowship with God...

1) Deception of Ahimelech

One of the first signs of a believer's being out of fellowship is deception.

Eighty-six priests lived there and ministered at the Tabernacle at Nob. I doubt whether much disturbed their quietness except occasionally a visitor who came to perform his vows before God. They had no weapon of defense because they didn't need any...all they had was the sword of Goliath which was a memento of David's great victory.

David came to Nob and right away the priest knew something was wrong...**Verse 1** says, "Ahimelech came *trembling* to meet David."

David was well known. Everybody knew he had slain Goliath. Everybody knew he had married the king's daughter. Everybody knew David was a national hero... But everybody did not know that David was running away because he feared for his life...not at this point, anyway.

So, instead of David telling Ahimelech the truth...instead of David saying, "Well, Ahimelech something has happened between Saul and me. Saul has already

The Christian Arsenal

www.christianarsenal.com

tried to kill me twice and has vowed to kill me and I'm running for my life...and I need your help."

Instead, David says, "Well, Ahimelech, I'm on a secret mission for the king. I can't tell you anything about it. I have some men with me, and I can't tell you where they are, but we're doing something special and important for the king. Oh, by the way, Ahimelech, we forgot to bring food with us."

Now, I believe Ahimelech certainly had questions in his mind, but he trusted David. After all, David was a man after God's own heart...after all, David was known as a man who walked in the power of the Spirit of God. After all, David had come against the enemy in the name of Jehovah! And after all, David was on a secret mission and needed some bread to feed his men.

So, Ahimelech said, "Well, David, all I have is the consecrated bread...You and your men can have it if I can be assured that you are all ceremonially clean."

And David said, "Oh sure, we haven't been with any women. We're all ceremonially clean."

So Ahimelech gave David the consecrated bread. And if all we had was this passage of Scripture we would say that David's deception worked! I mean, it really looks as though David got away with it, doesn't it?

But, he didn't! David learned a bitter lesson from all this...

Verse 7...

David knew at once he would be betrayed by this man. And that brings us to the second reason we can know that David was out of fellowship with God.

2) Deception of Himself

Verse 8-9...

Do you see what not trusting God and being out of fellowship with Him does? It leads to fear. It leads to running away. It leads to deception. David was deceiving himself that the weapons of the world were more powerful than the weapons of God. It leads to trusting in weapons that have already proven inadequate. I mean, that sword hadn't done Goliath any good, had it? Not trusting God and being out of fellowship with Him leads to just making one bad choice after another...and many times these bad choices don't affect just the person making them, many times these bad choices have a profound effect on others.

There was nothing wrong with Goliath's sword. What was wrong was that David was trusting in Goliath's sword and not in the Lord.

We do the same things, don't we? We get caught up with our jobs and our bank accounts, what the world says we should be doing, our social stand, what we want people to think of us...how accepted we are...and we rely on these things instead of the Lord, don't we?

Look over at

22:20-23...

What had happened?

Just as David feared, Doeg had run to Saul and had told him what he had seen at Nob...but he embellished his story. Doeg glossed over the fact that Ahimelech didn't know what was going on between Saul and David. He didn't tell that David deceived Ahimelech. Doeg

The Christian Arsenal

www.christianarsenal.com

suggested that Ahimelech had taken sides with David against the king. So, Saul sent for all 86 of the priests, with their wives and families, and commanded Doeg to kill them. Only one escaped and came and told David what had happened...

Can you imagine how David felt? Can you imagine how David felt about what he had done...the heartache it had caused...the deaths it had caused?

Let me ask you...

Did God know where David was? Did God know Saul had vowed to kill David?
Did all this take God by surprise? Had God promised David the throne? Of course!

But, again...we need to remember what can happen when one of God's children forgets that God is able to do what He has promised!

The last way we can know that David was out of fellowship with God is

3) Deception of King Achish

Chapter 21 tells us that David fled to Gath! And in Gath David played like he had lost his mind...he scribbled on the gates of the city...he foamed at the mouth...maybe he had taken lesson from Saul on how to be a mad man...

