

GOD'S TRAINING: Saul & David, 5th of 6, part 1 of 2, 12 pgs

INTRODUCTION: The rise and Fall of Saul

*All the elders of Israel gathered together and ... said to **Samuel**, You are old, and your sons do not follow your ways [This is not wrong. It is appropriate to judge a dynasty on the basis of their adherence to what is right], now appoint a king to lead us ... **the LORD told Samuel: it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king, 1 Sam.10:17-19** [We saw this principle in the life story of Moses]. As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day [This includes the people raised in the desert who crossed the Jordan to claim their inheritance], forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you. Now listen to them; but **warn them** solemnly ... about what the king ... will claim as his rights, 8.4-20. The Lord identified **Saul^a** as *the man who would govern my people, 10:1, 6, 9-10, 17-19; 11:6*.*

Samuel had explained to the people **the regulations governing kingship**, written them down, and placed them before the Lord, **1 Sam.10:25**. **Saul failed to follow the lord's instructions** [this is the very place where Abraham succeeded but Moses did not] on 2 occasions (**13:5-15**) which cost him the dynasty bearing his name, v.14, and the throne, 15:23. Saul had changed. The man who was once small in his own eyes (15:17; 9:21; 10:22), who had honored God for his victory over the **Ammonites** saying, *this day the Lord has rescued Israel, 11:13*, had become a rebel after he was made king, **15:10**. In fact he had the hubris to honor HIMSELF by erecting a monument for the Lord's victory over the **Amalekites, 15:2-3**, commemorating it as if it were HIS victory, **v.12**! Saul's admission of guilt for disobedience in that campaign was not really a confession, **13:11-12; 15:20, 24**. **A true confession cannot contain excuses,^b self-justification, or attribute blame to someone or something else.**

So the Lord sent Samuel to Bethlehem to anoint someone else as king, but Saul had changed into a lawless man who would do anything to keep his crown so that even **Samuel feared him**. He used subterfuge to anoint a new king, **1 Sam.16:1-3** ... *when Samuel arrived in Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him, v.4*. They understood Saul's new temperament and feared he would take out his anger on the town. **He anointed David as king of Israel, v.12-13**. The change in Saul's deportment is noted at David's anointing, from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David. Now the Spirit of the LORD had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD tormented him, v.13-14. This led to a search for someone to serve the king by playing the harp for him when he was troubled. So David was introduced to Saul's court and soon after to all of Israel. Nevertheless, **the Lord allowed Saul to reign forty years before he removed him from office, Acts 13:21**.

a. Saul was thirty when he became king, and he reigned over Israel forty two years, 1 Sam.13:1. His reign marked the end of the period described in the book of **Judges**. Under **Joshua** Israel had been implanted in the promised land. It only remained for her to occupy it by displacing the Canaanites, and cleansing the land of paganism. But **Israel quickly forgot the supernatural acts of God that had established her in the land**. She settled down and attached herself to Canaan's peoples, morals, gods, and religious beliefs and practices. **Judges was characterized by recurring cycles of apostasy, oppression, cries of distress, and gracious divine deliverance**. Remarkably this

age of Israel's failure, following directly on the redemptive events that came through Moses and Joshua, was in a special way **the OT age of the Spirit, Heb.11:32**. **It was God's Spirit that enabled people like Sampson to accomplish feats of victory in the Lord's holy war against the powers that threatened his kingdom**. This same **Spirit**, poured out on the church following the redemptive work of the second Joshua (Jesus), empowered Christians to begin the task of preaching the Gospel to all nations and of advancing the kingdom of God, **Acts 1:2, 8**.

