

The Child Of Promise

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God has a plan for His people; and His people often through lack of faith, take matters into their own hands, and subsequently suffer the consequences of their actions. This is where the mercy, understanding, compassion, and forgiveness of God are most often revealed.¹ In our weakness His strength is made perfect.²

In the first chapter of Genesis, the Lord creates man and woman; and He says to them: Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea, the bird of the sky, and every living thing that moves on the earth.³ They disobey God; and they seek to do things their own way: and they end up being fruitful and multiplying; but not in the way that God had intended them to.

In the fifteenth chapter of Genesis, God promises Abram a son who will inherit him. Abram trusts the Lord, and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.⁴ Sarai, Abram's wife, being barren, talks to Abram, and convinces him to lie with Hagar, her maidservant, because she believes that she will be established through her. Abram consents, and Ishmael is born. God speaks to Abram and changes his name to Abraham, or father of many nations; and tells him that he will give him a son through Sarai, who has now been called Sarah. Isaac, the child of promise is born, and God says that He will maintain His covenant through Isaac. Impatience and lack of faith, led to Ishmael, the son of the

maidservant-something that God never intended-but God's mercy and compassion, and His loyalty to His promise, begat Isaac, the child of promise.

In Genesis chapter forty-nine, Jacob blesses his twelve sons; and Judah is the one that receives the blessing concerning kingship, tribute and ruler-ship. "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet; so that tribute shall come to him and the homage of peoples be his."⁵ The Eternal King of Israel descended from the tribe of Judah. God speaks to the people and tells them that the time will come when they will set up a king over them; but He tells them that this one must be chosen of the Lord.⁶ Again the people are not patient: they tell Samuel to appoint over them a king. God tells Samuel "Heed the demand of the people in everything they say to you. For it is not you that they have rejected; it is Me they have rejected as their king."⁷ God then sends Samuel to find Saul the son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin; a tribe of which nothing is mentioned concerning the kingship.

"Saul was exceptional and goodly; no one in Israel was handsomer than he. From his shoulders up, he was taller than any of the people."⁸ He is tall and handsome, and Samuel says to the people, "Have you seen the one whom the Lord has chosen, that there is none like him among all the people?"⁹ Saul, although a good specimen of a human being, is weak in resolve, and lacking in leadership qualities. He has been chosen by the Lord to rule His people Israel; but he himself doubts that he is able to perform such a task, because his eyes are on himself, and not on the Lord who anointed him and chose him to rule. "But base men said, 'How can this man save us!' They ridiculed him and did not bring him tribute, but he remained mute."¹⁰ A leader should not be moved away from

that which is right by the opinion of the people: he should be the one who is influencing the people; and he should obey the word of the Lord. There are many instances where Saul is fearful, weak and disobedient to the word of the Lord; and many instances where he falls prey to the requests of the people, which go against what the Lord has told him to do. When Saul offers burnt offerings to the Lord, in a way that is not right, Samuel says to him:

You have acted foolishly! You did not keep the commandment of the Lord your God, that he commanded you. Until now the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever, but now your kingdom shall not endure. The Lord has sought a man after His own heart and appointed him as ruler over His people, because you have not observed that which the Lord has commanded you.¹¹

When Saul swears an oath to the Lord saying, ‘Cursed be the man that shall eat food until the evening when I am avenged of my enemies’¹², and it is found that Jonathan, Saul’s son, has eaten food, Saul fails to carry out the oath to the Lord; and he again allows the people to reach a verdict concerning the oath. Even though he said that he would carry out the oath, the people decide that it will not be so, and it is not so. “So the people redeemed Jonathan, and he did not die.”¹³

When Saul once again rejects the commandment of the Lord-this time concerning the Amalekites-Samuel clearly tells Saul that the kingdom has been torn from him, and has been given to his fellow, who is better than he is.¹⁴ Samuel says to Saul, “Because you have rejected the word of God, He has rejected you as king.”¹⁵ Again this is bad

leadership: Saul fell because of the disobedience of the people, and his inability to rule over them. Saul says to Samuel, “The people took pity on the best of the sheep and cattle.”¹⁶ The commandment was “Now go and strike down Amalek and destroy everything he has. Have no pity on him-kill man and woman alike, infant and suckling alike, ox and sheep alike, camel and donkey alike.”¹⁷

David was ruddy, with fair eyes and a pleasing appearance.¹⁸ Samuel takes the horn of oil, according to the commandment of the Lord, and anoints David to be king over Israel. Saul is still king of Israel in the eyes of the people; but in the eyes of God, he is no more. “The Spirit of the Lord passed over David from that day on.” “The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and he was tormented by a spirit of melancholy from the Lord.”¹⁹

