

I SAMUEL

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"THE FALL OF THE MIGHTY"

II SAMUEL 1:25

THE LATTER PORTION OF THIS CHAPTER IS AN ODE OR ELEGY COMPOSED BY DAVID WHEN HE HEARD OF THE DEATH OF SAUL AND HIS 3 SONS IN THE BATTLE OF MT. GILBOA. ISRAEL'S AGE OLD ENEMIES THE PHILISTINES, FINALLY WERE VICTORIOUS OVER MIGHTY SAUL. SAUL'S SUICIDE AND THE CREMATION OF HIS REMAINS BY THE MEN OF JABESH-GILEAD IS RECORDED IN THE LAST CHAPTER OF I SAMUEL. IN THIS LAST LAMENT OF DAVID'S CONCERNING SAUL AND JONATHAN, THE WORD MIGHTY WAS USED TO DESCRIBE SAUL. THE WORD SUGGESTS THAT SAUL WAS INDEED A MIGHTY MAN, AND YET HIS PERSONALITY AND ACTIVITIES REMAINS ONE OF THE MYSTERIOUS ENIGMAS OF THE O.T. SAUL WAS INDEED A MIGHTY MAN IN SEVERAL WAYS. WE WILL EXPLORE THIS IDEA TODAY.

I. SAUL WAS MIGHTY IN THE EYES OF THE PEOPLE-
I SAMUEL 11:15

GOD CHOSE THE NATION OF ISRAEL TO BE DIFFERENT. (EXO. 19:5-6) GOD WAS THEIR KING AND HAD DIRECT CONTACT WITH THEM THROUGH MEDIATORIAL RULERS. HE WATCHED OVER THEM, FOUGHT FOR THEM, DIRECTED AND GUIDED THEM. THE EXODUS FROM EGYPT WAS AMPLE PROOF OF GOD'S AVAILABILITY AND DESIREABILITY TO WATCH OVER AND CARE FOR THE NATION OF ISRAEL. HOWEVER THEY WANTED TO BE LIKE THE OTHER NATIONS AROUND THEM. THEY WERE DISSATISFIED WITH THE WAY GOD DID THINGS AND IN TURN BEGAN TO PRESSURE SAMUEL FOR A KING LIKE THE OTHER NATIONS OF THE WORLD. INSTEAD OF FACING THEIR OWN PERSONAL FAILURES AND CALLING THEIR FAILURES SIN, THEY SUPPOSED THAT A CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT WOULD CURE ALL THEIR PROBLEMS. (AN ATTITUDE WHICH STILL PREVAILS AMONG MEN TODAY.) "THIS IS THE MANNER OF SINFUL MEN IN ANY AGE, WHO MUST LEARN BY BITTER EXPERIENCE THAT POLITICAL ACTION CANNOT SOLVE PROBLEMS WHICH ARE BASICALLY MORAL AND SPIRITUAL." A.J. McCLAIN) HOWEVER, THE SELECTION OF A KING DID NOT CORRECT THE LONG STANDING MALADIES IN THE NATION. I WOULD SUGGEST THEY MADE SEVERAL MAJOR MISTAKES, NOT THE LEAST OF WHICH WAS REJECTING GOD! (I SAM. 8:7)

(1) THEY FORSOOK THE UNSEEN FOR THE SEEN - THIS IS CHARACTERISTIC OF THE NATURAL MAN. IN WORSHIP, HE DESIRES THINGS WHICH SPEAK OF THE FLESH AND NOT OF FAITH. HE IS CONTENT WITH RITUAL AND LITURGY BUT NOT CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S PROMISES. HEBREWS 11 IS GOD'S HONOR ROLL OF FAITH. VERY LITTLE IS SAID ABOUT THE MIGHTY EXPLOITS OF MEN, BUT A GREAT DEAL IS SAID ABOUT MEN AND THEIR FAITH IN GOD.

(2) THEY FORSOOK GOD'S BEST FOR HIS SECOND BEST - IN ASKING FOR A KING, ISRAEL ASKING FOR THE GUIDANCE OF A MAN INSTEAD OF THE GUIDANCE OF GOD. ✓ IN I SAM. 8:11-17 SAMUEL WARNED THE PEOPLE ABOUT THE ACTIVITIES OF AN EARTHLY KING. HE WOULD PRESS THEM INTO GOVERNMENT SERVICE, ABUSE PRIVATE PROPERTY, TAX THEM EXCESSIVELY AND IN THE LIGHT OF ALL OF THESE WARNINGS THE RESPONSE OF THESE PEOPLE WAS RECORDED IN I SAM. 18:19.

(3) THEY FORSOOK UNIQUENESS FOR CONFORMITY - THE DESIRE TO BE LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE IS DANGEROUS WHEN IT COMES TO THE THINGS OF GOD. THE CHILD OF GOD MUST DARE TO BE DIFFERENT. SAUL WAS THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE BECAUSE HE WAS A HERO AND MIGHTY BEFORE THEIR EYES, CAPABLE OF ACCOMPLISHING GREAT FEATS. SAUL'S FAILURE AND THE FAILURE OF THE FLESH IS GRAPHICALLY DEMONSTRATED IN ONE OF HIS FIRST MAJOR CONFRONTATIONS AS RECORDED IN I SAM. 17. THE STORY OF DAVID IS THE STORY OF THE CONQUEST OF FAITH IN OPPOSITION TO THE FEAR OF THE FLESH.

II. SAUL WAS MIGHTY IN HIS OWN EYES - I SAM. 15:17

SAUL BELIEVED THAT HE WAS REALLY SOMETHING GREAT. AS A MATTER OF FACT, AS HE INCREASED IN POWER HE INCREASED IN PROBLEMS. I WOULD SUGGEST THREE AREAS IN WHICH SAUL WAS MIGHTY IN HIS OWN EYES.

A. THE MATTER OF SACRED OFFICES - I SAM. 10:11,13:8 -13

SAUL BELIEVED THAT HE COULD DEAL WITH SACRED THINGS IN HIS OWN WAY. THE PROPHET WAS GOD'S SPOKESMAN, HIS MESSAGES WERE NOT HIS OWN BUT FROM GOD. HE WAS BOTH A FORETELLER AND A FORTHTELLER OF GOD'S TRUTH. SAUL REFUSED TO SUBMIT TO THE MESSAGE OF THE PROPHETS, AS DID DAVID TO NATHAN; CONSEQUENTLY, IN HIS ARROGANCE SAUL THOUGHT HE COULD DO AS HE PLEASED. THIS WAS TRUE CONCERNING THE OFFICE OF THE PRIEST. A PRIEST WAS ONE AUTHORIZED TO MINISTER IN SACRED THINGS, SUCH AS SACRIFICES AND IN MEDIATION. IT WAS DIVINELY APPOINTED, CONFIRMED

TO AARON'S FAMILY. (EXO, 28:1-3) SAUL SHOWED HIS UTTER DISREGARD FOR GOD'S DIVINE COMMAND WHEN IN THE INTEREST OF HIS OWN GLORY AND REPUTATION AND ALSO IN HIS GREAT IMPATIENCE HE SOUGHT TO PERFORM THE FUNCTION OF A PRIEST. HE SHOWED NO HUMILITY WHEN REBUKED BY SAMUEL BUT INSTEAD SOUGHT TO JUSTIFY HIMSELF. SAUL BELIEVED HE COULD DO NO WRONG IF HE WANTED TO DO SOMETHING, THAT MADE IT RIGHT. WE WILL TALK OF THIS IDEA UNDER ANOTHER HEADING.

B. THE MATTER OF A SILLY OATH - I SM. 14:24

THERE WERE FEW PEOPLE MORE LOVING, UNSELFISH AND UNNOBLE THAN SAUL'S SON JONATHAN. THIS CHAPTER RECORDS AN OUTSTANDING VICTORY ON JONATHAN'S PART YET SAUL WAS WILLING TO KILL HIS OWN SON RATHER THAN ADMIT HE HAD MADE A SILLY MISTAKE IN THE FORM OF A RASH VOW. AT LEAST ON THIS OCCASION HE COULD NOT SAY HE WAS WRONG AND HAD ACTED FOOLISHLY. HIS HOT IMPULSIVE TEMPER INITIATED HIM INTO WHAT SOMEONE HAS CALLED "THE SOCIETY OF RECKLESS VOWS" ALONG WITH HEROD AND JEPHTHAH. (JUDGES 11:30-40)

C. THE MATTER OF SLACK OBEDIENCE - I SAM. 15:22

LET US DIGRESS FOR ONE MOMENT AND DEAL WITH ONE OF THE MORAL PROBLEMS OF THE BIBLE. ENEMIES OF SCRIPTURE FASTEN UPON SUCH EVENTS AND ATTRIBUTE MORAL EVIL TO GOD. THEY MAKE FUN OF WHAT THEY SAY ARE THE GOD APPROVED IMMORAL ACTS IN THE O.T. OXNAM CALLED GOD A "DIRTY BULLY" AND TERMS SUCH AS BARBAROUS TYRANT, CRUEL AND VINDICTIVE ARE ATTRIBUTED TO GOD BECAUSE OF SUCH PASSAGES. LET US TAKE A CLOSE LOOK AT THE PEOPLE IN QUESTION, NAMELY, THE AMALEKITES. THESE PEOPLE HAD CRUELLY MISTREATED AND ATTACKED THE DEFENSELESS ISRAELITES WHILE THEY WERE IN THE DESERT OF REPHIDIM. THERE WAS NO JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ATTACK OTHER THAN SHEER HATRED. THE AMALEKITES WERE A BANDIT RACE, FIERCE UNTAMED WANDERERS, WHO FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS HAD ROAMED THE DESERT TO PREY ON WEAKER NATIONS, SLAUGHTERING, TORTURING STEALING AND RAPING FOR THE SHEER DELIGHT OF DESTRUCTION. THEY SCOFFED AT RELIGION, WORSHIPPED ONE GOD, NAMELY THE GOD OF FORCE AND POWER. FOR 500 YEARS THEY HAD LEFT A TRAIL OF BLOOD AND WRECKAGE ACROSS THE DESERT THAT WAS UNSURPASSED AMONG THE NATIONS WHICH SURROUNDED ISRAEL. THE AMALEKITES

WAGED WAR THROUGH AMBUSH AGAINST THE WEAK, THE AGED,
THE HELPLESS AND THE DEFENSELESS. THEY TORTURED
THEIR CAPTIVES BY HACKING OFF THEIR ARMS AND LEGS,
GOUGING OUT EYES, KNOCKING OUT TEETH. THEY JEERED
AT THOSE WHO OPPOSED THEIR STEALING, BLOOD-THIRSTY
WAYS. THE PROBLEMS FACING ISRAEL WAS THAT OF
SURVIVAL. AS LONG AS AMALEK PLAGUED THEIR BORDERS
ISRAEL WAS IN DANGER. IT IS DIFFICULT FOR US TO
THINK OF A BANDIT RACE OF PEOPLE WHO ARE HARDENED
SINNERS, BENT ON CRIMINAL ACTIVITY WITH NO HOPE OF
MORAL OR SPIRITUAL RECOVERY. THE DIFFICULT PART OF
THE VERSE SEEMS TO BE WITH THE SLAYING OF INFANTS.
IN OUR COUNTRY WE THINK OF CHILDREN AS SWEET AND
INNOCENT WHO ARE SEEMINGLY INCAPABLE OF MORAL
DECISION, ESPECIALLY WITH REFERENCE TO EVIL. HOWEVER,
EVEN IN OUR TIME AMONG PRIMITIVE TRIBES, AS DON
RICHARDSON REMINDS US, THAT CHILDREN IN NEW GUINEA
ARE TAUGHT AT AN EARLY AGE TO DECEIVE AND HATE
OUTSIDERS. RICHARDSON DESCRIBES THE ATROCITIES OF
THE SAWI TRIBE, HE TELLS HOW THE CHILDREN PARTICIPATED
WILLINGLY AND GLEEFULLY IN SUCH ACTIVITY! THE VERSES
BEFORE US CONCERN A JUDICIAL PRONOUNCEMENT BY GOD
FOR THE SURGICAL REMOVAL OF A NATION THAT HAD
BECOME A MORAL CANCER ON THE SURFACE OF THE EARTH.
THERE WAS NO OTHER WAY TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM.
GOD KNEW OF THEIR INCORRIGIBLE WICKEDNESS. THESE
NATIONS REFUSED TO REFORM AND ABIDE BY PRINCIPLES OF
TRUTH AND GODLINESS AND IN SUCH A STATE, GOD HAD NO
ALTERNATIVE. ONE COMMENTATOR HAS OBSERVED, "WHEN
MEN BETAKE THEMSELVES AND THEIR FAMILIES ABOARD A
SHIP, SAIL OUT UPON THE OCEAN FOR A PLEASURE TRIP,
AND MAKE THAT SHIP A PLACE OF DRINKING, WICKEDNESS
AND VICE, AND THEN ALL PERISH IN A HURRICANE WHICH
SUDDENLY FALLS UPON THEM, WHO IS TO BLAME? WILL YOU
ACCUSE GOD FOR NOT DISCRIMINATING BETWEEN ADULTS AND
CHILDREN? ONE DREADFUL ASPECT OF SIN IS THAT THE
WOE IT PRODUCES IS LIKE A WHIRLWIND, WHOSE SUCTION
DRAWS EVERY OBJECT WHICH IS NEARBY TO THE BOTTOM.
THE ONLY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE DISASTER RESULTING
FROM THE PRESENT DAY HURRICANE WHICH WIPES OUT A
CITY AND THE EXTERMINATION OF PEOPLES LIKE THE
CANAANITES IS THAT IN THE LATTER INSTANCES GOD
DEFINITELY ANNOUNCED WHY HE SENT SUCH SUFFERING, WHILE
IN THE CASE OF HURRICANES HAPPENING TODAY WE HAVE
NOTHING BUT THE GENERAL PRONOUNCEMENTS OF GOD
TO POINT TO AND EXPLAIN THE DISASTER. IT IS BETTER
FOR CHILDREN OF SUCH PEOPLE TO PERISH IN INFANCY

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THAN TO GROW UP AS DEVOTEES OF IDOLATRY AND VICE." (W. ARNT) THIS CHAPTER IS THE CLIMAX OF SAUL'S EGOTISTICAL WAYS. HE THOUGHT HE COULD DEAL WITH THE SPECIFIC DIVINE PLANS IN HIS OWN JUDGMENT AND WAYS ACCORDING TO WHAT HE BELIEVED BEST. IF THE KING IN ISRAEL DID NOT OBEY GOD HOW COULD HE EXPECT THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL TO DO SO? SAUL'S ATTITUDE WHEN CONFRONTED WITH HIS SIN AND FAILURE REMINDS US TO BEWARE OF ALL WHO YELL LOUDLY ABOUT THE WILL OF GOD, ESPECIALLY IF THEIR PERSONAL LIVES INDICATE THAT THEY KNOW VERY LITTLE ABOUT GOD OR HIS WILL. WHEN CORNERED WITH HIS ACTIONS SAUL SOUGHT TO SHIFT THE BLAME, AS LITTLE MEN ALWAYS DO. HE WAS NOT WRONG IN HIS OWN EYES. SAUL DID NOT UNDERSTAND THAT GOD WAS NOT INTERESTED IN OFFERINGS NEARLY AS MUCH AS HE WAS IN OBEDIENCE. PEOPLE IN EVERY DISPENSATION MUST BE MADE AWARE OF ONE SIMPLE BIBLE FACT THAT OBEDIENCE TO GOD IS NOT AN OPTIONAL SIDE OF CHRISTIAN LIVING. THERE ARE MANY QUESTIONS ABOUT SAUL'S LIFE AND DEATH. IT SEEMS TO CENTER AROUND UNDERSTANDING THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE O.T. QUESTION: WAS SAUL SAVED OR LOST? IF HE WAS A SAVED MAN, HE IS A PICTURE OF A MAN WHO WAS DOMINATED BY THE FLESH AND HIS FLESHLY DISPOSITION. IF HE IS A PICTURE OF A LOST MAN, HE DEMONSTRATES WHAT PRIDE CAN DO TO THE HUMAN HEART. THE WORD OF GOD DOES NOT SAY OR SPEAK CLEARLY OF SAUL'S SPIRITUAL STATUS, BUT IT DOES SPEAK THROUGH THOSE SINS WHICH DRAGGED HIM DOWN. SAUL IS A WARNING TO ALL PROUD MEN EVERYWHERE, WHETHER SAVED OR LOST, THOSE WHO DETERMINE TO RUN THEIR OWN LIVES AND THE LIVES OF OTHERS DO SO AT THEIR OWN LOSS. SAUL WAS A PROUD MAN WHO NEVER BROKE UNDER GOD'S HAND. I AM AWARE OF THE FACT THAT HE DID CONFESS: "I HAVE SINNED AND PLAYED THE FOOL" BUT SO DID PHAROA, BAALIM, ACHAN AND JUDAS. (EXO. 9:27, NUM. 22:34, JOSH. 7:20, MATT. 27:4) ULTIMATELY SAUL WAS SORRY FOR THE MESS HE MADE OF HIS OWN LIFE; IN CONTRAST DAVID'S REPENTANCE WAS GENUINELY GODLY IN NATURE NOT FOR HIS OWN PLIGHT ALONE BUT FOR WHAT HIS SIN HAD DONE TO THE GLORY OF GOD AND THE TESTIMONY OF GOD ON EARTH. INDEED THERE IS A LESSON FOR EVERY BELIEVER IN THE LIFE OF SAUL AND IT SPEAKS OF WHAT PRIDE DOES. IT ROBS US OF GOD'S PRESENCE AND POWER AND ULTIMATELY BRINGS EVERYONE DOWN. THE BIBLE STATES THAT GOD RESISTS THE PROUD WHEREVER HE FINDS THEM AND IT. EVEN THOUGH SAUL WAS KING OF ISRAEL, HIS PRIDE COULD NOT BE OVERLOOKED.