Unfortunately **many of the kings of Israel and Judah often acted much like the pagan rulers of the other nations**. Saul and eventually even David were no exceptions. Israel's kings had **God's Word** to varying degrees and their **conscience** to guide them. They also had **prophets** of the Lord that spoke truth to them and called them to account: Samuel during Saul's reign; Nathan during David's. **We have** God's Word complete, demystified, and explained in the NT, conscience, and the indwelling Holy Spirit to guide us.

b. **The real difference between an excuse and a reason is the motivation behind each. A reason is an explanation for taking a certain course of action.** The intention of an explanation is to provide context and clarify, while an **excuse** aims to avoid and deflect blame. An **excuse** is used to escape an obligation, expectation, or penalty for failing to follow orders. It attempts to justify or deflect one's culpability by blaming external factors. An **excuse** is a pretense or subterfuge for covering up disobedience or bad decisions. A person explaining his actions accepts personal responsibility for them and associated consequences. **Reasons become excuses** when they are used to avoid personal responsibility.

David & Saul

The Philistines had arrayed themselves to fight against Israel. For forty days, morning and evening, their **massive champion**, Goliath, **1 Sam.17:4-7**, stood between the two opposing forces and issued a challenge to Israel to send a man to fight with him. *On hearing the Philistine's words, Saul [Israel's champion, 9:2; 10:23] and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified, v.11*. David, who intermittently served Saul, came to the battle lines with food for his brothers, saw and heard the Philistine's challenge to the Israelites. **Unlike everyone else there, he saw the real issue clearly as a disgrace upon Israel**, **v.26**. *David's older brother burned with anger at him and dressed him down [out of a sense of his own shame and cowardice], Why have you come down here? [Typical of the way people deal with their own guilt, he questions David's motives, demeaning and insulting him] And with whom did you leave those few sheep in the wilderness [an insult inferring that he was worthless, useless, and pathetic] ? I know how conceited you are and how wicked your heart is, v.28 ... But David's spirit was indomitable and his heart pure*, he was a spiritual man, a supernaturalist.

Goliath ° *saw that David was little more than a boy [of perhaps fifteen] ... and he despised him [He was insulted that a mere boy had come forth to fight him] ... He cursed David by his gods. But David replied ... This day the LORD will deliver you into my hands, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head ... I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds ... and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel ... when he gives all of you into our hands [David understood the purpose behind the reason the situation unfolded as it did] ... He triumphed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone ... From that day Saul kept David with him and did not*

let him return home to his family, **17:40-18:2** .

Whatever mission Saul sent him on, **David was so successful that Saul gave him a high rank in the army** [despite his young age] . This pleased all the troops and officers [David's youth didn't seem to be an issue] . When the men were returning home [from chasing the Philistines] ... the women came out from all the towns of Israel to meet King Saul with singing and dancing ... they sang: Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands [In accordance with the normal conventions of Hebrew poetry, **this was their way of saying Saul and David had triumphed**]. This refrain galled him, so Saul became very angry [because in his insecurity and jealousy, he read their intentions incorrectly and took offense] ... He thought What more can he get but the kingdom? And from that time on **Saul kept a jealous eye on David** ... **In everything David did he had great success, because the LORD was with him** ... all Israel and Judah loved David because he led them in their campaigns [against the Philistines], **18:5-16**.

c. David referred to Goliath as **this uncircumcised Philistine (1 Sam.17:36)**, a designation of contempt emphasizing the illegitimacy of the Philistine presence in the land. This was the early iron age in which the Philistines held a monopoly on the working of iron, **1 Sam.17:5-7**.

Saul tries to murder David

Saul began exhibiting every indication that he was losing his mind. He personally tried to murder David on two separate occasions, **1 Sam.18:10-11; 19:9-10**. **Saul became still more afraid of him, and he remained his enemy the rest of his days** ... **David met with more success [against the Philistines] than the rest of Saul's officers, and his name became well-known, 18:20-30**. [David's fame and popularity complemented his humble view of himself, **v.18 & 23**] ... He struck the Philistines with **such force** that they fled before him, **19:8**. **Saul's plan to have David fall by the hands of the Philistines failed** ... so Saul sent soldiers to David's house to murder him, **11-12**. David's wife, Saul's daughter Michal, told the soldiers that David was sick in bed but Saul ordered them to bring him on his bed **so he could murder him, 14-16**. Saul had become a lawless man whose **twisted mind** imagined that David was his enemy, **v.17**. Through his **hatred, fear, and jealousy** of David, **Saul had given the devil a place in his heart, Eph.4:26-27**. **He was not in his right mind, but unstable, insecure, and resentful of David**. He continued to seek David's life and forced him to flee.

