
Day 91 – April 1

Israel as a Monarchy (1100 – 930 BCE)

David's Rise to Power

Reading: *1 Samuel 18:1-21:6; Psalm 59*

Reflections:

- As Saul becomes increasingly hateful of David, Jonathan his son and the rightful heir to the throne becomes the closest of friends. The story of Jonathan and David is truly one of the deepest friendships found in Scripture and reveals God's incredible grace. Jonathan serves David in a way that goes beyond human understanding while his father is set to kill David numerous times. The phrases used to describe Jonathan and David's friendship show us how deep a bond God can create: "become one in spirit...loved him as himself." The covenant between the two is complete and in a very real way, Jonathan gives to David all that he has so that David is fully blessed by him to take the throne that was rightfully Jonathan's. We see here how God again totally breaks outside of what we would expect and does the unexpected.
- David's success and popularity makes Saul increasingly angry and violent. The evil spirit that has come on Saul as a judgment from God motivates him to try to kill David. David is protected by God and is not harmed. In this reading we see a number of times where Saul is acting out with great evil intent but it also says that he is prophesying. Now, it is hard to understand what exactly Saul was doing when it says he was prophesying. Was he doing something like praying in tongues? Was he in a trance-like state as he spoke or muttered things? We don't know. He was having some form of spiritually intense experience when he took up the spear and tried to kill David. It makes a good point to consider: A spiritually intense experience does not immediately validate that God is at the centre of whatever is happening.
- Saul then tried to work against him by having him marry one of his daughters. If David was his son-in-law he would not be as likely to lead a rebellion against Saul? Saul also hoped to motivate David into more battles where David would die. David refuses on the first daughter but is bated in with the second (note: feel bad for those Philistines). Anyways, Saul also suggests that his second daughter would be a snare to him so that the Philistines would be turned against him. This seems a bit cryptic at first. It appears that Michal has idols in her house and so possibly Saul is thinking that she will turn

David to idol worship and may lose his favor with God. This is not explicitly said in the text, we only know that Michal apparently had at least one idol that appears later in the story.

- David is now rescued a number of times by Jonathan and once by Michal. His psalm portrays his heart of trust towards God and the threat he feels from his enemies, in this case Saul and his men.
- There is a fascinating account of Saul sending men to kill David but they are thwarted by God's Spirit as they prophesy uncontrollably. This happens to different bands of men sent to kill David and then ultimately to Saul. The Spirit of God is protecting David by overwhelming these men but it definitely seems strange. The reader is to understand that God is here again fighting the battle for David and is protecting him.
- Jonathan enters again into covenant with David as his servant. Key statement: "Whatever you want me to do, I'll do for you." As he affirms his oath of loyalty we see that he did it out of love because "he loved him as he loved himself." This deep bond again models to us the kind of love God desires for his people to share in relationship. It is fully other centered and rooted in true servanthood, the stronger serving the weaker.
- David ultimately must leave to save himself and he and Jonathan weep at their parting. God remains firmly in control and we shall see how David continues to show love and care for Jonathan and his son.