"MEPHIBOSHETH"

II SAMUEL 9:1-13

Names — Maher Shaleh Baz (18 letters)

IN RECENT WEEKS, WE HAVE BECOME ACQUAINTED WITH SEVERAL O.T. CHARACTERS RECORDED IN THE HISTORICAL BOOKS OF THE BIBLE. SOME OF THE CHARACTERS WERE FAMILIAR, SUCH AS NAAMAN. OTHERS WERE NOT SO FAMILIAR TO US, SUCH AS ASA AND JEHOSEPHAT. TUCKED AWAY IN THE MIDDLE OF II SAMUEL IS THE RECORD OF A MAN WHOSE LIFE EXEMPLIFIED THE NEW TESTAMENT DOCTRINE OF GRACE. (JUST THIS PAST WEEK AN ACROSTIC OUTLINE CONCERNING THE MEANING OF GRACE — GETTING RICH OR RIGHT AT CHRIST'S EXPENSE. I HAD NEVER HEARD THIS DEFINITION BEFORE!) THE WORD MEPHIBOSHETH MEANS "IDOL BREAKER." PERHAPS JONATHAN AND HIS WIFE HAD GREAT ASPIRATIONS FOR THIS CHILD THAT HE WOULD BECOME THE GREAT ICONOCLAST IN ISRAEL. RELATE TO THE IDEA OF EVERY AMERICAN PARENT WHO ASPIRE THEIR CHILDREN WITH REFERENCE TO THE PRESIDENCY. THE PHILISTINE UPRISING AND THE CHILDHOOD ACCIDENT MENTIONED IN II SAM. 4:4 DASHED ALL SUCH PLANS TO THE GROUND. THIS SMALL GRANDSON OF SAUL WOULD NEVER LEAD IN BATTLE, NEITHER CHAMPION ANY KIND OF REFORM IN ISRAEL. AS A MATTER OF FACT, HE WOULD NEVER BE A LEADER IN THE NATION. HE WOULD LIVE MOST OF HIS LIFE AS AN UNKNOWN AND UNHONORED DESCENDANT OF ISRAEL'S FIRST KING. AS A MATTER OF FACT, HIS LIFE WOULD BE A SERIES OF DISAPPOINTMENTS AND FRUSTRATIONS. HE WOULD NEVER LIVE UP TO HIS KINGLY HERITAGE. SURVIVAL WOULD BE ALL HE COULD AFFORD IN LIFE. AN ORPHAN AT THE AGE OF FIVE, HE WOULD BE RAISED BY NURSE AND SERVANT. WERE IT NOT FOR THIS PARTICULAR CHAPTER, MEPHIBOSHETH WOULD HARDLY BE KNOWN TO ANYONE TODAY.

I. THE INQUIRY OF DAVID - v. 1-3

THIS CHAPTER IS VERY UNUSUAL BECAUSE IT IS UNLIKE ORIENTAL KINGS. ONE OF THE FIRST ACTS ANY KING DID WAS TO DO AWAY WITH ANY CLOSE RELATIVES OF THE PREVIOUS KING. NOTHING STOPS INSURRECTION AS EFFECTIVELY AS EXECUTION. THERE MUST HAVE BEEN A DREAD AND FEAR FOR MONTHS AND YEARS IN THE BACK OF MEPHIBOSHETH'S MIND WHEN HE HEARD THAT DAVID WAS

(2 Kings 10:11)

-2-

"R. & Relatives Program"

KING. SURELY DAVID WOULD RID THE COUNTRY OF ALL RELATIVES OF SAUL, DAVID'S MORTAL ENEMY. THIS INQUIRY IS UNIQUE BECAUSE IT WAS TO HELP AND NOT HINDER THE FAMILY OF SAUL AND JONATHAN.

A. THE INQUIRY BEGAN WITH DAVID - v. 1 (In 1516)

DAVID TOOK THE INITIATIVE, THE FIRST STEP IN SEEKING OUT ANY REMAINING MEMBERS OF SAUL'S HOUSEHOLD FOR THE PURPOSE OF HELPING THEM. *I wasn't seeking Him (seeking something) Not God!*

B. THE INQUIRY WAS CONCERNING THE RELATIVES OF A MORTAL ENEMY - v. 1

ONE COULD SYMPATHIZE WITH DAVID IF HIS FIRST OFFICIAL ACT WAS TO AT LEAST IMPRISON OR EXILE THE MEMBERS OF SAUL'S FAMILY. AFTERALL SAUL SOUGHT TO KILL AND TO KEEP FROM POWER DAVID AND HIS ASSOCIATES. DAVID'S INVITATION WAS TO "ANY" OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF SAUL.

C. THE INQUIRY WAS FOR THE SAKE OF ANOTHER - v. 1

DAVID AND JONATHAN WERE TO ORIGINAL "SOUL" BROTHERS (COMPARE I SAM. 18:1-3, I SAM. 20:14-16) IT IS NOT DIFFICULT WHY DAVID COULD PROFIT FROM A STRONG FRIENDSHIP WITH THE SON OF ISRAEL'S FIRST KING. WHAT IS DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND IS WHY JONATHAN WOULD WANT TO BEFRIEND A SHEPHERD BOY FROM BETHLEHEM. THIS VERY COVENANT WOULD INDICATE JONATHAN BELIEVED THAT SOMEDAY DAVID WOULD RISE TO THE POSITION OF SUPREME AUTHORITY IN ISRAEL. IT WAS AT THAT TIME JONATHAN EXPECTED DAVID TO BE KIND TOWARD JONATHAN'S HEIRS. THERE WAS SOMETHING ABOUT DAVID THAT DREW MEN TO HIM. HE WAS A FEARLESS WARRIOR AND CONFIDENT LEADER BUT ABOVE ALL OF THIS HIS OUTSTANDING MORAL CHARACTER DREW MEN TO HIS SIDE. THEY WOULD WILLINGLY RISK THEIR LIVES AND DIE FOR HIM IF NECESSARY. SUCH FRIENDSHIPS ARE RARE IN HISTORY. (THE STORY OF DAMON AND PYTHIAS, TWO MEN OF SYRACUSE, WHO LIVED IN THE TIME OF DIONYSIUS I. WHEN PYTHIAS WAS CONDEMNED TO DIE, DAMON TOOK HIS PLACE IN PRISON SO HE COULD GO HOME TO SETTLE HIS AFFAIRS BEFORE DEATH. AT THE TIME OF EXECUTION, HE HAD NOT RETURNED, DAMON WAS ABOUT TO BE KILLED IN HIS PLACE AND PYTHIAS INSISTED ~~ON~~ PLACING HIS HEAD ON THE BLOCK. THERE IS ALSO THE STORY OF

ALEXANDER THE GREAT WHO LAY SICK OF FEVER. PHILLIP PRESCRIBED A CERTAIN REMEDY AND OFFERED IT TO ALEXANDER TO DRINK. JUST AS HE WAS ABOUT TO DRINK THE MEDICINE, A LETTER WAS HANDED HIM WHICH ACCUSED PHILLIP OF TREASON AND OF INSTIGATING A PLOT TO KILL ALEXANDER BY POISONING HIM. ALEXANDER'S CONFIDENCE IN THE FRIENDSHIP OF PHILLIP WAS SO GREAT THAT WITH ONE HAND HE QUIETLY HANDED THE NOTE TO PHILLIP AND WITH THE OTHER HE RAISED THE CUP OF MEDICINE TO HIS LIPS AND DRANK IT. THE END OF THE STORY IS THAT ALEXANDER'S CONFIDENCE IN HIS FRIEND WAS NOT MISPLACED AND HE QUICKLY RECOVERED FROM HIS ILLNESS. IN THE KINDNESS OF DAVID TO MEPHIBOSHETH, WE SEE THE KINDNESS OF GOD TO US. THIS KINDNESS OF GOD TO SINNERS IS DESCRIBED IN THE BIBLE WORD "GRACE." BY THE WAY, SUCH KINDNESS OF DAVID WAS NOT ALWAYS READILY ACCEPTED! (II SAM. 10:1FF) WHAT JESUS CHRIST DID ON CALVARY'S CROSS FOR SINNERS IS DESCRIBED AS GRACE. (EPH. 2:8-9, ROM. 3:24) "BEING JUSTIFIED FREELY BY HIS GRACE THROUGH THE REDEMPTION THAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS." JUST AS DAVID AND JONATHAN MADE A COVENANT THAT WAS BINDING SO BELIEVING SINNERS ARE BROUGHT NEAR TO GOD THROUGH A COVENANT RELATIONSHIP. "NOW THE GOD OF PEACE THAT BROUGHT AGAIN FROM THE DEAD OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST THAT GREAT SHEPHERD OF THE SHEEP, THROUGH THE BLOOD OF THE EVERLASTING COVENANT..." (HEB. 13:20) AS YOU KNOW THE WORD COVENANT MEANS AN AGREEMENT OR CONTRACT BETWEEN TWO PARTIES. THE BLOOD OF CHRIST SPEAKS OF THE ETERNAL COMPLETENESS OF A COVENANT GOD MADE WITH REFERENCE TO OUR SALVATION. THE SIGN OF THE COVENANT IS THE FACT THAT HE BROUGHT JESUS CHRIST FROM THE DEAD TO INSURE ITS ETERNAL NATURE. MEN CANNOT BE SERIOUS WHEN THEY THINK THEY DESERVE ANYTHING FROM GOD BUT JUDGMENT. GRACE IS THAT DIVINE FAVOR WHICH REACHES DOWN TO MAN IN HIS SPIRITUAL NEED. IN GRACE GOD SAVES MEN APART FROM HUMAN MERIT AND FOR THE SAKE OF JESUS CHRIST. SOMEONE HAS SAID IT LIKE THIS, IF YOU AND I GET TO HEAVEN IT WILL NOT BE THROUGH OUR OWN WORKING MERITS RATHER WE WILL BE THERE ON HIS TICKET OR CREDIT CARD AND NOT OUR OWN. IF YOU AND I GOT WHAT WE DESERVED HELL WOULD BE OUR ETERNAL HOME. IN GRACE GOD SAVED THOSE WHO DO NOT DESERVE IT. DAVID WAS KIND TO MEPHIBOSHETH NOT BECAUSE HE WAS LAME BUT BECAUSE JONATHAN WAS HIS FATHER! OFTEN IN SCRIPTURE GOD BLESSES SOME FOR THE SAKE OF OTHERS.

(COMPARE ~~LOT~~ AND ~~ABRAHAM~~, ~~LABAN~~ AND ~~JACOB~~,
~~POTIPHAR~~ AND ~~JOSEPH~~.)

II. THE INFIRMITY OF MEPHIBOSHETH - v. 3-8

A. THE INDICATION OF HIS LAMENESS - v. 3

THE TEXT INDICATES THAT MEPHIBOSHETH WAS LAME IN BOTH FEET. THIS LAMENESS WAS NOT OF HIS OWN ^① DOING, BUT RATHER HE FELL AT THE HANDS OF ANOTHER, A NURSE, (II SAM. 4:4) THIS IS AN IMPORTANT POINT IN BIBLE THEOLOGY. HE DID NOT CAUSE OR CREATE HIS PROBLEM, BUT THE EFFECTS OF HIS FALL WERE WITH HIM THROUGHOUT LIFE. THE BIBLE TEACHES THAT THE EFFECTS OF ADAM'S TRANSGRESSION HAVE BEEN PASSED ON TO ALL MEN. (ROM. 5:12) ALL MEN ARE SINNERS FROM A TWO-FOLD POINT OF VIEW:

^② *Disposition*
^③ *Design*
(1) SINNERS BY NATURE, THAT IS BY VIRTUE OF OUR RELATIONSHIP TO ADAM (2) SINNERS BY CHOICE. ALL MEN HAVE INHERITED BY BIRTH A SPIRITUAL VIRUS CALLED SIN. THAT SPIRITUAL MALADY IF UNATTENDED WILL LEAD THEM STRAIGHT TO HELL. THE ONLY CURE FOR THIS SPIRITUAL DISEASE IS THE BLOOD OF CHRIST. THERE IS A SENSE IN WHICH ALL MEN ARE SPIRITUALLY WHAT MEPHIBOSHETH WAS PHYSICALLY. WHEN IT COMES TO SALVATION WE ARE ALL SPIRITUAL CRIPPLES. UNABLE TO HELP OURSELVES IN SPIRITUAL MATTERS AND OUR RELATIONSHIP TO GOD.

B. THE IMPLICATION OF HIS LAMENESS - v. 4

I HAVE NEVER BEEN ONE TO PRESS TYPES TOO STRONGLY. HOWEVER THE WORD "MACHIR" LITERALLY MEANS "SOLD" AND THE WORD LODIBAR LITERALLY MEANS "BARREN". I COULD THINK OF NO BETTER TERM TO DESCRIBE THE CONDITION OF A MAN WHO IS SPIRITUALLY LAME OTHER THAN THE FACT THAT HE HAS BEEN SOLD UNTO SIN AND LIVING A LIFE THAT IS SPIRITUALLY BARREN. THE INFIRMITY OF SIN DOES NOT ENRICH ONE'S LIFE BUT RATHER IMPOVERISHES IT! THERE IS ONE ADDITIONAL ITEM WHICH COMES TO MIND IN THIS PARTICULAR PORTION OF THE TEXT, THIS HAS TO DO WITH HIS HUMILIATION BEFORE DAVID RECORDED IN V. 8. MEPHIBOSHETH DID NOT STRUT INTO DAVID'S PRESENCE AND REMIND DAVID THAT HIS GRANDFATHER WAS ONCE KING OF ISRAEL! NEITHER DID HE DEMAND HIS RIGHTS. FIRST OF ALL HE

clint
Test.
had
one.

GREAT RESPECT TO THE KING AND A GREAT DEAL OF PERSONAL HUMILITY. DOGS WERE CONSIDERED THE LOWEST OF ALL ANIMALS. THEY WERE ABHORRED BY HEBREWS BECAUSE OF THEIR UNCLEAN HABITS OF RUNNING THE STREETS IN PACKS, THE SCAVENGERS OF THE GARBAGE OF THE STREETS. IN MAKING THIS STATEMENT, MEPHIBOSHETH WAS INDICATING HIS LOW ESTIMATION OF HIMSELF IN THE KING'S PRESENCE. IT MAY BE THAT SOME PSYCHOLOGISTS WOULD SUGGEST THAT THIS MAN HAD A POOR SELF IMAGE OR AN INFERIORITY COMPLEX AND THIS MAY BE TRUE IN LIGHT OF HIS LONGSTANDING ILLNESS. BUT HE HAD THE GOOD SENSE TO RECOGNIZE THE KING AND TO HUMBLE HIMSELF IN HIS PRESENCE. NO PERSON WILL EVER GET TO HEAVEN BY TELLING GOD WHAT A GREAT GUY HE IS! GOD KNOWS BETTER. THE MATTER OF PERSONAL SINNERSHIP HAS BEEN FORGOTTEN TODAY. "I'M NOT SO BAD!" IS THE CRY EVERYWHERE TODAY. OSWALD SMITH HAD PUT HIS FINGER ON ONE OF THE KEY PROBLEMS OF OUR TIMES: "IN OUR PRESENT DAY, MEN ARE URGED TO BE SAVED BEFORE THEY KNOW THEY ARE LOST; TO BELIEVE WITHOUT BEING CONVICTED OF THEIR NEED. THE FRUIT IS PICKED BEFORE IT IS RIPE AND THE WORK IS SURE TO COME UNDONE. THE HOLY SPIRIT MUST CONVICT OF SIN BEFORE MEN CAN TRULY BELIEVE. THIS ACCEPTING CHRIST WITHOUT CONVICTION IS NOT NEW BIRTH. IT IS NOT A BORNAGAIN EXPERIENCE. THE PERIL OF OUR TIMES, TO GET DECISIONS WITHOUT GETTING MEN AWARE OF THEIR SINS, WHAT THEIR SINS DID TO JESUS CHRIST." IN THE LAMENESS OF THIS MAN WE SEE THE LAMENESS OF ALL MEN.