Saul massacres the village of Nob

Saul's craziness continued beyond belief. **David went to Nob [a village of priests and their families] 1 Sam. 21-22**. Saul found out that David had obtained a few supplies and inquired of God there (**v.9**) and accused them. **Why have you [the priest Ahimelek] conspired against me [there was no conspiracy, David was simply trying to avoid a confrontation with Saul who had not only corrupted his heart in trying to murder David, but had become psychotic], you and the son of Jesse ... he has rebelled against me and lies in wait for me** ... [really?] Ahimelek answered the king, Who of all your servants is as loyal as David, the king's son-in-law, captain of your bodyguard and highly respected in your household? **[reason and logic have no influence on a man who's heart and mind have been twisted]** Was that day the first time I inquired of God for him? Of course not [ie, this was not unusual]! Let not the king accuse your servant [Ahimelek referring to himself] or any of his

father's family, for your servant knows nothing at all about this whole affair [He certainly suspected something was wrong, but the king never issued public notice that David was considered an enemy of the kingdom]. The king ordered the guards to kill the priests ... But **the king's officials were unwilling to strike the priests** [a clue that God was warning Saul against this action]. The king then ordered Doeg the Edomite [not an Israelite] to strike down the priests [the officials should have continued their stand against the king and prevented this]. Doeg slew every person and animal in the town, **22:13-19**. Saul had finally **openly rebelled against God** with the massacre^d of every [unarmed] priest of the Lord, person, and animal in the entire village, **Gen.4:4-7**.

David ... escaped to the cave of Adullam. When his brothers and his father's household heard about it, they went down to him there. All those who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered around him, and he became their commander.^e About four hundred men were with him, **22:1-2**. But one son of Ahimelek named Abiathar escaped [from being murdered by Doeg] and fled to join David ... David said to Abiathar, That day, when Doeg was there, **I knew** he would be sure to tell Saul [but David couldn't imagine how far gone Saul was to wipe an entire village off the map]. I am responsible for the death of your whole family... **8-23**.

d. With the massacre of Nob, Saul had finally openly rebelled against God. This is where **unrestrained power by unaccountable authority is dangerous**. It is where the consequences of the corruption of a king's heart are displayed, **Gen.4:4-7**.

e. King Saul's jealousy of young David had been growing since David killed Goliath as a boy, perhaps 15 years old. Chased out of the king's presence, **David fled for his life**. As he fled, fighting men and their families began to join him. He faced the mounting responsibility of caring for an increasing number of people defecting to him from Saul and even from other nations. God used the logistics of his situation - sheltering, moving, supplying food, hiding the growing company following him - to push David, forcing him into the roll of leadership. God also gave him opportunities to kill Saul to test him in his resolve not to take Saul's life by his own hands, **1 Sam.24:10-13**. David was encouraged by his men and tempted to kill Saul, but he *was conscious-stricken* for entertaining that notion, **5-7**. David was the man *after his own heart* that God chose to be leader of his people, **1 Sam.13:14; Acts 13:22**. He was both king and prophet, **Acts 2:30**.

After Saul had assumed rule over Israel, he fought against their enemies on every side: Moab, the Ammonites, Edom, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines. Wherever he turned, he inflicted punishment on them. **He fought valiantly** and defeated the Amalekites, delivering Israel from the hands of those who had plundered them ... All the days of Saul there was bitter war with the Philistines ... **1 Sam.14:27-28, 52**. He spent the rest of his life dividing his time between chasing David and defending the kingdom against the Canaanites.