The reason David did this was to protect himself. David was afraid of the king and he knew that the custom of that culture was not to harm people who were mentally ill...

DO YOU SEE THE DOWNWARD SPIRAL OF BEING OUT OF FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD???

21:10...

David must have believed the folks of Gath wouldn't recognize him. But they did!!

Verse 11...

Gath, by the way was a **heathen** city, it was also an **enemy** city...**it was the city from which Goliath came**. Achish was its king and when told of David, he said, "Who is this crazy man? Don't I have enough crazy men in my kingdom? Do I need another one?"

Verses 12-15...

You know, this is a really a very tragic page in David's life. This man has been anointed by the Spirit of God to be king of Israel. The Spirit of God lives within him! But, he has deceived a priest,

he has deceived himself, and he has dishonored God by causing others to think he was something he was not.

There's a little verse over in the **Book of Jude**. It tells us to **keep ourselves in the love of God**. Have you ever taken yourself out of the love of God? Now, this doesn't mean we can ever go anywhere that God's love doesn't reach...but it does mean we can remove ourselves outside of God's **fellowship** and **instruction** and **protection**.

Have you ever failed to trust God and His promises?

The Christian Arsenal

www.christianarsenal.com

Well, let me ask you this...what about a man or woman who has done this? Does God wash His hands of him? Did God say, "Well, I gave David his chance, and he blew it! He's been weighed in the balances and been found wanting! I certainly can't use him after this. After all, he caused the death of 86 of my priests. He deluded himself that he can trust in the same weapons the world uses. He went down to enemy territory and brought dishonor on himself and Me!"

Well, that's obviously not what God said, and let me tell you why...

There are two psalms that David wrote during this time that tell us...

Psalm 34...

Look at the heading that precedes the actual psalm itself. See where the word Abimelech is used? This is not the name of a man, it is a **title**...it means "**king**". Just at the word "**Pharaoh**" meant the ruler of Egypt. Just as the word "**Caesar**" meant the ruler of Rome. The word "**Abimelech**" meant the ruler of some of those countries and cities around and about Israel. It was the title given to King Achish. So that tells us that David wrote this psalm after he had been in Gath. Look at

Verses 1-4 and 7 (and this afternoon read the entire psalm)

Psalm 56...

Look at the heading that precedes this psalm.

Verses 3-4; 13

David had run from God. David had refused to trust God. David seemed to have blown the slightest chance that God could ever use him...but then he lifted his hands and heart to God and cried out,

"Lord, I have nobody else! Here and now, dear
Lord, I just trust You!"

And God honored that! God knew David was a man after his own heart, and though he wasn't perfect, God loved him and knew what a man of character he really was. Don't you love David? Don't you identify with David?

God uses this same method over and over to teach His children. God needed to teach the children of Israel to trust Him and He marched them through the wilderness for 40 years before they were ready to enter the Promised Land. That's what God was doing for David. He was marching him through the wilderness to teach him to trust him so that when he took the throne of Israel he would be ready!

Has He ever marched you through the wilderness? Has He ever done this to prepare you for a special task...or just to be ready to enter a deeper relationship with Him? I'm afraid I've spent more time than I'd like to admit being marched through the wilderness...but even then, God was doing it for a reason...He was preparing me for something down the road.

How this should give you and me hope today! How many times have you ever felt that surely you have blown every chance that God could **love you...forgive you...use you?**

How many times have you backslidden and drifted away from God and behaved like a fool? How many times have you come to your senses and come back to God and realized with David that we can "**taste and see that the LORD is good!**"

The patience and mercy and forgiveness of God toward His people are beyond our understanding. When we allow fears and doubts to overcome our faith because we have failed to trust His promises then all we have to do is say, as David said,

The Christian Arsenal

www.christianarsenal.com

“When I am afraid, I will put my trust in Thee I shall not be afraid...what can mere man do to me?”