III. THE INHERITANCE OF MEPHIBOSHETH - v. 9-13

AFTER THE DEATH OF SAUL AND JONATHAN, AT THE HANDS OF THE PHILISTINES, THIS POOR BOY SPENT MANY YEARS RUNNING AND HIDING WITHOUT THE BENEFITS WHICH WERE HIS BY VIRTUE OF HIS RELATIONSHIP TO SAUL AND JONATHAN. NOW KING DAVID WOULD RESTORE MEPHIBOSHETH TO A PLACE OF HONOR IN THE KINGDOM. NOTICE THE EXTENT OF DAVID'S KINDNESS. THE WORDS "GIVEN" ALL AND SONS ARE SIGNIFICANT TERMS. MEPHIBOSHETH WAS NOT A PRETTY SIGHT TO BEHOLD. THERE WERE MANY NORMAL THINGS IN LIFE WHICH HE COULD NOT DO. I FEEL CERTAIN THAT SAUL WOULD HAVE DISOWNED THIS DEFORMED, USELESS GRANDSON. HOWEVER, DAVID'S TREATMENT OF MEPHIBOSHETH WAS NOT BASED UPON APPEARANCE BUT RATHER UPON THE BASIS OF A COVENANT

Point.

WHICH HE HAD MADE WITH MEPHIBOSHETHS FATHER A COUPLE OF DECADES BEFORE. MEPHIBOSHETH DID NOT EARN THE RIGHT NOR DESERVE THE RIGHT TO ENTER INTO DAVID'S HOUSE LET ALONE SIT AT HIS TABLE AS A SON! HIS POSITION AT THE KING'S TABLE WAS A MATTER OF PURE GRACE. THIS CRIPPLED MAN WAS TREATED AS ROYALTY WITH ALL OF ITS RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES. THIS IS AN ASTONISHING FACT IN THE LIGHT OF THE N.T. DOCTRINE OF ADOPTION AND SONSHIP. QUESTION; AT WHOSE TABLE DO YOU FEED? IS IT AT THE KING'S TABLE ENJOYING THE DELIGHTS OF HIS BENEFITS OR IS IT AT THE HOG TROUGHS OF THE WORLD LIKE THE WAYWARD PRODIGAL STUFFING ONE'S STOMACH WITH THE HUSKS WHICH DO NOT SATISFY?

Analogy:

- (1) We are spiritually lame helpless!
- (2) We are judgment bound. (= deserve it!)
(Leviticus, a gift from - Saul) Mark 9:27
- (3) We Receive kindness of God —
for the sake of another (Jesus)
- (4) Sit at the king's table — grace not works.
Why? a cov. - the king keeps his word 1 Sam. 20:14-16

2 Sam. 16:1-4

Mep. looked forward to the returning David —

⊕ Bare Oak —

Community dinner
honoring a member
my friend — so with
me — Sat By the
Gov. talked — why was I there? (Not meant —
with my friend)

There are few things more important than the matter of selecting our friends according to their love and devotion to God. Otherwise, you will be drawn away from your dedication to the Lord to other interests and pursuits in order to maintain the friendship.

As young people you need friends who are friends of your God. You will need all of the moral and spiritual support you can get--your friends will be one of the great factors in this area. This is not to say that you cannot be friendly to all people--I am talking about close friendships.)

The friendship of David and Jonathan is recorded in 1 Sam. 18:1-4 (Son L - Brothers)

The attitude of David toward Mephibosheth is an O.T. illustration of the N.T. doctrine of grace. This is exactly what God does for the believing sinner. Romans 5:8, 2 Cor. 5:21, 1 Pet. 2:24, 1 Pet. 3:18,

Men cannot be serious when they mistakenly think they deserve anything from God but judgment. Grace is the favor, benefits of a holy God reaching to man in his needs. Our spiritual needs are greater than we can supply--God in grace saves us apart from human merit--for the sake of another--for Jesus sake. Please excuse this oversimplification but it is as if we were going to Heaven on His ticket, on His credit card and not on our own. Our coin is not accepted in Heaven's bank! Never forget, God would be justified in sending all men to Hell! Rom. 3:10, 3:23. It is in grace that He saves any at all! Rom. 3:24-25. JESUS AT ATLANTA WON'T WORK!

II. THE KING'S KINDNESS WAS EXTENDED TO THE HELPLESS v. 3b-5

The text indicates that Mephibosheth was lame on his feet. This lameness was not of his own doing, but rather he had fallen at the hands of another. 2 Sam. 4:4. The Bible teaches us that you and I fell spiritually at the hands of another--Adam. Rom. 5:12 In theology, we speak of the Fall of Man. Adam had a choice: (1) Let God determine what was right for him and live with and for God. (2) Live for himself and determine his own way. As a result of Adam's transgression man became a sinner with divine penalties imposed on him for his sin. God requires that man must have his sins dealt with. The Bible calls this work of God the new birth. The tendency of men outside of Christ is to make the world more comfortable to sin in a better place to go to Hell from--but God says we are spiritually helpless and by faith must trust God to change us and make us fit for heaven. *** Parallel what God does in regeneration with a person performing a heart transplant on himself---impossible! *** Jesus raised 3 dead persons from the dead. In one since of the word so with us. He gives life.

✓ The adopted son given all of the legal rights of his father. Rights of name and inheritance.

Gal. 3:26. We who were the enemies of God have become his sons! Rom. 5:10.

**** In an ancient parade of an eastern king a little dog with this sign "I Belong To The King"

"I'm A Child Of The King!"

One of the evangelists use to tell the story of a king who went out among his subjects and selected a young boy to be part of his royal family. Of course the boy was delighted--brought in to the royal palace and saw as he entered the great banquet table laden with delicious food. Many guests were there and it was going to be a great evening. The king requested that the boy be given a bath and a change of clothes. He objected--"I like my old clothes!" The king replied: "If you are going to sit at my table, you must do so according to my requirements."

There are many people who would like to sit at the king's table in eternity--but in the old garments of sinful life--they do not want the bath of cleansing that the Bible calls the new birth. But without it you cannot get into Heaven. John 3:3 "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

THE SONS OF DAVID

David had many sons born of his wives and concubines. In 2 Sam. 3:2-5 we learn of the sons who were born at Hebron. Others were born at Jerusalem. Of his sons there are those both good and bad of which we could say a great deal, but must limit our thoughts to just 3:

I. HIS FRAIL SON-- 2 Sam. 12:15 "very sick"

One of the bitterest events in the life of David. He must stand by and see another innocent party suffer for his own sin. This is always difficult--(people would rather bear sorrow themselves than have their loved one go thru times of pain.) This is the culmination of a life of great success in war--17 years. Multiple wives--life of ease that kept him in Jerusalem--for one moment of self-indulgence he was to pay a price as no other man in history. His sin is forgiven but the scars still remain. (Timeless application in our day--one moment people throw away the character it took a life-time to build, self-respect, and of others. (Mr. Jinks sons drunk at his funeral.)

A. Question arises: Why would God allow the innocent to suffer for the sins of a parent??

This is not something new-- happens every day. Children suffer for the sins of parents----- picture in Life of children beaten.

Perhaps no easy answer to the question but we can see the reasons and proper attitude in this area;

1. David knew it was right if the Lord did it and rather than bitterness he worshipped.
v.20
2. The glory of God among the nations of the world is at stake--v.14 David's poor testimony brought the name of the Lord in a bad light. God could not let this sin go unpunished.
3. Another side to this story--a side of blessing and hope. There is no greater verse in the Bible on the subject of the death of infants than v.23 David has thru this experience given hope to literally thousands of people who have seen tiny ones slip out into eternity.

Answer:

(Wilkie's story about the sick little girl who had such a difficult time--restored only to be hit and killed by a car!)
Wilkie's distress--no message--afterwards

II. HIS FAMOUS SON--1 Kings 10:1 "fame"

Solomon was the second son born of Bathsheba.
For what was Solomon famous:

1. Wisdom--story of 2 mothers. Cases of this nature brought to the king. 1 Kings
2. Peaceful reign-- 1 Chron. 22:9 4:29
3. Builder of Temple
4. Writer--Songs of Solomon, Proverbs Eccles. (Vanity)

Yet .."it is a striking commentary on the quality of sinful men that in the very period of the historical kingdom's greatest success, there were already present the seeds of political catastrophe." (McClain)

Solomon failed in 3 vital areas:

1. He multiplied military force-- Deut 17:14ff 1 Kings 10:2
2. Loved many wives-- 1 Kings 11:1
3. Piled up silver and gold.
Solomon died in folly and disgrace and let son to split kgdm--Rehoboam.

III. HIS FAVORITE SON-- 2 Sam. 18:33 "my Son"

1. Absalom-- a remarkable man. Great personal attraction--carried on the line of the sons of Jesse for even David was known for his nice looks. Add to this his hair!
 - a. Flare for the dramatic--chariots and runners--people like the spectacular. (Parents get pleasure vicariously from activities of children.)
Lived in style.
 - b. Winning ways, personal charm, political ambitions----yet wild, wayward and foolish.
 - c. Yet David loved this son in an unusual way!

***My Dad-- not his strength or fearlessness etc. baptism and conversion,

THE PURSUIT OF GODI SAMUEL 13:14

MORE IS WRITTEN ABOUT THE LIFE OF DAVID IN THE OLD TESTAMENT THAN ANY OTHER PERSON. SIXTY-TWO CHAPTERS IN THE BIBLE ARE DEVOTED TO DAVID'S LIFE, AND BY CONTRAST, FOURTEEN DEAL WITH THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM. THE NAME DAVID MEANS "BELOVED" AND IS UNIQUE IN THE O.T. FOR HE ALONE BEARS THAT NAME. AS FAR AS THE BIBLE IS CONCERNED, MORE DETAILS ARE GIVEN ABOUT DAVID'S LIFE THAN ANY OTHER O.T. CHARACTER. DAVID WAS ONE OF THE MOST VERSATILE MEN IN THE BIBLE. HE WAS A SHEPHERD, MUSICIAN, SOLDIER, KING AND POET. DAVID IS ONE OF THE GREAT MEN OF THE BIBLE, BUT I AM ALWAYS AMAZED AT THE UTTER HONESTY OF THE WORD OF GOD NOT SEEKING TO HIDE DAVID'S SINS, BUT RATHER PORTRAYING HIM WITH ALL OF HIS WEAKNESSES AS WELL AS HIS STRENGTHS. THIS IS ONE REASON THE BIBLE IS SO HELPFUL TO US. MEN LIKE DAVID ARE NOT PORTRAYED AS PARAGONS OF SINLESSNESS, BUT RATHER AS MEN LIKE ALL MEN WITH VIRTUES AND VICES. SOMEONE HAS WELL SAID, "THE BEST OF MEN ARE BUT MEN AT THEIR BEST." ONE COMMENTATOR CALLED DAVID "THE PRODIGAL SON OF THE OLD TESTAMENT", ANOTHER "THE ROBIN HOOD OF THE BIBLE". WITHOUT DOUBT, HE IS ONE OF OUR FAVORITE O.T. CHARACTERS. ON OUR LAST TOUR TO ISRAEL, I WAS SURPRISED WHEN WE VISITED DAVID'S TOMB, THAT IT DID NOT BEAR THE ELABORATE TRAPPINGS ONE MIGHT EXPECT AT THE GRAVE OF ISRAEL'S GREATEST KING.

I. DAVID'S SELECTION TO BE KING OF ISRAELI SAMUEL 16:1, 7

SAMUEL HAD RETIRED FROM PUBLIC LIFE AND WAS PRESIDING OVER THE SCHOOL OF THE PROPHETS IN RAMMAH. IN THEIR QUEST FOR A KING, THE PEOPLE HAD CHOSEN SAUL BECAUSE OF HIS STRIKING PHYSICAL APPEARANCE. HOWEVER, IT BECAME OBVIOUS THAT SAUL WAS DESIROUS OF HAVING HIS OWN WAY AND RESENTED GOD'S LEADERSHIP IN THE NATION. HIS SELF-WILL, SELF-GLORY AND ARROGANCE FINALLY COST SAUL HIS KINGDOM. GOD SENT SAMUEL TO BETHLEHEM AND THE HOUSE OF JESSE TO ANOINT A NEW KING. SAMUEL WAS AS SURPRISED AS EVERYONE ELSE WHEN GOD CHOSE THE YOUNGEST OF JESSE'S SONS. THE GLARING CONTRAST BETWEEN DAVID AND SAUL HAD TO DO WITH THE CONTRAST

IN THE PHYSICAL APPEARANCE AS OPPOSED TO SPIRITUAL QUALIFICATIONS. GOD SAW IN DAVID'S HEART, SOMETHING THAT WAS TOTALLY ABSENT IN THE ARROGANT SAUL. EVEN IN EARLY LIFE, GOD WAS PREPARING DAVID FOR PUBLIC LIFE.

II. DAVID'S REJECTION BY SAUL 18:29

DAVID WAS BROUGHT INTO THE COURT OF SAUL INITIALLY AS A MUSICIAN. HIS SECOND APPEARANCE WAS AT THE VALLEY OF ELAH AND HIS DEFEAT OF GOLIATH. SAUL BECAME JEALOUS OF DAVID'S POPULARITY WITH THE PEOPLE. THE KING BROODED OVER HIS BITTERNESS AND HATRED OF DAVID UNTIL IT BECAME DANGEROUS FOR DAVID TO BE NEAR SAUL BECAUSE OF THE REPEATED ACTS OF SAUL TO KILL HIM. IN I SAMUEL 22, THE SCRIPTURAL RECORD INDICATES THAT DAVID FLED FROM SAUL AND MADE HIS HEADQUARTERS IN THE CAVE OF ADULLAM. FOR NINE YEARS, DAVID LIVED IN EXILE, REJECTED BY THE KING OF ISRAEL. DURING THIS TIME, SOME 400 MEN JOINED DAVID IN HIS EXILE. DURING THIS TIME, DAVID HAD SEVERAL BRIEF ENCOUNTERS WITH SAUL AND SEVERAL OPPORTUNITIES TO TAKE SAUL'S LIFE, BUT STEADFASTLY REFUSED TO DO IT. HE AND HIS MEN BUSIED THEMSELVES IN OPPOSING FOREIGN INVADERS WHO SOUGHT TO PLUNDER AND STEAL FROM THE FARMERS IN ISRAEL. DURING THIS PERIOD IN DAVID'S LIFE, GOD WAS TEACHING HIM SOME VALUABLE LESSONS. HE KNEW HE WAS DESTINED TO BE THE KING OF ISRAEL. HOWEVER, IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT HIS JOURNEY TO THE THRONE WOULD NOT BE AN IMMEDIATE ONE. GOD WANTED DAVID TO COME TO THE THRONE SLOWLY AND THIS EXILE WAS PART OF THE TEMPERING PROCESS. DURING THIS DIFFICULT TIME, GOD WAS FORGING QUALITIES OF CHARACTER AND ABILITY TO COMMAND TO DAVID'S LIFE. THE MEN WHO JOINED DAVID IN THIS VENTURE WERE DEVOTED TO HIM AND WOULD REMAIN LOYAL TO HIM LONG AFTER HE ASSUMED HIS THRONE. ONE CANNOT HELP BUT BE IMPRESSED WITH DAVID'S PATIENCE AWAITING GOD'S TIME TO TAKE HIS PLACE OF LEADERSHIP. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN VERY EASY FOR DAVID TO GAIN ADVANTAGE THROUGH MILITARY STRENGTH TO PUSH HIMSELF FORWARD, EVEN TO TAKE SAUL'S LIFE. HE REFUSED TO DO THIS EVEN WHEN HIS SUPPORTERS URGED HIM TO DO SO. DURING THIS PERIOD OF REJECTION AND EXILE, DAVID WROTE HIS EXPERIENCES, THUS HAS BEEN ABLE TO HELP MEN THROUGH THE PAGES OF CHURCH HISTORY WHO HAVE ENDURED SIMILAR REJECTION.