ABIGAIL'S WARNING TO DAVID

David had become responsible for leading and caring for a growing number of people who had joined him. One of the ways he provided for his people was by performing services for land owners. A certain man, Nabal ... had a thousand goats and three thousand sheep, which he was shearing at Carmel. David heard about it and sent men to provide protection for his shepherds and flocks

against pillage. When the shearing was finished, he sent men to ask for remuneration. Nabal, however, foolishly **contemptuously insulted David** and sent the men away with nothing. David's knee-jerk reaction was anger. He called his men to arms and set out **to avenge himself of this personal affront, 1 Sam.25:4-13, 21-22**. He was angered and tempted by this slap-in-the-face. He reacted contrary to the principle of non-vindication that had characterized his response to Saul's attempts to end his life. **David overreacted much like Saul when he wiped out Nob, 22:18-19. With God's justice** vengeance is appropriately restrained and meted out to the guilty party. Taking action while still hot with anger causes one to overreact. David was intending more than mere vengeance upon Nabal. His rage was leading him beyond the scope of the offense to **murder every male** [adults? *Vengeance does not produce the righteousness of God, Jas.1:20, ie. doesn't result in a righteous outcome*]. **Ps.37:1-11** states David's principle of not vindicating himself, and **Mt.5:5** gives the principle of turning the other cheek, *The meek [unassertive] shall inherit the earth.*

Nabal's wife, Abigail, was unaware of the insults, that prompted David's reaction, **1 Sam.25:14-17**, so upon finding out, she wisely assembled a caravan of supplies for David's men and met him on the way to avenge himself. *Now, my lord ... since the LORD has kept you from murdering and taking vengeance into your own hands ... The LORD will surely reward you with a lasting dynasty, for you are fighting the LORD's battles. [Abigail was aware that even as David fled from Saul he fought the Philistines and sought to glorify the Lord rather than to advance his own prowess]. May no evil be found in you all your days! [She is concerned for the preservation of David's reputation in view of the high office he would later assume] ... When the LORD has ... made you leader of Israel, don't let this [action you plan to take] be a blemish on your record. Then your conscience won't have to bear the staggering burden of needless bloodshed and vengeance, 1 Sam.25:26-31.* So David returned to his former commitment to allow God to be the avenger (see **1 Sam.26**). Nabal died shortly afterward while holding a banquet (**25:37-38**), acting as if he were a king (see **Prov.30:21-22**) then David invited Abigail to be his wife, **1 Sam.25:39-42**.

DAVID AS KING

With the death of Saul and his three sons (**1 Sam.31**), David^f was anointed king over Judah (2 Sam.2:1-7) and he issued a veiled invitation to the men of Jabesh Gilead (who had respectfully buried Saul) to recognize him as king like Judah had, **v.7**. His appeal for their support, however, was ignored. Now **Abner, Saul's cousin and the commander of his army, took advantage of the power vacuum created by Saul's death**. He set up **Ish-Boseth (2:8-9)** an unassertive son of Saul, as king of Israel [as a pawn to serve his own ambitions]. Abner then initiated with **Joab**, David's nephew and commander of his army, a limited contest [hand to hand fight] between 12 men from each of the houses of David and Saul (**14-15**) which was intended to settle the dispute between the two without resorting to full-fledged war [similar to the choosing of 2 champions to decide the conflict between the Philistines & Israel, **1 Sam.17**]. However, that contest was indecisive (**v.16**) and **escalated into a fierce war** between them (**v.17**) in which the men of Israel were defeated by David's men. Now in that battle Abner had killed Joab's brother, Asahel, **18-23**.

Abner contacted David in an attempt to unify the nation to which David agreed, **2 Sam.3:12-13, 19-21**. While Abner was serving as ambassador, **17-21**, *Joab and his brother Abishai [murdered him, 26-27] because he had killed their brother Asahel in the battle at Gibeon, v.30. [David*

cursed him for it, **28-29**, but **failed to punish him for his crime as required by law**] ... **28-39**. When Ish-Boseth heard that Abner had died ... he lost courage and all Israel became alarmed because civil strife threatened and the northern tribes were now without a strong leader, **2 Sam.4:1**. Rekab and Baanah, two of Saul's son's men ... assassinated **Ish-Boseth** while he was lying in bed taking his noonday rest, **5-7**, and brought his head to David expecting him to reward them, **v.8**. But David had them executed, **9-12**. **This discrepancy between David's treatment of Joab and Saul's sons men was a harbinger of the beginning of the breakdown of justice under David's rule.** At the age of 30, David was anointed king over Israel, **5:1-5**. But he who had united the northern and southern kingdoms also became responsible for **the disintegration of that union**.