Chapter 22 tells us how David gathered his mighty army of men. This chapter doesn't call them “mighty men.” They're called “mighty men” over in **2 Samuel**. **1 Samuel 22** calls them the “**distressed,**” the “**debtors,**” and the “**discontent.**”

These were probably folks who had served Saul but had become disenchanted with Saul's leadership. They had come to serve a king who had not yet taken the throne.

They came to David believing him to be their God-anointed and God-appointed king. They came to David fully surrendering their lives to his leadership and his authority. They came leaving the kingdom of Saul and identifying themselves with the kingdom of David.

They were in distress. They were in debt. They were discontent...and they came to David believing him to God's king...and they came leaving one kingdom for another.

And David took this group of men...these imperfect and troubled men with all their baggage...this motley crew of distressed, indebted, discontented men, about 400 of them, and he trained them. He disciplined them. He built them into a nucleus of what became the greatest army of all of Israel's history.

And what a picture of us today! I want us to switch gears and move our thinking from David's day to our day...the year 2001...

Just as Saul had been rejected by God but still occupied the throne...you and I live in a day when there is one who sits on the throne who has been rejected by God. Who is it who sits on the throne of this world today?

Well, he has many names...

**Satan, Lucifer, the adversary, the enemy,
the accuser of the brethren, the father of lies,
the prince of the power of the air, the god of
this world....**

And just as David had been appointed and anointed by God but had not yet taken the throne...**we also see a King who has been appointed by God but who isn't yet sitting on the throne of this world.**

Just as God allowed Saul to run his course, God is also allowing the god of this world to run his. But, one day God will send forth His Son for the second time...

One day Jesus will come with a name written on His thigh... “King of kings and Lord or lords...” One day Jesus will come and rule and reign and guess what? He's going to bring His army with Him...a motley crew of those who came to Him when they were distressed and indebted and discontented and we will be His mighty army!

Literally the word for “distressed” is “to be under great pressure and tribulation.” It's a picture of all of us who finally have come to the realization that we're sinners and there's nothing we can do about it.

The Christian Arsenal

www.christianarsenal.com

At a prayer luncheon this past Monday morning, Dr. Lee from Korea shared his personal testimony with us. He said his family were deep into the teachings of Confucius...they worshiped their ancestors.

But one day he was invited to a Christian church by a friend. He said that in time he was convicted that he was a sinner. He said that greatly disturbed him and he went to his friend and said, "I know I'm a sinner and I know I'm going to hell, and I don't know what to do." His friend took him to the pastor of the church and the pastor led Dr. Lee to the Lord.

Before a person can be saved, a person must know that he is lost.

Then, the word for "debt" in **chapter 22** means bankrupt. And we were all spiritually bankrupt before God, weren't we? Before we accepted Jesus, we had nothing and we were nothing...in fact, our spirits were dead!

Then, it says "those who were discontented." This means **totally disappointed and frustrated**. It's a picture of a person who's at the end of his rope.

Does this person sound familiar? Was there a time in your life when this person was you? Was there ever a time in your life when you were in great distress because you realized you were a sinner?

Was there ever a time in your life when you realized you were spiritually bankrupt before God?

Was there ever a time in your life when you looked at your life and you were disappointed and frustrated because of your sin?

Are you pretending to be on a mission for the King, but you're really running from the King or you're lost and don't know the King?

Was there ever a time in your life when you left the god of this world and you bowed before the One who will one day come again as King of kings and Lord of lords? If you've never done that, or if you're not certain, there's no better day than today to come to Jesus!

One more thing and we're through...

These men looked to David for their **training**. Have you allowed the Lord Jesus Christ to instruct you and train you and direct you?

These men looked to David for their **protection**. Jesus said His presence would always be with us...He would never leave us, He would never forsake us...and I believe that means His protection will ever be upon us.

These men looked to David for **reward**. They knew one day David would be crowned king of Israel and they would share in his kingdom. Jesus promised us that one day we will rule and reign with Him.

Again, I know we've left a lot out...but please study for next week. We'll see Saul continue to pursue David and we'll also see the story of David and Abigail!