*mirrored
Phonon*

III. DAVID'S DEVOTION TO MEN AND GOD 18:1-4

BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION, LET ME MAKE A GENERAL OBSERVATION CONCERNING DAVID'S LIFE. HIS PRIMARY CONCERN IN LIFE WAS SPIRITUAL AND NOT MATERIAL IN NATURE. THERE SEEMS TO BE ONE CONSUMING PASSION TO BRING GLORY TO GOD AND NOT PERSONAL GLORY TO DAVID. THIS IS A RARE QUALITY IN AN INDIVIDUAL. THE FRIENDSHIP OF DAVID AND JONATHAN WAS UNIQUE. ONE MIGHT EXPECT THE RISING POPULARITY OF DAVID BOTH IN SAUL'S EYES AND IN THE EYES OF THE PEOPLE TO HAVE PROVOKED ENVY IN THE HEART OF JONATHAN WHO WAS HIS APPARENT TO THE THRONE AND OLDER THAN DAVID. ALSO, HUMANLY SPEAKING, AS THE KING'S SON, JONATHAN HAD NOTHING TO GAIN BY BEFRIENDING A PLAIN SHEPHERD FROM BETHLEHEM. THERE WAS NO ADVANTAGE POLITICALLY OR OTHERWISE ON JONATHAN'S PART, IT WAS SIMPLY OUT OF SELFISH DESIRES AND KEEN FRIENDSHIP THAT BROUGHT HIM TO DAVID. ON THIS GENERAL SUBJECT, WILLIAM TAYLOR HAS OBSERVED THAT IT IS USUALLY IN THE EARLY PART OF LIFE THAT LASTING FRIENDSHIPS ARE FORMED WHICH INFLUENCE THE ENTIRE COURSE OF OUR CAREER. THERE ARE FEW WAYS THAT LEAD US MORE QUICKLY AWAY FROM GOD AND INTO SIN THAN THE SELECTION OF IMPROPER FRIENDS. I THINK IT IS GOOD ADVICE TO ADVISE THE YOUNG THAT THEY ARE NOT TO WITHDRAW THEMSELVES FROM ANY ASSOCIATION WITH THE UNGODLY, BUT WHEN IT COMES TO THAT INNER-CIRCLE OF FRIENDS, THEY MUST BE THOSE WHO ARE FRIENDS OF OUR BLESSED LORD. OTHERWISE, THEY WILL UNDERMINE THE FOUNDATION OF ONE'S LIFE, TURN THE BELIEVER AWAY FROM FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST. EVEN AMONG BELIEVERS, OUR CLOSE FRIENDS SHOULD BE THOSE WHO ARE SOLD-OUT TO THE JESUS CHRIST AND WHO MEASURE CHARACTER BY ONE'S DEDICATION TO JESUS CHRIST!! DAVID WAS A MAN WHO COULD EVOKE STRONG FRIENDSHIP AND LOYALTY FROM OTHERS. HE ALSO GAVE THE SAME KIND OF DEVOTION. DAVID'S DEVOTION TO GOD WAS REFLECTED IN THE PSALMS AS IN NO OTHER SECTION OF THE BIBLE. PSALMS 23 AND 42 REFLECT THIS DEVOTION TO GOD. DEEP WITHIN DAVID'S SOUL THERE WAS A LONGING FOR AND A DEVOTION TO GOD. HIS GREATEST CONCERN IN LIFE HAD TO DO WITH HIS RELATIONSHIP TO GOD AND TO GOD'S KINGDOM ON EARTH. THIS DISTINCTION WOULD SUGGEST WHY DAVID'S LIFE WAS FILLED WITH A MEASURE OF BLESSEDNESS AND SAUL'S WITH MISERY. SAUL LIVED FOR HIMSELF AND HIS OWN INTERESTS--WAS MOODY AND UNHAPPY MOST OF HIS LIFE. SAUL POISONED HIS OWN LIFE AND DESTROYED HIS OWN SOUL BY HIS LACK OF DEVOTION TO GOD. DAVID, IN CONTRAST, WENT DOWN IN THE PAGES OF HISTORY AS THE MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART.

IV. DAVID'S DEFECTION FROM GOD. II SAM. 11:1

DAVID'S GREAT SIN OF ADULTERY WAS THE GREAT BLEMISH AND STAIN ON HIS LIFE. THIS CHAPTER BEGINS A CHAIN OF EVENTS THAT WOULD TURN DAVID'S LIFE AWAY FROM GOD ONE FULL YEAR, AND THE SCARS OF THIS SIN WOULD PLAGUE DAVID TO THE GRAVE. PICTURE THE SCENE: DAVID WAS AT THE HEIGHT OF HIS POLITICAL POWER. HE HAD CONQUERED ALL THE NATIONS AROUND HIM. IT WAS A TIME OF GREAT PROSPERITY, ALL WAS GOING WELL IN ISRAEL. HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT IT WAS TO BE DEFEATED AS A SOLDIER, AND HIS POPULARITY AMONG THE PEOPLE HAD NEVER BEEN HIGHER. IT WAS AT THIS TIME OF LUXURY AND IDLENESS, WHEN DAVID WAS NOT SURROUNDED BY HIS WARRIORS, THAT PASSION TOOK HOLD OF DAVID AND PRINCIPLE ESCAPED HIS LIFE. IT IS ENTIRELY POSSIBLE THAT THIS SITUATION WOULD HAVE BEEN EASILY WITHSTOOD HAD DAVID NOT BEEN LIVING IN THE LAP OF LUXURY. IT SHOULD ALSO BE NOTED THAT WHATEVER DAVID DID, HE DID WITH INTENSITY AND ENTHUSIASM. WHEN DAVID WORKED FOR GOD, IT WAS NEVER A HALF-WAY VENTURE, AND THE SAME WAS TRUE WHEN HE SINNED. ONE OF THE MANY SAD ASPECTS OF THIS CHAPTER IN DAVID'S LIFE HAS TO DO WITH THE FACT THAT A LIFETIME OF WORTHY ACHIEVEMENTS AND DEVOTION TO GOD WAS STAINED IN A MOMENT'S WEAKNESS. WHEN GOD INTRUSTS MEN WITH GREAT RESPONSIBILITY, IT ALSO REQUIRES GREAT DILIGENCE AND CARE. THIS PARTICULAR SIN FROM ADULTERY TO MURDER AND COMPLICATED NOT ONLY DAVID'S LIFE AND THE LIVES OF SEVERAL OTHER PEOPLE, BUT BROUGHT DISGRACE TO THE ENTIRE NATION. A CHAIN OF TRAGEDIES WOULD FOLLOW DAVID FROM THIS POINT UNTIL HIS DEATH. THE DEATH OF BATHSHEBA'S CHILD, THE SIN OF AMMON, THE REBELLION AND MURDER OF ABSALOM, ALL WOULD COMPLICATE DAVID'S LIFE FROM THIS POINT ON. THE BUOYANT SPIRIT WOULD BE CRUSHED AND THE JOY OF LIFE DISAPPEAR. THE LESSONS OF THIS EPISODE ARE NUMEROUS. IF DAVID COULD FALL AT THIS POINT, THERE IS DANGER FOR EVERY MAN. REGARDLESS OF ONE'S POSITION IN SOCIETY OR IN THE CHURCH, AND REGARDLESS OF HIS MORAL CHARACTER AND ABILITY, NONE IS IMMUNE FROM SIN. ALSO, IT SHOULD BE POINTED OUT THAT THIS PARTICULAR YEAR IN DAVID'S LIFE OCCURRED NOT IN HIS YOUTH, BUT IN HIS MIDDLE YEARS!! DAVID WAS APPROXIMATELY 50 YEARS OLD WHEN THIS OCCURRED. HE WALKED WITH GOD FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS. IT SHOULD BE A GRAVE REMINDER THAT AS LONG AS WE ARE IN THIS WORLD, WE ARE THE OBJECTS OF SATAN'S STRATEGY. FOR AN ENTIRE YEAR, DAVID'S SUBBORNNESS AND REFUSAL TO CONFESS HIS SIN

PUT A CLOUD BETWEEN HIMSELF AND GOD. THE JOY HE HAD ONCE KNOWN WAS GONE. I THINK ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT EXPERIENCES OF THIS TIME WAS THE DEATH OF BATHSHEBA'S INFANT. HOW DIFFICULT IT WAS FOR DAVID TO KNOW THAT OTHERS WERE SUFFERING BECAUSE OF HIS SIN. WE NEED TO BE REMINDED THAT MANY TIMES CHILDREN PAY FOR THE PERMISSIVENESS OF THEIR PARENTS. NOT ONLY WOULD DAVID KNOW THE AGONY OF THE LOSS OF HIS INFANT SON, BUT LATER ON HIS FAVORITE SON ABSALOM WOULD BREAK HIS HEART. THERE IS AN ENORMOUS PRICE TO PAY FOR A MOMENTS DEFECTION.

V. DAVID'S CONFESSION AND RESTORATION. PSALM 51:1-4, 7-13

ONE OF THE BASIC QUESTIONS ABOUT RELIGION HAS TO DO WITH THE FACT THAT THERE IS A DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE PEOPLE OF GOD AND THE WICKED. NOWHERE IN THE BIBLE ARE WE TOLD THAT THE GODLY MAN IS IMMUNE FROM SIN. HE IS THE FIRST TO ACKNOWLEDGE HIS OWN PERSONAL SINNERSHIP. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE CHILD OF GOD AND THE UNGODLY HAS TO DO WITH THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO SIN. WHEN THE BELIEVER FALLS INTO SIN AND RISES FROM IT, LEAVES IT AND CRIES OUT TO GOD FOR FORGIVENESS AND CLEANSING. HOWEVER, WHEN THE UNGODLY FALLS INTO SIN, HE CONTINUES THERE, REVELS IN IT MUCH LIKE A SOW THAT WALLOWS IN THE MIRE. HE IS OFTEN OBVIOUS TO THE NATURE OF HIS SIN, SEEING ONLY ITS PLEASURE TO HIMSELF. A GODLY PERSON WILL ARISE IN CONFESSION AND RESTORATION. IF HE DOES NOT, THERE IS A GRAVE QUESTION ABOUT THE QUALITY OF HIS PROFESSION. A MAN WHO PROFFESSES TO LOVE GOD AND CONTINUES TO LIVE A LIFE OF SIN HAS NO RIGHT TO CALL HIS PROFESSION A GENUINE PROFESSION OF FAITH!! DAVID WENT FOR ONE MISERABLE YEAR OUT OF FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD, BUT FINALLY THERE CAME THAT MOMENT WHEN SEPARATION FROM GOD AND THE JOY OF SALVATION BROUGHT DAVID TEARS AND REPENTENCE. DAVID CONCLUDED HIS LIFE IN FELLOWSHIP WITH THE LORD. THE PURSUIT OF GOD WAS HIS MOST NOBLE AMBITION. NOTHING WAS MORE IMPORTANT TO DAVID THAN FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD AND BRINGING GLORY TO HIS NAME. ONE REASON WHY DAVID IS THE MOST LOVABLE CHARACTER IN THE O.T. IS BECAUSE WE SEE IN DAVID MUCH OF OURSELVES. WE, TOO, HAVE KNOWN THE FELLOWSHIP OF INTIMACY WITH GOD. WE, TOO, HAVE KNOWN THE MISERY AND AGONY OF FAILURE AND SIN AS BELIEVERS. WE, TOO, HAVE LONGED TO BRING GLORY TO GOD BY OUR LIFE AND MINISTRY. THE PATH OF RESTORATION AND FORGIVENESS

Same as David's. Confession = Cleansing. Pursuit of God - sin must be dealt with ~

ROBERT K. SPRADLING

AUGUST 1, 1976

A.M.

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THE BATTLE IS THE LORD'S

I SAMUEL 17:47

THE BIBLE RECORDS THE DETAILS OF SOME OF THE STRANGEST CONFLICTS IN HUMAN HISTORY. FOR EXAMPLE, IMAGINE A MODERN DAY NEWSMAN INTERVIEWING THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE WITH REFERENCE TO BATTLES IN WHICH THEY WERE ENGAGED. (1) MOSES TAKING THE ROD OF GOD AND STRETCHING IT OVER THE RED SEA AND THE COMPLETE VICTORY OF THE ARMIES OF ISRAEL WITHOUT A SINGLE CASUALTY. (2) THE WALLS OF JERICHO FALLING DOWN WITH NO HORSES, CHARIOTS, BATTERING RAMS, OR MIGHTY WEAPONS, SIMPLY THE BLOWING OF A RAM'S HORN. (3) THE DEFEAT OF SISERA IN JUDGES 5:20. (4) THE VICTORY OF GIDEON REDUCING HIS ARMY FROM 32,000 TO 300 MAKING THE RATIO OF 400 TO 1. THESE MEN ENTERED INTO COMBAT ARMED ONLY WITH LIGHTS AND PITCHERS. WHENEVER GOD LED HIS PEOPLE INTO CONFLICT THERE WAS NEVER ANY DOUBT WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE VICTORY. THE CHAPTER BEFORE US IS NO EXCEPTION TO THAT RULE. GOD HAD REJECTED SAUL. REPEATEDLY, ISRAEL'S FIRST KING, HAD CHAFFED AND REBELLED AT THE INTERFERENCE OF GOD IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THE AFFAIRS OF ISRAEL. SAUL WAS DETERMINED TO HAVE HIS OWN WAY WITH UTTER DISREGARD FOR THE COMMANDS OF GOD. GOD COULD NO LONGER USE SAUL BECAUSE OF SAUL'S ARROGANCE AND SELF-GLORY. THROUGH THE GODLY PROPHET, SAMUEL, DAVID WAS ANOINTED KING OVER ISRAEL. THIS CHAPTER BRINGS US TO HIS FIRST MAJOR PUBLIC APPEARANCE IN SCRIPTURE. THERE ARE FEW MEN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT AS WELL KNOWN AND LOVED AS DAVID. SANDERS HAS WELL SAID, "THIS IS THE FULLEST BIOGRAPHY IN THE BIBLE." FOR EXAMPLE, 14 CHAPTERS MENTION THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM BUT NO FEWER THAN 62 CHAPTERS ARE DEVOTED TO DAVID'S LIFE. THE SCENE PITS ISRAEL WITH THEIR ANCIENT FOE, THE PHILISTINES. THIS FIERCE AND GODLESS, WARLIKE NATION, WAS THE PERPETUAL ENEMY OF ISRAEL. IT WAS A CONFEDERACY OF 5 INDEPENDENT TOWNS, GAZA, ASHDOD, ASHKELON, GATH, AND EKRON.

GENERALLY, THEIR MODE OF WARFARE WOULD BE DESCRIBED AS GUERRILLA IN NATURE WITH SUDDEN RAIDS ON UNPROTECTED VILLAGES FOR THE PURPOSE OF PLUNDERING AND STEALING AND RAVAGING, ~~EVERY DAY~~. THROUGH THIS ACTIVITY THEY KEPT THE NATION OF ISRAEL IN A STATE OF CONSTANT ANXIETY AND ALARM. NOW THERE ~~WERE~~ TACTICS ^{Had} ~~HAVE~~ CHANGED AND THE ARMY OF THE PHILISTINES ~~IS WAS~~ LINED UP IN BATTLE GEAR FACING THE ISRAELITES. THE PROCEDURE WAS TO LET A FAMOUS CHAMPION OR MAN OF WAR FROM EACH SIDE BATTLE TO THE DEATH WITH THE WINNING SIDE TAKING ALL THE SPOILS TO THE EXTENT THAT THE LOSER WAS BOUND TO SERVITUDE. BECAUSE OF SAUL'S SPIRITUAL DECLINE, HE HAD VERY LITTLE TO PROVIDE BY WAY OF LEADERSHIP FOR THE NATION. TO HIM GOD WAS SIMPLY A NAME AND NOTHING ELSE. SAUL BELIEVED THAT GOD HAD DONE GREAT THINGS FOR ISRAEL IN THE PAST AND PERHAPS HE WOULD DO GREAT THINGS IN THE FUTURE BUT SOMEHOW HE DID NOT EXPECT GOD TO ACT IN THE PRESENT BECAUSE OF HIS OWN DISOBEDIENCE AND REJECTION. FOR 40 DAYS ISRAEL HAD UNDERGONE GREAT HUMILIATION THROUGH THE "BAD MOUTHING" OF GOLIATH AND THE SCORN OF THE ENTIRE PHILISTINE ARMY. INTO THIS TENSE SITUATION WALKED DAVID, THE YOUNGEST SON OF JESSE, AND IT IS THIS CONFRONTATION, ONE OF THE UNIQUE BATTLES IN BIBLE HISTORY THAT ARRESTS OUR ATTENTION TODAY. WE MIGHT ALSO POINT OUT THAT DAVID IS SOMEWHERE BETWEEN THE AGE OF 18 AND 20. THIS CHAPTER IS FILLED WITH UNLIKELY SITUATIONS AND CIRCUMSTANCES.

I. AN UNLIKELY WARRIOR - VERSES 12-37

WHEN ONE LOOKED AT TINY DAVID AND MAMMOTH GOLIATH, THE ODDS OF CONFLICT BETWEEN THE TWO SEEMED IMPOSSIBLE. IN ALL PROBABILITY, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR DAVID TO CARRY GOLIATH'S ARMOR WHICH WEIGHED 156 POUNDS. THE HEAD OF HIS SPEAR WEIGHED 18½ POUNDS. GOLIATH'S SHIELD WAS BIGGER THAN DAVID'S ENTIRE BODY. WHEN ONE LOOKED AT THE OUTWARD CIRCUMSTANCES AND MEASURED THE ODDS, IT WAS NOT ONLY UNLIKELY THAT DAVID COULD WAGE COMBAT AGAINST GOLIATH BUT UTTERLY IMPOSSIBLE!

THE TEXT OF SCRIPTURE LISTS AT LEAST THREE FACTORS WHICH DESERVE OUR ATTENTION IN THE TEXT.

A. THE FAMILY FACTOR - VERSE 12-28

JESSE HAD EIGHT SONS, THREE OF WHOM WERE FIGHTING IN SAUL'S ARMY. DAVID WAS THE YOUNGEST AND PROBABLY THE SMALLEST OF ALL HIS BROTHERS. HIS DUTIES TOOK HIM TO THE SHEPHERD'S FIELD. ALSO, HE SEEMS TO BE THE ONE WHO RAN ERRANDS FOR HIS FATHER. IT WAS SUCH AN ERRAND THAT BROUGHT HIM TO THE BATTLEFIELD. ALSO, DAVID'S BROTHER, ELIAB, WAS ANGRY AT DAVID'S INQUISITIVE INTEREST IN THE EVENTS ON THE BATTLEFIELD. HIS ELDEST BROTHER LOOKED UPON DAVID AS HIS "LITTLE BABY BROTHER" AND DID NOT SEE IN DAVID WHAT GOD SAW IN HIM! FAMILIES SELDOM SEE THE POTENTIAL FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IN THEIR MEMBERS. SOMETIMES MOMS AND DADS AND BROTHERS HAVE NO IDEA WHAT GOD IS DOING IN THE HEART OF A FAMILY MEMBER AND THE ENORMOUS POTENTIAL AVAILABLE TO THE YIELDED LIFE. ELIAB LOOKED UPON DAVID AS A NUISANCE AND A DREAMER AND A PEST!

