

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 19 (May 1-7, 2016)

I will skip several chapters that describe King Saul's pursuit of David, but I do want to spend this week emphasizing David's respect for the God-ordained office of the king, despite the wickedness of Saul. You may want to review chapters 21 and 22 of 1st Samuel before beginning this week's devotions.

Sunday, May 1 (read 1 Samuel 23:1-14)

Day after day Saul searched for him, but God did not give David into his hands. (1 Samuel 23:14b)

God has answered David's prayers and given him a great victory over the Philistine army at Keilah (v. 1-6), but this leaves the future king vulnerable to attack from the reigning King Saul (v. 7-8). Once again, David goes to the Lord in prayer to determine God's will for the present crisis (v. 9-12). Are you beginning to see why David will be a king in whom God can trust? He seeks wisdom and guidance from the Lord because he trusts Him, even though his army consists of a bunch of outcasts (see 1 Samuel 22:2). Remember the point made in the April 11th devotion that God loves to use the most unlikely people to accomplish His will so that He gets the glory. David and his men have to hide from the jealous king for a while, but the sovereign Lord has their lives safe in His hands (v. 14).

Monday, May 2 (read 1 Samuel 23:15-18)

And Saul's son Jonathan went to David at Horesh and helped him find strength in God. (1 Samuel 23:16)

We return to the wonderful friendship between David and Jonathan, the current king's son. Like David, you need a friend who will help you find strength in God and in His Word (v. 16). It is easy to gather around you a group of people who will say what you want to hear (see 2 Timothy 4:3), but a true friend will tell you the truth. Jonathan is a true friend, even though he knows that God has promised the kingship to David and not to him, the logical successor of his father, Saul (v. 17). If you make an earthly covenant with anyone (example: marriage), make sure it is with someone who will help you find strength in the Lord. You will need his/her strength in the days ahead!

Tuesday, May 3 (read 1 Samuel 23:19-29)

Then Saul broke off his pursuit of David and went to meet the Philistines. (1 Samuel 23:28a)

I included today's text in our study, because I want you to have confidence in the Lord's protection, even when men betray you. When you became God's child, He pledged to protect you from all attacks of people, physical or verbal (see Psalm 118:6). God's sovereign hand will never allow anyone to overcome you until His will has been fully accomplished in your life. Nothing gives me more assurance than this truth! In order to have perfect peace (Isaiah 26:3), we must learn to trust God to complete the work He has begun in us (see Philippians 1:6). Then we will experience the peace that only Christ can give (see John 14:27).

Wednesday, May 4 (read 1 Samuel 24:1-7)

He said to his men, "The Lord forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the Lord's anointed, or lift my hand against him; for he is the anointed of the Lord." (1 Samuel 24:6)

In today's text, Saul, in his humanity, does not deserve David's respect; however, David knows that God has ordained the **office** of the king. The office is to be respected even when the man does not deserve it! That means that we must take a stand against the unbiblical rulings that come out of Washington without condemning the men and women through whom they come (I'm not there yet). Having a Biblical worldview instead of a politically correct worldview will challenge you in many areas, just as I am challenged in this one! You may be surprised that the Bible spares no details in relating the story of fallen mankind (v. 3-4). Because the Holy Spirit came upon David when Samuel anointed him (see 1 Samuel 16:13), he experiences instant conviction due to his disrespectful action (v. 5). He models true leadership by teaching his men the truth about respect for God's anointed (v. 6).

Thursday, May 5 (read 1 Samuel 24:8-22)

"May the Lord judge between you and me. And may the Lord avenge the wrongs you have done to me, but my hand will not touch you." (1 Samuel 24:12)

In today's text, David bows before the jealous king and asks him why he is listening to gossip from the men (v. 8-10). He acknowledges that Saul is God's anointed; therefore, his own hand will not harm him (v.10-12). Instead, he entrusts all judgments into the will of his God (v. 12). The Bible teaches us to refrain from taking revenge, leaving that task in the Lord's capable hands (see Romans 12:19-20). Saul verbally acknowledges the fact that David will succeed him as king (v. 16-21); however, the words of this demon-oppressed king will soon prove worthless. We will follow the story in tomorrow's devotion.

Friday, May 6 (read 1 Samuel 26:1-11)

"But the Lord forbid that I should lay a hand on the Lord's anointed." (1 Samuel 26:11a)

In today's text, in spite of his pledge to respect the successor to the throne (1 Samuel 14:16-21), Saul goes right back pursuing the future king in order to take his life (v. 1-2). David learns of Saul's presence and sends out scouts to pinpoint the king's location (v. 3-4). He finds that Saul is asleep in his camp, with his army encamped around him (v. 5). Joab's brother Abishai volunteers to accompany David to the camp of the enemy (v. 6-7). The overzealous soldier sees this as an opportunity to destroy King Saul (v. 8), but the Spirit-led David rebukes him and, once again, teaches a lesson about honoring God's anointed leader (v. 9-11). Can you see why David's integrity allows God to refer to him as a man after His own heart (Acts 13:22)?

Saturday, May 7 (read 1 Samuel 26:12-25)

They were all sleeping, because the Lord had put them into a deep sleep. (1 Samuel 26:12b)

Note that all the glory for the success of this story goes to God, because it is **He** who causes the king and his men to sleep so soundly that David is able to walk unnoticed into his camp (v. 12). Afterwards, David and Saul converse again as they did the last time David spared Saul's life (v. 13-20). King Saul admits his sin (v. 21), but David has heard that false repentance before. God's chosen man is too wise to accept the idle words of a jealous king, so he goes on his way, aware that Saul is not truly repentant (27:1). King Saul is so demon-led by this time that he goes to a witch to seek advice (chapter 28) and takes his own life on the battlefield where his sons, including Jonathan, are also killed (chapter 31). It marks the tragic ending of a chosen man of God who refuses to walk in obedience to His Lord.