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f. 2 Sam.8 & 10 serve as an introduction to one of the great men of all time, David king of Israel. Read these 2 chapters to get a sense of the kind of man David was and of the terrific military victories God gave him. Typically kings would secure their **dynasties** from the possibility of challenges by murdering the surviving male descendants of the former king, **1 Sam.20:30-31**. **David did something very unusual in keeping with his policy of non-vindication.** After Saul's death, he sought out a young man in Saul's lineage, **Jonathan's son Mephiboseth**, to show kindness to. He gave him all of Saul's property and assigned him a place at the king's table, **2 Sam.9:1-12; 21:7**.

Anger & David, King of Israel

*So David reigned over all Israel and did what was just and right for all his people, **2 Sam.8:15**.* **This is David in his proper role as king of all Israel concluding the conquest of Canaan.** *Some time after the events of **chap.9**, King **Nahash** of the Ammonites died, and his son **Hanun** became king. David said, I am going to **show loyalty** to Hanun just as **[I did with]** his father, Nahash, was always loyal to me. So David sent ambassadors to express sympathy to him about his father's death, **10:1-2**.* David demonstrated his respect for loyalty and showed that he was not a warmonger intent on conquering the world. In fact God had forbidden Moses from starting a war with the Ammonites or taking their land.

*Thirty eight years passed from the time we first left Kadesh-Barnea until we finally crossed the Zered Brook! By then, all the men old enough to fight in battle had died in the wilderness, as the LORD had vowed would happen ... the LORD said to **Moses**, Today you will ... enter the land of the **Ammonites**, the descendants of Lot. But do not bother them or start a war with them. I have given the land of Ammon to them ... **Dt.2:14-18**.*

David, who reigned several hundred years after Moses led the people out of Egypt, was aware of God's position concerning the Ammonites. But it seems that God wanted the Arameans **[aka Syrian mercenary allies of the Ammonites]** out of the land, so **he worked through the Ammonite king's advisers to accomplish his designs**,

*When David's **ambassadors** arrived in the land of Ammon, the Ammonite commanders said **that David has sent them to spy out the city so they can conquer it!** So Hanun seized David's ambassadors and shaved off half of each man's beard, cut off their robes at the buttocks, and sent them back to David in shame ... When the people of Ammon realized how seriously they had angered David, they hired 20,000 Aramean foot soldiers from the lands of Beth-Rehob and Zobah, 1,000*

from the king of Maacah, and 12,000 from the land of Tob. When David heard about this, he sent Joab and all his warriors to fight them, **2 Sam.10:2-7** .

David's anger was justified. His men had been disgraced and he had been insulted, his offer of condolence and friendship spurned, and mercenaries had been employed against him. However **David continued to act appropriately, under control and not driven by his anger.** He set his commander, Joab, to the task of battle strategy, and he prevailed. *After the battle was over, Joab [and his soldiers] returned to Jerusalem, 10:14b.* As far as Israel was concerned, the battle was over and the matter concluded. But the Arameans didn't let it go.