B. THE PHYSICAL FACTORS - VERSES 33

NOT ONLY DID DAVID'S FAMILY THINK THERE WAS NO WAY HE COULD HELP IN THE BATTLE, DAVID WAS SMALL, INEXPERIENCED, UNTRAINED, AND UNSKILLED IN THE WAYS OF WAR. AFTER ALL HE WAS A SHEPHERD, MUSICIAN, POET. WHAT COULD HE KNOW ABOUT PHYSICAL COMBAT! BY CONTRAST GOLIATH WAS BIG, STRONG, A PERSON OF RAW POWER - AN AWESOME SIGHT, WITH ROARING VOICE AND FEARSOME THREATS, HE STRUCK FEAR INTO THE HEART OF EVERY MAN IN THE ISRAELI ARMY INCLUDING ITS GENERAL, SAUL! NOTHING ABOUT DAVID'S PHYSICAL APPEARANCE SPOKE OF MILITARY ABILITY - NOTHING!

C. THE FAITH FACTOR - VERSE 36-37, 47, 50

DAVID WAS NOT THINKING OF HIS OWN TACTICS IN APPROACHING GOLIATH.

HE SAW THAT THE NAME OF GOD WAS BLASPHEMED. ALSO, HIS CONFIDENCE WAS IN THE FACT THAT GOD WOULD DELIVER HIM NOW AS HE HAD DONE IN THE PAST. DAVID'S CONFIDENCE WAS IN THE LORD NOT IN HIMSELF. THERE IS A BIBLE PRINCIPLE IN THIS CHAPTER AND IN OTHER CHAPTERS WHICH TEACHES THAT GOD OFTEN USES UNLIKELY PEOPLE TO DO HIS WORK. SOMETIMES THE MOST CAPABLE INTELLECTUALLY AND PHYSICALLY ARE SO CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR OWN CAREER AND OWN REPUTATION THAT THEY HAVE NO TIME OR INTEREST IN THE WORK OF GOD. GOD CAN AND DOES USE MIGHTILY THOSE WHO ARE YIELDED TO HIM. HE IS NOT LOOKING FOR PEOPLE WHO WILL TURN THEIR ABILITIES INTO THE WORK OF GOD, BUT SIMPLY INSTRUMENTS THROUGH WHOM HE MAY POUR HIS MIGHTY POWER. (I CORINTHIANS 1:26 - 29)

II. UNLIKELY WEAPONS - VERSE 4-7, 40

GOLIATH WAS A FEARSOME SIGHT. SAUL WAS PERFECTLY WILLING FOR DAVID TO GO OUT AND GET HIS "KILLING DONE" AND WAS EVEN WILLING TO DONATE HIS OWN ARMOR TO THE CAUSE! DAVID USED UTTERLY UNCONVENTIONAL WEAPONS TO ACCOMPLISH HIS VICTORY. HAD DAVID GONE INTO COMBAT WITH THE USUAL ARMOR OF WARFARE, HIS DEFEAT WOULD HAVE BEEN QUICK AND FINAL. DAVID USED THE WEAPON WHICH WAS FAMILIAR TO HIM AND WHICH HAD DELIVERED HIM FROM PAST CRISIS. IT WAS SOMETHING HIS ENEMY NEVER EXPECTED HIM TO DO. MORRISON HAS WELL SAID, "BETTER A WELL USED SLING THAN AN ILL USED SWORD." THERE IS MUCH SPECULATION AS TO WHY DAVID CHOSE 5 SMOOTH STONES. I THINK THE ANSWER IS CLEAR ACCORDING TO OTHER VERSES IN THE BIBLE. GOLIATH WAS ONE OF A FAMILY OF FIVE ENORMOUS MEN, PERHAPS THE LAST VESTIGES OF A GIGANTIC RACE KNOWN AS THE ANAKIM WHICH ISRAEL HAD ENCOUNTERED AND OVERCOME IN THEIR CONQUEST OF CANAAN. (COMPARE JOSHUA 11:22 AND II SAMUEL 21:15-22) DAVID HAD NO FEAR OF MISSING WITH HIS FIRST STONE. I THINK HE WAS PREPARED TO BATTLE WITH THE WHOLE FAMILY IF SUCH WAS NECESSARY. THERE IS A GREAT LESSON FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD IN THIS CHAPTER WHEN COMPARED WITH II CORINTHIANS 10:1-2. IN THE WORLD IN WHICH WE LIVE, THE CHRISTIAN DOES NOT RELY UPON THE WEAPONS OF THE WORLD TO ACCOMPLISH SPIRITUAL GOALS. WHAT ARE OUR WEAPONS AGAINST GODLESSNESS AND EVIL?

THE VERY SAME THAT JESUS USED IN HIS EARTHLY MINISTRY - THE IRRESISTIBLE WORD OF GOD USED IN THE POWER OF AGGRESSIVE PRAYER. SUCH WEAPONS RELEASE THE RESOURCES OF THE GOD OF HEAVEN ON THE FIELD OF SPIRITUAL CONFLICT ENABLING GOD'S PEOPLE TO GO FORWARD IN POWER.

III. AN UNLIKELY WARFARE

AS WE HAVE ALREADY SAID, PHYSICALLY SPEAKING, DAVID WAS NO MATCH FOR GOLIATH. BUT THE NAME OF GOD WAS AT STAKE. THE GLORY OF GOD AND NOT PERSONAL GLORY WAS DAVID'S PRIMARY INTEREST. HE KNEW GOD WAS ALIVE AND WOULD VINDICATE HIS HOLY NAME BEFORE THE WORLD. HOWEVER, WHEN WE GO FORTH IN THE NAME OF GOD TO BRING HONOR AND GLORY TO HIM WE MUST DO IT HIS WAY. THERE IS NO WAY WE CAN DO THE WORK OF GOD IN THE ENERGY OF THE FLESH. GOD DOES NOT WORK THROUGH THE SCHEMINGS AND DEVISINGS OF MEN. HE WANTS HIS PEOPLE TO DO HIS WORK IN HIS WAY. (COMPARE EPHESIANS 6:11ff) THE CHRISTIAN IS IN MORTAL COMBAT WITH A FOE WHO IS INFINITELY SUPERIOR TO US IN EVERY WAY. WOE TO THE CHRISTIAN WHO SEEKS TO MATCH WITS WITH SATAN! HIS "WILES" OR METHODS ARE DECEIT AND LYING. OUR MERE STRENGTH IS NO MATCH FOR THE WELL ORGANIZED FORCES OF AN UNSEEN ARMY IN THE SPIRITUAL WORLD PRESIDED OVER BY SATAN HIMSELF. ACCORDING TO THESE VERSES THERE ARE DIFFERENT RANKS IN SATAN'S ASSOCIATES. THERE, AS THERE IS GOVERNMENTAL RANK AND ORDER AMONG GOD'S CREATURES, SO WITH SATAN. OUR ONLY HOPE OF OVERCOMING HIM IS TO PUT ON THE ADEQUATE ARMOR MENTIONED IN THESE VERSES. THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY IS NOT ONE MAN'S ABILITY OVERCOMING THE DOUBT AND RELUCTANCE OF ANOTHER, IT IS THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TAKING THE WORD OF GOD AND BRINGING SPIRITUAL LIFE TO THOSE WHO ARE SPIRITUALLY DEAD. THE GOOD SOLDIER OF JESUS CHRIST HAS NO AUTHORITY OF HIS OWN, NO POWER OF HIS OWN, IT IS ALL DELEGATED TO HIM. ONE OF THE PRESSING PROBLEMS IN THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST IS THE FAILURE OF PROFESSING CHRISTIANS TO UNDERSTAND THE NATURE OF THE CONFLICT IN WHICH WE ARE ENGAGED.

VICTORY IS NOT WON BY ORGANIZATIONAL OR ADMINISTRATIVE METHODS BUT BY SPIRITUAL ACTIVITY!

IV. AN UNLIKELY WINNER - VERSE 50

TO SAY THAT DAVID WAS AN UNDERDOG IN THIS CONFLICT WOULD BE AN UNDERSTATEMENT! DAVID WAS THE ONLY PERSON ON THAT BATTLEFIELD WHO BELIEVED HE WOULD WIN THE BATTLE BY GOD'S GRACE. NO ONE ELSE EXPECTED HIM TO WIN! I AM SURE, THAT TO THE NATURAL EYE, IT LOOKS LIKE THE CHURCH COLLECTIVELY AND CHRISTIANS INDIVIDUALLY ARE LOSING BADLY. EVIL IS LARGE, LOUD, AND SEEMINGLY INVINCIBLE. THE GOLIATH'S OF THIS WORLD STRUT, AND BOAST, AND BLASPHEME GOD WITH NO APPARENT CONSCIOUS. THE CHILDREN OF THE LIVING GOD ARE LAUGHED AT AND SCORNED AND IT SEEMS THAT COURAGE IS LACKING EVERYWHERE. THE CHRISTIAN NEEDS TO REMEMBER THAT WE ARE ALWAYS DEFEATED WHEN WE APPROACH THE CONFLICT OF THE AGES WITH WORLDLY WEAPONS. RESPONDING TO OUR OLD NATURE, THE PHILOSOPHIES OF THE WORLD THE POWER OF FORCE MANY OF WHICH SEEM TO BE NECESSARY EXPEDIENTS WILL ULTIMATELY FAIL. THE CHURCH TODAY IN LARGE MEASURE IS ARRAID IN THE ARMOR OF THE WORLD. IT GOES FORTH PREACHING A MESSAGE OF PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIAL REFORM AND EVERYTHING EXCEPT THE GRACE OF GOD, REPENTANCE, REGENERATION, AND REBIRTH. THAT IS WHY THE CHURCH IS FAILING IN THE WORLD. MEN HAVE ALWAYS DONE VALIANTLY WHEN THEY PUT THE GLORY OF GOD FOREMOST IN THEIR LIVES. THE CHURCH ALWAYS FAILS WHEN SHE IS CONCERNED ABOUT HER OWN EXPANSION AND NOT THE GLORY OF GOD. GOD IS NOT INTERESTED IN HUMAN GREATNESS BUT RATHER THE HONOR AND GLORY OF HIS DEAR SON! MAY THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST TODAY BE JEALOUS FOR THE GOOD NAME OF GOD'S SON, JESUS CHRIST! (JOHN 1:13)

A.M.

THE FOLLY OF FOOLS*Revised
July 1988*

IN MEDIEVAL TIMES, EVERY KING'S COURT HAD AN OFFICIAL ENTERTAINER KNOWN AS A COURT JESTER, OR FOOL. THE TERM "FOOL" IS STILL USED IN EVERYDAY LANGUAGE IN A FRIVOLOUS OR JESTING WAY. HOWEVER, JESUS GAVE A WARNING ABOUT THE WORD WHICH HAS SOBERED MANY: "BUT I SAY UNTO YOU, THAT WHOSOEVER IS ANGRY WITH HIS BROTHER WITHOUT A CAUSE SHALL BE IN DANGER OF THE JUDGEMENT: AND WHOSOEVER SHALL SAY TO HIS BROTHER RACA, SHALL BE IN DANGER OF THE COUNSEL: BUT WHOSOEVER SHALL SAY, THOU FOOL, SHALL BE IN DANGER OF HELL-FIRE."

(MATTHEW 5:22) THE CONTEXT OF THIS CHAPTER INDICATES THAT OUR LORD WAS SPEAKING OF THE DANGER OF BEING ANGRY WITH OTHERS. THE MAN WHO PERMITS ANGER TO WELL UP IN HIS HEART BY CALLING ANOTHER MAN A FOOL IS ON DANGEROUS GROUND. HOWEVER, THERE IS ANOTHER USAGE OF THE TERM FOOL IN THE BIBLE. IT REFERS TO A PERSON WHO IS CHARACTERIZED AS FOOLISH OR UNWISE. AS A MATTER OF FACT, GOD CALLED A MAN A FOOL IN LUKE 12. THERE WAS NO ANGER INVOLVED IN GOD'S DECLARATION HE WAS SIMPLY STATING THE FACT THAT A CERTAIN MAN LIVED A VERY FOOLISH LIFE! THE BOOK OF PROVERBS ABOUNDS WITH WARNINGS ABOUT FOOLISH BEHAVIOUR OR CONDUCT. FOR EXAMPLE, IN PROVERBS 7:7ff SOLOMON WARNED HIS SONS OF THE DANGER OF HARLOTRY AND THE UTTER FOOLISHNESS OF SUCH CONDUCT. THROUGHOUT THE PSALMS THE TERM APPEARS AND FOOLISH CONDUCT IS DESCRIBED. TODAY, WITHIN A SPAN OF TEN CHAPTERS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, THERE IS THE RECORD OF THREE MEN WHO WERE CALLED FOOLS. IN THE FIRST INSTANCE, A MAN'S WIFE CALLED HIM A FOOL. IN THE SECOND, A MAN CALLED HIMSELF A FOOL. IN THE THIRDS A KING CALLED ONE OF HIS SOLDIERS A FOOL.

I. THE CONTEMPTOUS FOOL: NABAL - I SAMUEL 25:25

THIS CHAPTER OPENS WITH THE DEATH OF SAMUEL. FOR MANY YEARS, THE NATION HAD BEEN BLESSED WITH THE WISDOM AND GODLY EXAMPLE OF THIS MAN. HIS VERY PRESENCE HAD A CONTINUING INFLUENCE FOR GOOD. WHEN HE DIED, THE NATION PLUNGED INTO MOURNING. THEY GAVE HIM THE LAST RITES AND HONOUR WORTHY OF SUCH A STATESMAN. (COMPARE THE DEATH OF JOHN LENNON AND JOHN R. RICE). AFTER THE DEATH OF SAMUEL, DAVID RETURNED TO THE FAMILIAR HAUNTS OF HEBRON. HE SUPPORTED HIMSELF BY PROTECTING THE OUTLYING HERDS AND POSSESSIONS OF BEDOUINS FROM MARAUDING RAIDERS. SINCE DAVID AND HIS MEN HAD PROTECTED HIS COUNTRYMEN FROM SUCH RAIDS, IT WAS THE HABIT AND CUSTOM FOR GRATEFUL BUSINESSMEN TO ACKNOWLEDGE THIS SERVICE BY CONTRIBUTING TO THE UPKEEP OF THIS GUERRILLA ARMY. BECAUSE OF GOD'S GOODNESS AND DAVID'S PROTECTION, NABAL HAD ENJOYED A RECORD YEAR OF PROFIT IN HIS BUSINESS. INSTEAD OF BEING GRATEFUL TO BOTH GOD AND DAVID, NABAL RESORTED TO INSULT AND SNEERS WITH REFERENCE TO DAVID'S MEN. TO IGNORE DAVID'S CONTRIBUTION TO HIS PROSPERITY WAS A BREACH OF ETHICS ON NABAL'S PART. AS A MATTER OF FACT, NABAL RELEGATED DAVID TO THE POSITION OF SERVANT AND THEN CALLED HIS ARMY A BAND OF REBELS. I SUSPECT THAT EVERY AGE HAS ITS NABALS. THEY ARE WEALTHY, BUT DEVOID OF THE COMMON COURTESIES OF LIFE. THEIR OVER-BEARING, SELF-INDULGENT, SELF-IMPORTANT, INDEPENDENT ATTITUDE IS OBNOXIOUS TO THOSE WHO ARE REQUIRED TO LIVE NEAR THEM. AS A MATTER OF FACT, NABAL LIVED ONLY FOR THE INCREASE OF HIS GOODS. SOMEONE HAS SAID THAT THERE ARE FOUR KINDS OF GREATNESS: (1) GREATNESS OF POSSESSIONS (2) GREATNESS OF DOING (3) GREATNESS OF THINKING (4) GREATNESS OF BEING... THIS HAS TO DO WITH GREATNESS OF CHARACTER AND ONE MIGHT WELL SAY THERE IS NO GREATNESS WITHOUT THIS KIND. I MUST CONFESS THAT THE CONTRAST IN CHARACTER BETWEEN NABAL AND ABIGAIL BOTHERED ME FOR MANY YEARS. I WONDERED HOW A WOMAN OF SUCH GRACE AND WISDOM COULD EVER HAVE GOTTEN HOOKED UP WITH A CHARACTER LIKE NABAL! IT IS NOT LIKELY THAT SHE MARRIED HIM FOR HIS WEALTH -- THOUGH I'M SURE SOME HAVE DONE SUCH IN HISTORY.

App.