David is a young boy, but it is apparent that he has faith in the Lord God of Israel; and that He puts the Lord way above anything else that has any potential to help himself or the people of Israel. When Goliath is threatening the children of Israel, they are terrified, and their strength and their hope flees from them. “Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine and they were terrified and greatly afraid.”²⁰ David has faith in the Lord, who will give the victory to Israel; and he remembers the covenant that God made with Abraham. God promised Abraham that He would greatly multiply him; and that he would give him the land of Canaan as an everlasting possession. He commands every male to be circumcised; and that is the sign of the covenant.²¹ David says to the people in the camp of Saul, “Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he disgraces the battalions of the Living God.”²²

David is young, and he is not trained in the art of fighting. He cannot even carry the armor of Saul, because he is small, and has no experience using the weapons and the armor of a trained soldier: he is a shepherd. When he confronts Goliath, he approaches him saying:

You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin-but I come to you with the name of the Lord, Master of Legions, the God of the battalions of Israel, that you have ridiculed. On this day the Lord will deliver you into my hand. I shall smite you, and I will remove your head from upon you; and I shall offer the carcass of the Philistine camp this day to the fowl of the heavens and to the beast of the earth! Then the whole earth shall know that there is a God in Israel, and all this assembly will know that not through sword and spear does the Lord grant salvation; for unto the Lord is the battle, and He shall deliver you into our hands.²³

David rushed forward, and the Lord delivered Goliath into his hand.

The character and the faith of David are not revealed to us only in the narrative covering his ascension to the throne of Israel through to his death. It is clear also from the Psalms, that David has no other hope in his life but the God of Israel. When all else fails, the Lord is faithful. When we have sinned, there is forgiveness and mercy with the Lord. David says that even if he makes his bed in Sheol, the Lord is there with him.²⁴ And though he walks through the valley overshadowed by death, he will fear no evil,

because the Lord's rod and His staff will comfort him.²⁵ "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is my life's strength, whom shall I dread."²⁶ When David sins with Bath-sheba, he calls upon the Lord that the Lord may show him favor. He recognizes that he is a sinner; he acknowledges his sin; he confesses his sin to God, and he asks for forgiveness: he does not lose hope, for his hope is in the Lord who cannot fail him.²⁷

God works in His own time; and He has a plan for His people. "For I know the thoughts that I am thinking for you; thoughts of peace and not evil, to give you a future and a hope. You will seek me and you will find me, if you will search for me with all your hearts."²⁸

Like Isaac, David was the one that the Lord had chosen. Saul, like Ishmael, was the product of faithlessness and impatience; and both were the cause of much suffering for Israel. The scepter will not depart from Judah!²⁹ And David will never want a man to sit upon the throne of Israel.³⁰ "For a child has been born to us, a son has been given us. And authority has settled on his shoulders. He has been named 'The Mighty God is planning grace; The Eternal Father, a peaceable ruler'-In token of abundant authority and of peace without limit upon David's throne and kingdom, that it may be established in justice and in equity now and forever more. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts shall bring this to pass."³¹

David is a picture of the One to come: he is a picture of the Messiah who will bring peace to the Land, and who will restore the Kingdom to Israel. This is the One of whom David says:

The LORD said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand while I make your enemies your footstool. The LORD will stretch forth from Zion your mighty scepter; hold sway over your enemies! Your people come forward willingly on the day of battle. In majestic holiness, from the womb, from the dawn, yours was the dew of youth. The LORD has sworn and will not relent, ‘You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. The Lord is at your right hand. He crushes kings in the day of His anger. He works judgment upon the nations, heaping up bodies, crushing heads far and wide. He drinks from the stream on his way; therefore he holds his head high.³²

¹ Psalm 78:37-39

² II Corinthians 12:9

³ Genesis 1:28

⁴ Genesis 15:5-6

⁵ Genesis 49:10

⁶ Deuteronomy 17:15

⁷ I Samuel 8:7

⁸ I Samuel 9:2

⁹ I Samuel 10:24

¹⁰ I Samuel 10:27

¹¹ I Samuel 13:13-14

¹² I Samuel 14:24

¹³ I Samuel 14:45

- 14 I Samuel 15:28
- 15 I Samuel 15:23
- 16 I Samuel 15:15
- 17 I Samuel 15:3
- 18 I Samuel 16:12
- 19 I Samuel 16:13-14
- 20 I Samuel 17:11
- 21 Genesis 17:10-11
- 22 I Samuel 17:26
- 23 I Samuel 17:45-47
- 24 Psalm 139:8
- 25 Psalm 23:4
- 26 Psalm 27:1
- 27 Psalm 51
- 28 Jeremiah 29:11,13
- 29 Genesis 49:10
- 30 Jeremiah 33:17
- 31 Isaiah 9:5-6