Having ③ doing ② being ④

THE ONLY REASONABLE ANSWER SEEMS TO BE THAT IN THE PAST, OFTEN MARRIAGES WERE ARRANGED BY FAMILIES IN SUCH A WAY THAT THE CHILDREN HAD NO SAY OR CHOICE IN THE MATTER. AND YET, IN EXPERIENCE, IT'S AMAZING HOW MANY "ABIGAILS" ARE MARRIED TO MEN LIKE NABAL! GODLY WOMEN OF GRACE AND CHARM WITH HIGH IDEALS AND NOBLE AMBITIONS IN LIFE ARE MARRIED TO MEN LIKE NABAL WHO LIVE ONLY FOR THEMSELVES, THEIR WORK, AND THEIR POSSESSIONS. THIS POOR MAN NEVER DID REALIZE THAT HIS MOST VALUABLE ASSET IN LIFE WAS HIS GODLY WIFE! WHEN THE TEN YOUNG MEN RETURNED TO DAVID'S CAMP BEARING NABAL'S STINGING REBUKE, IT WAS MORE THAN DAVID COULD STAND. IMMEDIATELY, DAVID ARMED 400 MEN AND PREPARED TO ATTACK NABAL. DAVID'S ANGER IS UNDERSTANDABLE BUT NOT EXCUSABLE. THE MAN WHO HAD BORNE THE HOSTILE ACTS OF KING SAUL WOULD NOW NOT TOLERATE INSULTING WORDS TO HIMSELF OR HIS MEN. SIMPLY STATED, DAVID'S PRIDE HAD BEEN WOUNDED. HE HAD NO LEGAL RIGHT TO ANY OF NABAL'S PROPERTY. IT WAS SIMPLY A SOCIAL INSULT. IN A MOMENT OF RAGE, DAVID HAD FORGOTTEN A SIMPLE BIBLE PRINCIPLE, NAMELY, THE SACREDNESS OF HUMAN LIFE -- EVEN THE LIFE OF A MAN LIKE NABAL. WHEN WORD CAME TO ABIGAIL OF NABAL'S GROSS DISCOURTESY TOWARD DAVID, IMMEDIATELY SHE TOOK STEPS TO RECTIFY THE SITUATION. SHE ACKNOWLEDGED THE FACT THAT HER HUSBAND WAS A FOUL-TEMPERED, MAN OF NO REASON. AS A MATTER OF FACT, THE WORD NABAL IN ONE VERSION MEANS: "ONE OF DOG-LIKE CHARACTER." DAVID CONTINUED TO JUSTIFY OR RATIONALIZE HIS ANGER BY REHEARSING THE FACT THAT FOR MONTHS HE HAD GUARDED THE FLOCKS OF NABAL, PRESERVED THE SAFETY OF HIS POSSESSIONS, AND NOW WHEN HE ASKED A SMALL FAVOR IN RETURN HE RECEIVED A CHURLISH REPLY, WHICH HE WOULD NOT TOLERATE. IN ABIGAIL, WE SEE A WOMAN OF GREAT BEAUTY, TACT, AND INTELLECTUAL ABILITY. ANY OTHER MAN WOULD HAVE BEEN GRATEFUL TO GOD FOR SUCH A COMPANION. HER CORRECT APPRAISAL AND ANALYSIS OF HER HUSBAND'S CHARACTER IS THE BASIS FOR OUR CONSIDERATION TODAY. THE SPIRITUAL QUALITY OF ABIGAIL IS REFLECTED IN THE FACT THAT SHE POINTED OUT TO THE KING THAT HE COULD NOT SEEK REVENGE FOR HIMSELF, HE MUST LEAVE THAT TO GOD.

DAVID'S ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE FACT THAT SHE SAVED HIM FROM A HORRIBLE CRIME IS GRATIFYING. WHEN SHE RETURNED HOME, SHE FOUND HER HUSBAND IN A DRUNKEN STUPOR. WHEN SHE INFORMED HIM OF THE SITUATION FROM WHICH SHE HAD SAVED NABAL HE SIMPLY DIED OF SHOCK. NOBODY WEPT WHEN NABAL DIED. HE WAS NOT MISSED OR MOURNED OVER. THE NABALS OF THIS WORLD LEAVE NOTHING BEHIND BUT GRIEF. ONLY MEN LIKE SAMUEL WHOSE LIVES HAVE BEEN A GODLY EXAMPLE, AN ACTIVE INFLUENCE FOR GOOD, ARE MOURNED OVER WHEN THEY DIE. IT IS INTERESTING THAT NABAL'S WISE WIFE WOULD SOON BECOME HIS WEALTHY WIDOW AND DAVID'S WIFE. THE WORLD IS FILLED WITH MEN LIKE NABAL WHO HAVE NO INTEREST IN OR REGARD FOR ANYONE BUT THEMSELVES. THEY USUALLY DIE UNNOTICED AND NOT MISSED. THE POLYGAMY OF VERSE 44 IS NOT CONDONED BY GOD. THE BIBLE SHOWS THAT SENSUALITY WAS DAVID'S BESETTING SIN. THERE WERE CERTAIN THINGS WHICH GOD PERMITTED APART FROM JUDGEMENT BUT WHICH WERE STILL WRONG IN THE SIGHT OF GOD, EVEN THOUGH MEN OF PROMINENCE LIKE DAVID COMMITTED SUCH SINS. THIS FIRST STEP TOWARD POLYGAMY LED TO MULTIPLE MISERIES IN LATER YEARS BOTH FOR DAVID AND HIS SON SOLOMON WHO FOLLOWED HIS FATHER'S UNWISE EXAMPLE.

II. THE JEALOUS FOOL: SAUL -- I SAMUEL 26:21

THIS CHAPTER RECORDS THE FINAL OCCASION IN WHICH SAUL AND DAVID WOULD (EVER) MEET. SAUL WOULD SOON DIE, WITH HIS SONS, ON THE HILLS OF GILBOA IN SHAME AND MILITARY DISGRACE. IN THIS CHAPTER, ONCE AGAIN, WE SEE THE UPS AND DOWNS OF SAUL'S ATTITUDE TOWARD DAVID. HIS DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE TYPE PERSONALITY TORMENTED HIM ALL THE DAYS OF HIS LIFE. FOR A SHORT TIME IN THOSE EARLY DAYS, SAUL SEEMED PLEASED TO HAVE YOUNG DAVID NEAR HIM. DAVID'S FEARLESSNESS IN BATTLE ALONG WITH HIS MUSICAL ABILITY AND LOYALTY TO SAUL APPEALED TO THE KING. THEN CAME THAT MEMORABLE DAY AS THEY RETURNED FROM MILITARY EXPEDITION AND SAUL HEARD THE CHANT OF THE LADIES ALONG THE STREETS OF JERUSALEM. FROM THAT DAY FORWARD, SAUL WAS NEVER THE SAME TOWARD DAVID. THEN TOO THERE WAS THE UNUSUAL RELATIONSHIP OF DAVID TO JONATHAN.

THIS MUST HAVE ANGERED SAUL AS A MAN OF FEW FRIENDS IS OFTEN JEALOUS OF A PERSON WITH MANY. IT NEVER OCCURED TO SAUL THAT DAVID WAS HIS GREATEST FRIEND AND THE MONSTEROUS JEALOUSY AND PRIDE WHICH MADE HIM SUCH A MISERABLE MAN WAS TOTALLY OF HIS OWN DOING. SAUL'S SUSPICIOUS NATURE BROUGHT SORROW AND SADNESS INTO HIS OWN LIFE AND THE LIVES OF ALL AROUND HIM. ON THIS OCCASION, SAUL FACED THE FACT THAT DAVID COULD HAVE TAKEN HIS LIFE BUT DID NOT AND PERHAPS FOR THE FIRST TIME IT DAWNED ON SAUL THAT HIS SUSPICION OF DAVID WAS UTTERLY FOOLISH AND UNFOUNDED. ON THAT OCCASION, SAUL CRIED OUT IN DISPAIR: "I HAVE PLAYED THE FOOL." HOWEVER, THE DIE HAD BEEN CAST AND THERE WAS NO TURNING BACK FOR SAUL. HE COULD NEVER UNDO THE DAMAGE HE HAD ALREADY DONE TO ISRAEL SPIRITUALLY AND TO HIMSELF PSYCHOLOGICALLY. (THERE IS ONE INTERESTING COMPARISON IN THESE TWO CHAPTERS, WHERE DAVID WAS READY TO TAKE NABAL'S HEAD WITH A SWORD, BY CONTRAST HE WAS CONTENT TO LEAVE THE CONTROVERSY BETWEEN HIMSELF AND SAUL WITH GOD AND DID NOT LOOK UPON THIS EXPERIENCE AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO AVENGE HIS ADVERSARY.)

App.

III. THE CARELESS FOOL: ABNER -- II SAMUEL 3:33

THE BOOK OF I SAMUEL CLOSES WITH THE DEATH OF SAUL AND HIS THREE SONS. SAUL'S CHIEF MILITARY ADVISOR AND WARRIOR WAS A MAN NAMED ABNER. AFTER SAUL'S DEATH, ABNER SOUGHT TO PUT SAUL'S SON, ISHBOSHETH, ON THE THRONE. HOWEVER, ISHBOSHETH WAS A WEAK PUPPET IN THE HANDS OF ABNER AND AFTER FIVE YEARS OF MILITARY WARFARE, ABNER WON BACK MUCH OF THE LOST TERRITORY. HOWEVER, EVEN THOUGH HIS FORCES WERE MORE NUMEROUS THAN THOSE IN JUDAH HIS BEST SOLDIERS WERE STILL NO MATCH FOR THE 600 CRACK TROOPS IN DAVID'S PERSONAL COMMAND. AS TIME WENT ON, DAVID BEGAN TO INCREASE IN POWER. (II SAMUEL 2 TELLS THE STORY OF AN ATTEMPT BETWEEN THE FORCES OF ABNER AND THE FORCES OF JOAB TO SETTLE SOME OF THERE MILITARY SCORES BY A KIND OF REPRESENTATIVE DUEL BETWEEN TWO COMPANIES OF TWELVE MEN FROM EACH SIDE. HOWEVER, WHEN THEY WERE ALL

SLAIN A FIERCE BATTLE ENSUED BETWEEN THE FORCES AND ABNER FLED FOR HIS LIFE. JOAB WHO WAS DAVID'S NEPHEW, HAD TWO SOLDIERS BROTHERS NAMED ABISHAI AND ASAHIEL. WHEN ABNER REALIZED HIS FORCES WERE IN DISARAY HE SET OUT ON FOOT PURSUED BY ASAHIEL. ABNER BEGGED HIM NOT TO FOLLOW AND WARNED THAT HE WOULD KILL HIM IF HE CONTINUED ON AFTER ABNER. HOWEVER, THIS WAS ALL TO NO AVAIL AND ASAHIEL WAS KILLED BY ABNER. JOAB VOWED TO KILL ABNER FOR THE DEATH OF HIS BROTHER. TWO YEARS WENT BY AND A QUARREL ERUPTED BETWEEN ABNER AND ISHBOSHETH OVER A WOMAN. WOUNDED IN PRIDE AND SEEKING TO OFFER DAVID HIS RENEWED ALLEGIANCE, ABNER MADE OVERTURES TO DAVID TO TRANSFER ALLEGIANCE. AFTER TESTS OF HIS SINCERITY, A FEAST WAS GIVEN IN HONOR OF ABNER. AT THE FEAST, JOAB WAS NOT PRESENT BUT WAS OUT ON A MILITARY EXPEDITION. WHEN HE RETURNED PREMATURELY AFTER ABNER LEFT HE SENT A MESSAGE UNDER DAVID'S NAME AND MET ABNER AT THE GATE OF HEBRON. FEIGNING A PRIVATE AND SECRET CONVERSATION, JOAB STABBED ABNER TO DEATH. THE POINT OF THIS STORY IS THAT ABNER DID A VERY FOOLISH THING. HE MISCALCULATED WHEN HE BELIEVED THAT JOAB WOULD LET BYGONES BE BYGONES. HE WAS UNAWARE OF THE DEEP REVENGE IN JOAB'S HEART AND WAS UNAWARE OF HIS OWN PERIL IN COMING OUTSIDE THE CITY OF HEBRON. HEBRON WAS A CITY OF REFUGE AND ABNER WAS NOT LIVING THERE BY ACCIDENT. HISTORY RECORDS THAT THERE WERE THREE CITIES ON EACH SIDE OF THE JORDAN RIVER WHERE PEOPLE MIGHT LIVE WHO HAD ACCIDENTLY KILLED OTHERS OR WHO HAD TAKEN LIFE ON THE FIELD OF COMBAT. THE LAW SPECIFIED THAT IN SUCH CASES OF MANSLAUGHTER, A PERSON FROM THE FAMILY OF THE SLAIN VICTIM COULD AVENGE THE DEATH OF THE DEAD. HOWEVER, THE LAW STATED THAT IF A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY COULD REACH THE PERSON GUILTY OF ACCIDENTAL MANSLAUGHTER, WITH AN ARROW OR SPEAR OR SWORD, HE COULD AVENGE THE DEATH. HOWEVER, THE PERSON WAS SAFE AS LONG AS HE STAYED INSIDE THE WALLS OF THE CITY OF REFUGE UNTIL THE HIGH PRIEST DIED.

IF ABNER HAD STAYED INSIDE THE CITY WALLS THERE WAS ABSOLUTELY NOTHING JOAB COULD HAVE DONE. ABNER DIED WITHIN REACH OF LEGAL SAFETY. THE POINT OF THIS STORY IS OBVIOUS: THERE ARE HOSTS OF PEOPLE JUST LIKE ABNER WHO WILL DIE THE DEATH OF A FOOL. THEY WILL DIE NEAR THE PLACE OF SAFETY. THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE HEARD THE GOSPEL AND KNOW THE WAY OF SALVATION AND THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING SAVED LIKE ABNER WILL MISCALCULATE. THEY PLAN TO GET RIGHT SOMEDAY BUT WILL FAIL TO TAKE ALL OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES INTO VIEW. AT THE TIME OF HIS DEATH, ABNER THOUGHT EVERYTHING WAS GOING HIS WAY. HE WAS ACCEPTED BY DAVID AND FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HIS LIFE ASSOCIATED WITH A MAN WHO MIGHT APPRECIATE HIS WORTH AS A MILITARY STRATEGIST AND WARRIOR. THE SADDNESS IN DAVID'S HEART WAS THAT ABNER DIED WITHOUT WARNING AND UNLIKE A SOLDIER.

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Conclusion
Only

Sept. 1983
Bce-AM

6
THE POINT OF THIS STORY IS THAT ABNER DID A VERY FOOLISH THING. HE MISCALCULATED WHEN HE BELIEVED THAT JOAB WOULD LET BYGONES BE BYGONES. HE WAS UNAWARE OF THE DEEP REVENGE IN JOAB'S HEART AND WAS UNAWARE OF HIS OWN PERIL IN COMING OUTSIDE THE CITY OF HEBRON. HEBRON WAS A CITY OF REFUGE AND ABNER WAS NOT LIVING THERE BY ACCIDENT. HISTORY RECORDS THAT THERE WERE THREE CITIES ON EACH SIDE OF THE JORDAN RIVER WHERE PEOPLE MIGHT LIVE WHO HAD ACCIDENTALLY KILLED OTHERS OR WHO HAD TAKEN LIFE ON THE FIELD OF COMBAT. THE LAW SPECIFIED THAT IN SUCH CASES OF MANSLAUGHTER, A PERSON FROM THE FAMILY OF THE SLAIN VICTIM COULD AVENGE THE DEATH OF THE DEAD. HOWEVER, THE LAW STATED THAT IF A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY COULD REACH THE PERSON GUILTY OF ACCIDENTAL MANSLAUGHTER, WITH AN ARROW OR SPEAR OR SWORD, HE COULD AVENGE THE DEATH. HOWEVER, THE PERSON WAS SAFE AS LONG AS HE STAYED INSIDE THE WALLS OF THE CITY OF REFUGE UNTIL THE HIGH PRIEST DIED. IF ABNER HAD STAYED INSIDE THE CITY WALLS THERE WAS ABSOLUTELY NOTHING JOAB COULD HAVE DONE. ABNER DIED WITHIN REACH OF LEGAL SAFETY. THE POINT OF THIS STORY IS OBVIOUS: THERE ARE HOSTS OF PEOPLE JUST LIKE ABNER WHO WILL DIE THE DEATH OF A FOOL. THEY WILL DIE NEAR THE PLACE OF SAFETY. THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE HEARD THE GOSPEL AND KNOW THE WAY OF SALVATION AND THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING SAVED LIKE ABNER WILL MISCALCULATE. THEY PLAN TO GET RIGHT (SOMEDAY) BUT WILL FAIL TO TAKE ALL OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES INTO VIEW. AT THE TIME OF HIS DEATH, ABNER THOUGHT EVERYTHING WAS GOING HIS WAY. HE WAS ACCEPTED BY DAVID AND FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HIS LIFE ASSOCIATED WITH A MAN WHO MIGHT APPRECIATE HIS WORTH AS A MILITARY STRATEGIST AND WARRIOR. THE SADNESS IN DAVID'S HEART WAS THAT ABNER DIED WITHOUT WARNING AND UNLIKE A SOLDIER.

Luke 12
Picture

"Thou Fool"

"WORTHY OF DEATH"

1 Kings 2:26

This is a strange title for a message from the Bible. Often we have heard folk remark--"He was mean and no good but he didn't deserve to die like that." We will qualify what we mean a little later on---for in a strict spiritual sense, all men are worthy of death for we receive more grace and mercy from God than most of us deserve.

Introduction to the Book of Kings. (Data in margin)

The book begins with an ending--the close of the life of David. v.1 says "Now king David was old..." He is about 70 yrs. but many things have happened to prematurely age David: (1) Life hardness of military life, pressures of staying alive and ruling a nation with internal and external problems, (2) Family David had many sons and the first 4 of them died violent deaths.

1. Ammon
2. Chileab--"like the father" prob. looked like David.
3. Absalom
4. Adonijah

In these sons we will see David's greatest weakness. In his fondness for his children, he was prone to overlook. In the light of the text, we shall examine the lives of 3 men of whom it could be said, they were worthy or deserving of death, and see the reasons why. The first of this ~~trio~~ trio was David's 4th son--

I. ADONIJAH WAS WORTHY OF DEATH --1:5-7 41-53; 2:13-25

From the first few verses of the first chapter of Kings we learn a great deal about Adonijah:

A. Too Much Like His Brother Absalom--v.5

1. Mothers different but much in common.

Explain v.6 ref. to David not their mothers.

Absalom's mother from a wild mountain people and this unpredictable and restlessness in Absalom. Māacah 2 Sam. 3:3

Adonijah's mother was Haggith which literally means "dancer" with some conjecture get another picture of another son from another strange woman.

2. Appearance and manner--"goodly" v.6

This is a reference not to character but to appearance. Physically attractive.

B. Too Ambitious For His Own Good

1. Exalted himself-- God exalted David.

2. "I will be king"--David had declared that Solomon would be his successor.

3. Big display of his person.

C. Too Little Discipline From His Parents--v.6

The word "displeased" means "pained, grieved, prevented or challenged. Point is not that Adonijah was perfect,

but that David did not restrict him in his attitudes and activities. David's fondness for his children clouded his judgment in disciplining them and blinded them as to their faults. (Christians fall inot this easier than any other trap. My kids are different--smarter, better behaved, nothing more repulsive than a doting parent who can see no wrong in their children!)*Lena--

D. Too Much of A Coward To Be a Good Leader --v.49,50

The horns of the altar were projections at the 4 corners of the altar where sacrifices were bound. They symbolize place of grace and safety--the sanctity and protection of the Lord's house. Ex. 21:14 Murders and rebels however could find no safeth there.

v. 52-- an act of grace and mercy on Solomon's part--gave him another opportunity to prove himslef.

E. Too Crafty ~~For~~ And Decitful In Spite of His Promise--2:13 ff

At first, it would appear that Solomon had made a harsh judgment on this man. But understand the background:

"In the East no act is more directly associated with suspicions of treason than a subjects marrying or attempting to marry a widow of a deceased king." This act shows the scheming of "donijah for even to marry a concubine of king was regarded as an insult to the present king and an unwillingness to submit to his authority. If "adonijah were seeking to lower Solomon in public opinion and exalt himself, this would be a perfect way.

Why Adonijah worth of death????

He refused to submit to the king and was determined to gain the crown any way possible. Treason and Rebellion. There could be no peace in the kingdom until this was dealt wi th.

II. JOAB WAS WORTHY OF DEATH 2:28-32

Joab was a strange man. Capable of great loyalty and yet a more blood-thirsty, treaterous, jealous man never lived. David warns Solomon about him before his death. 2:6 I have often wondered why David did not deal more firmly with Joab.

Two reasons:

- (1) Joab son of David's sister.
- (2) Joab was on the "inside" of David's sceme to kill Uriah--how could David deal with a murderer when he was guilty of the same. Joab probably never let him forget it!

Joab killed Abner. Jealously

Joab killed Absalom.

He was a murderer of long standing and well overdue to pay for his crimes. Solomon knew never be a day of peace in Israel as long as Joab could roam freely.

III. SHIMEI WAS WORTHY OF DEATH-- 2:36-44

Shimei was one who had ridiculed and cursed David before .

Reason was that he was of the family of Saul. 2 Sam. 16:5-12. His hatred for David had smoldered thru the years. Saul was his choice. David spared his life but he never trusted him. (Interesting point--forgiveness something you can gain--but a broken trust--never.) His Word Was Of No Value. Old hatreds ruled his life.

Point of this text:

We look at this trio and say--what horrible men, they were bound to come to death living as they did. Each of them had a common fault--they rebelled against the king. They refused to be loyal to Solomon. Do you see a New Testament parallel?? There are just 2 classes of people in this world--those who are loyal to Jesus Christ--those who aren't!

All men are deserving of spiritual death. If God had sent every man who ever lived to Hell he would have been justified in doing so! But though we're worth of death and deserve it--He promised grace and mercy to those who will come to Jesus Christ. John 3:19

"THE LEGACY OF A LEPER"

II KINGS 5

LEPROSY WAS A FEARED AND LOATHSOME DISEASE IN BIBLE TIMES. THE VICTIM WAS KNOWN AS THE LIVING DEAD. ONCE THE DIAGNOSIS OF LEPROSY HAD BEEN MADE, THE PROCESS OF DETERIORATION CULMINATED IN THE DISLOCATION OF BONES FROM THEIR JOINTS, FINGERS, TOES, AND LIMBS DROPPING OFF, THE ENTIRE BODY A MASS OF DISSOLUTION AND DECAY. IN ISRAEL, IT MEANT SEPARATION FROM THE REST OF SOCIETY, AND ISOLATION FOR THE PATIENT. THE VICTIM OF THIS DISEASE WAS SAD TO BEHOLD. HE WAS REQUIRED BY CEREMONIAL LAW TO RENT HIS CLOTHES, TO WALK WITH BARE AND UNCOVERED HEAD, A BANDAGE ON HIS CHIN OR LIP, AND WHENEVER ANOTHER PERSON APPROACHED HIM HE WAS REQUIRED BY LAW TO CRY OUT THIS WARNING "UNCLEAN, UNCLEAN!" APPARENTLY THE LAWS OF PURIFICATION PERTAINING TO A LEPER WERE NOT AS STRINGENT IN SYRIA AS IN ISRAEL BUT THERE WERE ENORMOUS PROBLEMS FOR EVERY PERSON KNOWN AS A LEPER. IT BROUGHT A KIND OF MISERY AND FRUSTRATION WHICH MADE LIFE NOT WORTH LIVING. GEIKIE IN HIS HOURS WITH THE BIBLE RELATES THE STORY OF A LEPER WHO WROTE A LETTER DESCRIBING HIS PLIGHT. SO GREAT WAS HIS MISERY THAT HE ASKED TO BURIED ALIVE-WHICH SOME FRIENDS DID, APPARENTLY TO PUT HIM OUT OF HIS MISERY! THE STORY OF NAAMAN TOOK PLACE DURING THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF THE GREAT PROPHET ELISHA. HIS LIFE WAS CHARACTERIZED BY THE MINISTRY OF MIRACLES IN THE LIVES OF HIS PEOPLE. A GREAT DEAL IS KNOWN ABOUT ELIJAH THE GREAT FEARLESS PREACHING PROPHET, BUT ELISHA'S MINISTRY WAS AS EQUALLY EFFECTIVE.

I. THE EXPLOITS OF NAAMAN-v. 1-7

THE FIRST FEW VERSES OF II KINGS 5 PROVIDE A GRAPHIC DESCRIPTION OF NAAMAN.

A. THE MILITARY SIDE OF HIS LIFE -

THE WORD "CAPTAIN" SUGGESTS MORE THAN SUCH A RANK IN THE AMERICAN ARMY. IT IS COMPARABLE TO A GENERAL OR MORE ACCURATELY A CHIEF OF STAFF. NAAMAN WAS PROBABLY THE HIGHEST POSITION IN THE SYRIAN ARMY. HE HAD IMMEDIATE ACCESS TO THE KING HIMSELF. THE TEXT ALSO REVEALS THAT NAAMAN WAS SUCCESSFUL IN HIS MILITARY CAREER. THIS FACT IS SUBSTANTIATED BY THE

WORD "DELIVERANCE" SUGGESTING THAT SOME GREAT VICTORY HAD MADE NAAMAN A NATIONAL HERO. ALSO THE WORD "CAPTIVE" SUGGESTS HIS SUCCESS IN RETURNING FROM BATTLE WITH SPOILS. (RELATE CUSTOM OF PILING GOODS AND GIVING THE RANKING MILITARY MEN THE BEST OF THE PILE PLUS THE CAPTIVES TO BE SLAVES.) IN ONE SUCH MILITARY VICTORY, A LITTLE MAID FROM ISRAEL BROUGHT TO BE MRS. NAAMAN'S ATTENDANT. THE WORD "WAITED" IN V. 2 IS AN OLDE ENGLISH WORD THAT MEANS "TO ATTEND, OR ACT AS A SERVANT." OUR WORD WAITER, WAITRESS AND WAITING ROOM COMES FROM THIS IDEA. THIS "LITTLE MAID FROM ISRAEL" INTRIGUES US. ONE WOULD EXPECT HER TO BE BITTER AND UNFORGIVING BECAUSE OF HER PLIGHT. AFTER ALL, WHO WANTS TO WAIT ON SOMEONE ELSE AND BE A SLAVE? HOWEVER, THE POINT OF THE PASSAGE IS THAT EVEN THOUGH SHE WAS FAR FROM HOME SHE DID NOT FORGET GOD. SHE WAS CONCERNED FOR HER CAPTOR. LITTLE DID NAAMAN REALIZE THAT THIS MAID WOULD BE THE INSTRUMENT GOD WOULD USE TO COMPLETELY CHANGE HIS LIFE. (I AM IMPRESSED WITH THE FACT THAT GOD OFTEN USES "LITTLE THINGS" TO DRASTICALLY ALTER OUR LIVES. WE WOULD EXPECT GREAT AND MOMENTOUS THINGS, GOD USUALLY WORKS THROUGH THE SMALL AND THE INSIGNIFICANT. THE JAWBONE OF AN ASS, FIVE LOAVES AND TWO FISHES, THE INSOMNIA OF A KING, AND "THINGS" OF THAT NATURE.) PLEASE DON'T TELL GOD HOW TO BRING THE MESSAGE OF DELIVERANCE INTO YOUR LIFE. IN ALL PROBABILITY IT WILL NOT COME FROM THE SOURCE YOU EXPECT OR THE WAY YOU EXPECT. (RELATE GEORGE SLAVIN'S STORY OF HOW HIS FATHER WAS SAVED IN THE HOSPITAL A FEW DAYS BEFORE HE DIED.) GOD IS NOT BOUND TO BLESS US BY OUR OWN DESIGNS!

B. THE MORAL SIDE OF HIS LIFE

THE WORD "GREAT, HONORABLE" SUGGESTS THAT NAAMAN WAS A MAN HIGHLY RESPECTED BY HIS COUNTRYMEN. HE REMINDS ME OF THE CENTURIONS IN THE N. I. OF THE SEVEN MENTIONED, ALL WERE MEN OF HIGH MORAL CHARACTER AND INTEGRITY PERHAPS BECAUSE OF THE DISCIPLINE REQUIRED IN MILITARY LIFE. (WE ARE KIDDING OURSELVES IF WE EVER EXPECT HIGH MORALITY FROM AN UNDISCIPLINED GENERATION-IT WILL NOT AND CANNOT BE!) IN SPITE OF HIS HIGH MORAL STANDARDS IN LIFE HE WAS STILL AN ALIEN TO THE BLESSING OF GOD THROUGH HIS COVENANTS TO ISRAEL. THIS IS ANOTHER BIBLICAL EXAMPLE OF THE FACT THAT HIGH MORALITY CANNOT AND

DOES NOT SAVE FROM SIN. IT IS COMMENDABLE AND DESIRABLE BUT IT DOES NOT GET ONE INTO HEAVEN! HIS MORALITY WAS NO CURE FOR HIS LEPROSY! IN LIKE FASHION MORALITY IS NOT ABLE TO DEAL WITH SIN!

C. THE MISERABLE SIDE OF HIS LIFE

THE LITTLE PHRASE "BUT HE WAS A LEPER" CHANGES THE ENTIRE PICTURE CONCERNING NAAMAN. HE WAS THE MILITARY VICTOR BUT A VICTIM HIMSELF. HE WAS MIGHTY BUT MISERABLE. HE HAD ACCESS TO MEN IN HIGH POLITICAL PLACES, BUT IT COULD NOT HELP HIS LEPROSY. HE HAD THE RESPECT OF HIS COUNTRYMEN, BUT IT COULD NOT HELP HIS CONDITION. EVEN THOUGH HE WAS NOT A SOCIAL OUTCAST AS LEPERS WERE IN ISRAEL, NO AMOUNT OF MILITARY SUCCESS OR PERSONAL ACCOMPLISHMENT COULD COMPENSATE FOR THIS PERSONAL TRAGEDY IN HIS LIFE. EVERY DAY HE LIVED, NAAMAN HAD TO FACE THE FACT THAT HE CARRIED A DISEASE WHICH DOOMED HIM TO DEATH. THIS FACT COLORED EVERYTHING ELSE HE DID. THIS CHAPTER IS ONE OF GOD'S REMINDERS THAT MEN OUTSIDE OF CHRIST ARE DOOMED NOW! (JOHN 3:18) THE SENTENCE OF DEATH HAS ALREADY BEEN PRONOUNCED AND THEY CARRY A MORAL VIRUS IN THEIR SYSTEM CALLED SIN. THE ONLY CURE FOR THIS DREAD MALADY IS DIVINE IN NATURE. THE FACT OF MAN'S SPIRITUAL CONDITION SHOULD MAKE HIM AWARE OF HIS NEED OF DIVINE GRACE.

II. THE EXPECTATION OF NAAMAN-v. 9-13

NAAMAN DID WHAT POLITICALLY POWERFUL AND INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE WOULD DO. HE USED HIS INFLUENCE WITH THE KING OF SYRIA TO OBTAIN A LETTER TO THE KING OF ISRAEL TO SECURE THE SERVICES OF ELISHA. WHEN THE LETTER WAS BROUGHT TO THE KING OF ISRAEL IT PROVOKED A VIOLENT REACTION-v. 7.

A. THE PROTOCOL OF THE SITUATION- v. 9-10

IN THE EAST, THE WAY ONE MET AND RECEIVED A GUEST WAS AN IMPORTANT PART OF SOCIAL ETIQUETTE. IT WAS OBVIOUS IN THIS SITUATION THAT NAAMAN WAS NOT GIVEN THE V.I.P. TREATMENT. AFTER ALL, HE WAS A FOREIGN DIGNITARY AND WORTHY OF SPECIAL RECOGNITION AND TREATMENT! NAAMAN WAS USED TO GIVING ORDERS AND HAVING MEN DO HIS WILL. ADD INSULT TO INJURY, ELISHA DID NOT APPEAR AT THE DOOR OF HIS HOUSE BUT RATHER SENT A MESSENGER TO GIVE INSTRUCTIONS TO

NAAMAN. IN NAAMAN'S EYES THE INSTRUCTIONS WERE SILLY. HE HAD MADE A LONG JOURNEY TO HEAR A MAN MAKE A TOM FOOL SUGGESTION TO DO A RIDICULOUS ACT. ELISHA SHOULD HAVE BEEN IMPRESSED WITH THE SPLENDOR OF NAAMAN'S ARRIVAL, BUT HE WASN'T! ELISHA KNEW THAT BEFORE NAAMAN COULD EVER BE CURED HE MUST TAKE THE PLACE OF A CONDEMNED MAN. IF NAAMAN WAS NOT WILLING TO OBEY THE SIMPLE INSTRUCTIONS OF FAITH HE COULD NEVER BE CLEANSED. (APPLICATION)

B. THE PROVOCATION OF THE SITUATION-v. 11

THE TEXT USES THE WORD "WROTH AND RAGE" TO DESCRIBE NAAMAN'S REACTION TO ELISHA'S INSTRUCTIONS. THE WORD "THOUGHT" SUGGESTS THE ALTERNATE TRANSLATION OF "SAID". COULD IT BE THAT NAAMAN HAD ALREADY PREDICTED TO HIS COLLEAGUES WHAT WOULD HAPPEN WHEN HE ARRIVED AT ELISHA'S HOUSE AND WHEN ELISHA DID NOT REACT AS WAS EXPECTED, NAAMAN'S PRIDE WAS HURT? HE KNEW HOW SYRIAN MAGICIANS SANG THEIR INCANTATIONS AND WENT THROUGH PAGAN RITUALS DEALING WITH DISEASE. HE FORGOT, HOWEVER, THAT NONE OF THIS RITUAL HAD EVER CURED ANYONE! NAAMAN WAS SO INSULTED WITH ELISHA'S HANDLING OF THE ENTIRE SITUATION THAT HE WAS FURIOUS. HE DID NOT SEE HIMSELF AS A COMMON SINNER. IT HAD NEVER DAWNED ON NAAMAN THAT ALL OF HIS ATTEMPTED CURES HAD BROUGHT NO RESULTS. IT IS INTERESTING TO OBSERVE THAT HUMAN NATURE CALLS FOR DISPLAY AND RITUAL TO DEAL WITH SIN. THINK OF THE MANY COMMON CURES TO THE PROBLEM OF SIN, NONE OF WHICH WORK! (1) BE SINCERE (2) OBSERVE THE GOLDEN RULE, TEN COMMANDMENTS, BAPTISM AND CHURCH MEMBERSHIP (3) MORALITY (4) THE HOLY HOPE-SO (5) "I'M NOT SO BAD"-THESE PEOPLE EXPECT TO SNEAK THROUGH THE GATE AT THE LAST MOMENT. GOD DOESN'T REALLY CARE WHAT WE THINK ABOUT SALVATION. HE IS INTERESTED IN THE REAL CURE FOR OUR SINS AND HAS MADE IT SIMPLE, EASY AND CLEAR. TO BE SURE, IT PROVOKES MANY BUT THEY CANNOT DENY THE FACT THAT IT WORKS! (I CORIN. 1:21)

C. THE PREJUDICE OF THE SITUATION-v. 12

NOTICE THE USAGE OF THE WORD "BETTER" AND THE WORD "ALL". NAAMAN COULDN'T UNDERSTAND WHY IT WAS NECESSARY TO GO AND DIP IN THE MUDDY JORDAN RIVER WHEN THERE WERE MUCH CLEANER AND NICER RIVERS IN SYRIA.- AND HE MENTIONS TWO. AS A MATTER OF FACT, THESE TWO RIVERS WERE BETTER THAN ALL THE RIVERS

IN ISRAEL. NAAMAN'S PHILOSOPHY WAS THAT "ONE RIVER IS AS GOOD AS ANOTHER." IN FACT, THE CLEAR WATER OF THE SYRIAN RIVERS WAS MUCH PREFERRED AND MORE APPEALING TO NAAMAN. THIS VERSE SHOWS THE LENGTHS TO WHICH MEN WILL GO TO AVOID DOING WHAT GOD SAYS TO DO. THE SECRET TO NAAMAN'S CLEANSING WAS IN HIS OBEDIENCE TO GOD AND NOT IN THE RIVER. HOWEVER, THERE IS SOMETHING SIGNIFICANT IN THE MEANING OF THE WORD JORDAN. IT LITERALLY MEANS "THE PLACE OF DEATH OR JUDGMENT." IN THIS RESPECT, IT IS A PICTURE OF CALVARY'S CROSS. THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE WHO SAY "ONE CHURCH IS AS GOOD AS ANOTHER, ONE RELIGION IS AS GOOD AS ANOTHER, AS LONG AS YOU ARE SINCERE." THIS APPROACH COMPLETELY MISSES THE SIGNIFICANCE OF REDEMPTION IN THE PERSON OF CHRIST. THE NATURAL MAN IS BORN WITH A PREJUDICE AGAINST THE GOSPEL. HE IS BORN WITH HIS BACK TOWARD GOD. HIS NATURAL INCLINATION IS TO HIDE AND RUN FROM GOD RATHER THAN TURNING TO HIM. IT IS ONLY BY GOD'S GRACE THAT MEN ARE CLEANSED FROM SIN.

III. THE EXPERIENCE OF NAAMAN-v. 14-16

FORTUNATELY NAAMAN'S SERVANTS HAD MORE SENSE THAN THEIR MASTER! THERE WAS NO SUCH THING AS INCOMPLETE OBEDIENCE, THAT IS, SIX DIPS WOULD NOT BRING CLEANSING. ILLUSTRATE HOW NAAMAN MUST HAVE REACTED AFTER THE FIRST SEVERAL DIPS. HE KNEW IT WOULDN'T WORK, HE HADN'T REALLY EXPECTED TO BE CLEANSED ANYWAY. THE RESULT DID NOT COME UNTIL THE SEVENTH DIP,

A. IT WAS A COMPLETE EXPERIENCE-v. 14

THE TEXT SAYS "HE WAS CLEAN." THERE WERE NO DEGREES OF CLEANSING WITH NAAMAN. HE DID NOT HAVE TO GO BACK WEEK AFTER WEEK, MONTH AFTER MONTH, YEAR AFTER YEAR. THE PERSON WHO HAS EXPERIENCED FORGIVENESS OF SINS KNOWS THE FEELING OF INNER CLEANSING FROM SIN. TITUS 3:5)

B. IT WAS A CONFIDENT EXPERIENCE-"I KNOW"

NOTICE THE CONTRAST IN NAAMAN'S WORDS, ONCE HE SAID "I THOUGHT" NOW HE SAYS "I KNOW." PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN CLEANSED KNOW IT! THEY MAY NOT BE WELL VERSED IN THE DETAILS, BUT THEY KNOW THEY HAVE BEEN CLEANSED (COMPARE THE EXPERIENCE OF THE MAN IN JOHN 9. ALSO, I JOHN 5:13-"THESE THINGS

YOU

HAVE I WRITTEN UNTO/THAT BELIEVE ON THE NAME OF THE SON OF GOD; THAT YE MAY KNOW THAT YE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE..." THIS PARTICULAR WORD FOR "TO KNOW" MEANS TO KNOW THROUGH EXPERIENCE. II TIM. 1:12
 WE CANNOT DEVELOP THE FACT THAT NAAMAN WAS INTERESTED IN GIVING A GIFT TO ELISHA AS AN INDICATION OF HIS GRATITUDE. I AM IMPRESSED WITH THE FACT THAT WHEN HE REALLY WAS CLEANSED IT AFFECTED HIS GENEROUS IMPULSES! THERE WAS A GOOD REASON WHY ELISHA WOULD ACCEPT NO GIFT, BECAUSE THE FALSE PROPHETS AND HEATHEN TEACHERS EXPECTED THE SAME FOR ANY SERVICES RENDERED. NOT SO WITH ELISHA. IT IS A STRIKING EXAMPLE THAT SALVATION IS BY GRACE. GOD WILL NOT LET US BUY OUR WAY INTO HEAVEN. HOWEVER, IT IS INTERESTING THAT THE GRATEFUL HEART IS INTERESTED IN SHARING HIS RESOURCES WITH GOD. THE HEART OF THIS STORY IS THE SIMPLICITY INVOLVED IN CLEANSING. NAAMAN'S PRIDE WAS HIS PRIMARY PROBLEM. PRIDE KEEPS MEN FROM GOD ABOVE ALL OTHER SINS. (RELATE THE STORY OF BUNYAN'S HOLY WAR. IN THIS BOOK JOHN BUNYAN TELLS THE STORY OF MR. LOTH-2-STOOP THAT IS ONE WHO HAD A SUPERIOR LOOK, AN ERECT BACK, AND A HEART FULL OF PRIDE. BUNYAN CALLED HIM A VERY STIFF AND PROPER GENTLEMAN. HE WAS NOT ADVERSE TO THE CLAIMS OF EMMANUEL AS LONG AS HIS CLAIMS TO SUPERIOR TREATMENT WERE OBSERVED. IF HE WAS GOING TO JOIN THE PILGRIMAGE IT WOULD BE WITHOUT STOOPING. IF THE PRINCE WOULD HAVE HIM GIVE ALMS, HE WOULD DO IT WITH DIGNITY, THAT IS, IF SALVATION WERE OFFERED AT A PRICE HE WOULD DO HIMSELF THE HONOR OF PURCHASING IT. BUT WHEN MR. LOTH-TO-STOOP WAS TOLD THAT SALVATION COULD ONLY BE GAINED BY BENDING THE BACK AND THE KNEE AND BY TRUSTING NOT HIS OWN MERITS BUT CASTING HIMSELF UTTERLY AND COMPLETELY UPON THE MERIT OF EMMANUEL, HE WAS SAD AND REFUSED TO DO SO. HOW HARD IT IS FOR OUR PRIDE HEARTS TO ADMIT WE ARE SPIRITUALLY UNCLEAN, SPIRITUAL BANKRUPT, AND PROUD TO ADMIT OUR NEED EVEN TO GOD. WHEN WE LIKE NAAMAN ACCEPT GOD'S CLEANSING ON GOD'S TERMS WE MAY BE ASSURED OF GOD'S RESULTS.

TOO

Manuel
 Problem
 Eminent

"WASH AND BE CLEAN"
2 Kings 5:1-15

How can a man be morally pure and clean before a holy God? This is an age old question which can only find its answer in the Bible. Man has tried many ways to find peace and cleansing before God--- knowledge, culture, self-denial or even self-destruction---but to no avail.

"What can wash away my sin? Answer: Nothing...but the Blood
"What can make me whole again?" Answer: Nothing..but the Blood
This is John's great picture of Christ on Patmos:

"Unot him that loved us, and washed us from our sins
in his own blood." Rev. 1:6

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with
corruptible things, as silver and gold...But with the
precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish
and without spot." 1 Pet. 1:18-19

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the
forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his
grace. Eph. 1:7

One of the outstanding O.T. stories of cleansing by faith
is recorded in 2 Kings 5.

I. THE DESCRIPTION OF NAAMAN'S SITUATION--v.1-8

A. Mighty Yet Miserable - v.1

1. "Naaman"-- "pleasantness or beauty"

(In the days of rise in Syria perhaps a very handsome
and impressive looking man. Absalom)

2. "captain of the host"

The word captain is the word "sar" one of 13 Heb.
words for captain, this one meaning a military
commander. The word "host" means army. Naaman was
probably the commander in chief of the Syrian army.

3. "a great man"

Highly esteemed because of his great success.

4. "honorable" ("lift up the face")

He was "looked up to" respected, exalted and en-
joyed a place of special favor in Syria.

(When we rode his chariot down the street people
took notice of him.) "Here come Naaman."

5. "a mighty man of valor"

a brave soldier. He knew what the front lines
of combat looked like.

BUT

he was a leper!

How often this word of 3 letters changes the complexion
of a story:

1. Judges 16:20 --"I will go out as at other
times before, and shake myself. And he wist
not that the Lord was departed from him. BUT

the Philistines took him

2. Jonah 1:3 "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me. BUT Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish ~~far~~ from the presence of the Lord...."
3. Luke 12:20
BUT God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee...."
4. Eph. 2:4

Naaman was a leper---think what this meant:

The word "leprosy" literally means "the stroke of the scourge!" Lepers were called "the walking dead." In our day when men fear cancer, heart disease, etc. for death, in Bible times leprosy was the most feared disease. (For a description see the margin of Bible.)

Someone has pointed out the remarkable similarity of leprosy and its symptoms to sin:

1. Universality--no respecter of race or color or position. Rom. 3:23
2. Hideousness-- a leper is difficult to look upon because of the effects the disease has on the body--decay etc. Sin destroys the soul.
3. Painless at first-- begins with a small sore on the skin-- no feeling but soon becomes very painful.
4. Works from the inside outwardly
Out of the abundance of the heart/ *Mk. 7*
5. Contagious
We are born in sin. *Psa. 51 and 58*
6. Destructive
Eventually death. - *Rom. 6:23*
7. Restrictive
Keeps a man from loved ones and outcast of society. Sin keep a man out of heaven.
8. It is curable
There is a cure for sin--Jesus Christ and the Cross. -

B. Wealthy Yet Poor --v.5

The wealth is not said to be his, but it was at his disposal and for his benefit. It was an insult in the orient to ask a favor without giving something in the way of a gift--this one about \$55,000 in American money. The "changes of raiment" were festive clothes of "clothing for special occasions.

Point:

The king of Syria's wealth could not buy the health of a favored general. Nor can this be done today.
(Man testimony of Dr. bills-- no ththing.)

Many wealthy discovered how true this is!

C. Influential Yet Impotent--v.6

He was a close associate of the most powerful man in all of Syria who had "pull" with foreign countries. Naaman traveled in "high" circles but he was not to find cleansing in the high courts of oriental palaces. Where then??

Ind.-Jn. 6

1. "little maid" - *F. Chisholm t. Scientific - Bill Purdue.*
Information comes from unexpected sources. His help would come from a captured "slave girl" who waited on his wife. 1 Cor. 1 and 2 *
2. "the prophet"
His help would come from a man who knew how to get hold of God!

II. THE INSTRUCTION OF ELISHA CONCERNING CLEANSING--v.10

* It is interesting to notice how difficult it is for men to follow instructions. (McClains obass in Theology--many failed because they did not read the instructions!)

- A. Impartial-- "sent a messenger" - *Nicodemus* *Negro in Africa* *Same way.*

Naaman not use to this--he was respected in Syria!
***Peter the Great in London who came incognito to hear great preacher named Robert Haydock preach on this very subject. Nothing held back all come same way!
Greatness in God's sight is not measured by human standards--but of devotion to Christ!

- ✓ B. Simple--"Gom...wash"

Easy to understand. Not one multisyl. word in the whole thing. Salvation is too easy for many folk--not simple faith--thats not enough.

- C. Specific--"Jordon..7 times."

Knew where to go for cleansing. Most know whaer ehe answer is...don't want the answer God gives.
Calvary.

- D. Guaranteed Results

"shall be clean"

Rom. 10:13 God promises to honor simple trust.

III. THE OBJECTIONS OF NAAMAN--v.11-13

Naaman didn't like Elisha's attitude. cf. John the Baptist and Philip also Elijah.

- (A) He Didn't Get Special Attention

- (B) He Didn't Like The Way and Place of Cleansing

IV. THE SUBMISSION OF NAAMAN TO THE GOD ORDERED WAY OF
CLEANSING--v.14 "he went down"...he was clean.

- A. Men must submit in humility to the God of grace.
B. Story in Bunyan's Holy War - (mansoul)

The story deals with Mr. Loth-To-Stoop, one who has a superior look and an erect back a heart full of pride. Bunyan calls him a very stiff and proper gentleman. He was not adverse to the claims of Emmanuel as long as his claims to superior treatment were observed. If he was going to join the pilgrimage it would be without stooping. If the Prince would have him to give alms, he would do it with dignity...if salvation ~~were~~ were offered at a price he would do himself the honor of entertaining the offer. But when Mr. Loth-to-Stoop was told that salvation could only be gained by bending the back, and humbling the knee, by n trust in any merits of his own, but in casting himself as utterly worthless upon the mercy of God in Christ, he was sad. Love of self for Christ....so hard to ~~stoop~~ stoop. The proud heart stooping to the Saviour.

Pride keeps men from God —

"WHERE HOW AND WHY"

2 Kings 6

Intro:

The early chapters of 2 Kings are among the most fascinating of all the O.T. No portion of the O.T. records more miracles in such a short space of time. There are at least 8 in the first 5 chapters. Also, we are introduced to 2 men whom it is so easy to confuse--Elijah and Elisha. These are very interesting men--Elijah belonged to an unusual order of men--he and Enoch were ushered into glory without dying! Seemed appropriate to understand one man passing on his responsibility to another in the light of current events!

I have selected 3 questions in ch.6 and 7 which illustrate 3 great principles in Scripture.

I. QUESTION: "WHERE FELL IT"---2 Kings 6:6

PRINCIPLE: "DOING THE IMPOSSIBLE"

It would be ridiculous for me to argue the merit of whether or not such a thing is scientifically possible or not! The Bible records a stated fact--the iron did swim or "float!" Let me say that the miraculous element of the Bible is not a stone to stumble over but a stone or rock to stand on. Ministry of Christ--nothing wierd or strange, simple and plain. The miracles of the "ible are simply the intervention of God into his creation at special times for special purposes.*** If God cannot interject his hand into creation, over and above cause and effect, then prayer is a waste of time and the hand of God is bound by the laws of nature.

Why would Elisha perform a miracle for such a trivial thing?

1. Probably only way to insure its recovery.
2. It was borrowed. Values not like ours today--others prop.
3. Continued establishment of Elisha as a prophet.
4. To teach men that nothing is trivial with God as far as we are concerned! God helps us in the small personal things of life--the details! Everything about the life we have in Christ is supernatural.

The way for us to experience blessing is to do the things men say can't be done:

- ||(1) Missions--better watch out we don't get too much in missions! (Burr Oak--Billy recently)
(turtle--can't for forward till stick your neck out!)
- (2) Expansion--- Boldness--timid about the things of the Lord yet in personal things we plung in with little thought of failure!
(Art. in paper about change--we fear it!)

II. QUESTION: "HOW SHALL WE DO?"---2 Kings 6:15

PRINCIPLE: "SEEING THE INVISIBLE"

Background of the king of Syria out to get Elisha.

Point: Human eyes could see no way of escape--but Elisha was not nervous--he served a Big God! It is never foolish to trust God.

1. Psa. 34:7 "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."
2. Psa. 55:18 "He hath delivered my soul in peace from the battle, that was against me: for there were many with me."
3. Psa. 91:11 "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways."
4. Psalm 121:1-2 (re-punctuate.)

We see the enemy and not our resources. We dwell on defeat when victory is near at hand--but our vision is faulty.

Lesson:

We never really prove the Lord until our backs are against the wall--no other resources--and He will not intervene until our resources have been used up.

III. QUESTION: "WHY SIT WE HERE UNTIL WE DIE?" 2Kings 7:3

PRINCIPLE: "FACING THE INEVITABLE"

Background of the famine in Samaria.

1. These men were certain to die:

a. Leprosy

b. Famine but death would surely come.

2. There many excuses men for neglect:

a. Someday--- but not today. Never met a man who did not plan to get right--wait! *Bury them--*

b. Friends---need a new set of friends.

Prov. 13:20 "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." Any supposed friend who is laughing at the saints and the Christian life is a fool.

c. Hard---Mt. 11:28 Religion is hard, not Christ. I have yet to meet a born-again man who had but one regret--why did I wait so long!

d. Give up-- miss the point. Did you ever meet a man who was really ready for marriage and in love who moaned about missing the life of a bachelor.

e. Hypocrites

Point: Men will put off the greatest decision in life until it is too late!

**Story by Spurgeon

**Dad and Jack Templeton

**Doug Berry