The Arameans now realized that they were no match for Israel. So when they regrouped, they were joined by additional Aramean troops summoned by Hadadezer from the other side of the Euphrates River. When David heard what was happening, he mobilized all Israel, crossed the Jordan River, and led the army to Helam [He was paying attention to the developing situation and at a crucial time brought a significant force to meet the threat.] ... again the Arameans fled from the Israelites. This time David's forces killed 700 charioteers and 40,000 foot soldiers ... all the kings allied with Hadadezer saw that they had been defeated and surrendered to Israel and became their subjects . After that, the Arameans were afraid to help the Ammonites, 2 Sam.10:15-19 . David acted entirely appropriately. **The Ammonites forced the issue here and this was the outcome God worked through his servant David.**

David's Sins: The Beginning of the Decay⁹ of the Kingdom

After the king was settled in his palace and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, 2 Sam.7:1. David reigned over all Israel, doing what was just and right for all his people, 8:15 . BUT , in the spring of the year, when kings normally go out to war , David sent Joab and the Israelite army to fight the Ammonites. They destroyed the Ammonite army and laid siege to their [chief city] , Rabbah . This was a mopping up operation to finish the business with Ammon. However [meanwhile], David stayed behind in Jerusalem, 11:1. Make no mistake, this language portends a major change like a shift in the wind. David, King of Israel, was not at the battle where he should have been.

*Late one afternoon, after his midday [nap] , David got out of bed and was walking on the roof of the palace. As he looked out over the city, he noticed a woman of unusual beauty taking a bath. He found out that she was Bathsheba ... the wife of Uriah^h the Hittite [This is 1st of a series of warnings or wake-up calls that God gave David.] Then David sent messengers to get her and he slept with her [committed adultery, punishable by death, Lev.20:10; Dt.22:22] and she got pregnant, 11:1-5 . [this is the 2nd warning from God to prevent David from going farther] . And just like that **David was no longer fit to rule.** God would tear the kingdom from him in the most disgraceful public way. Adultery is bad enough, but it didn't end there. David hatched a plot to get Uriah to go home and sleep with his wife so he would think the child was his own. When trickery didn't work, **David resorted to murder.***

He sent to Joab for Uriah and asked him questions about the troops and the battle. *Then he told Uriah, Go on home and relax ... But Uriah ... slept that night at the palace entrance with the king's palace guard ... David asked ... Why didn't you go home last night after being away for so long? Uriah replied, The Ark and the armies of Israel and Judah are living in tents, and Joab and*

*my master's men are camping in the open fields. **How could I go home to wine and dine and sleep with my wife?** ... **I WOULD NEVER DO SUCH A THING** ... So the next evening, David again got him drunk. But ... Uriah again went out to sleep on his mat among his master's servants ... **2 Sam.11:8-13***

This is the kind of person David and any man who would wield power needed to surround themselves with - not just loyal soldiers or advisors, but confidants whose commitment to the truth of what is right before God and best for the nation **came before loyalty** to the king [remember king Saul's officials who refused to follow his order to murder the priests of the LORD at Nob, **1 Sam.22:17**. Nevertheless they didn't prevent Doag from doing it!]. David relied upon Joab, the pragmatist and murderer, to carry out his despicable and unlawful order to see that Uriah was killed, **2 Sam. 11:14-15** **Because David didn't personally plunge a knife into Uriah, he was able to suppress in his own mind what he had done.**

Uriah's words and actions rebuked David for his absence from the battle and attention to Bath-sheba. But he couldn't see it because his focus had narrowed to deceiving Uriah. David already had 6 wives (**2 Sam.3:2-5**) and probably Saul's wife and concubine as well [It was customary for new kings to assume the harem of their predecessors, **12:8**]. What is surprising about this whole episode is that when David's plot to cover up his adultery failed (**6-13**), he coldly and callously had Bath-sheba's husband murdered (14-25) and then took her to be His wife, 26-27. What happened to David's conscience? Where was his sense of right and wrong? He had power, riches, status, and fame, but not the authority to commit murder or ignore it. He was **without anger or remorse, his heart was hardened, he had no pity**. He had lost his sensitivity to God's warnings. [He had recognized God speaking to him through Abigail. But **he completely missed God's rebuke in Uriah's actions and words** when he failed to get him to go home to his wife so he would think the child was his.] David pragmatically did what was necessary to keep his sin hidden [similar to Saul when trying to get Samuel to act like everything was in order after he had lost the kingdom of Israel, **1 Sam.15:25, 28, 30**]. **He was on a progressive journey into darkness** and intended to keep his evil deeds from exposure at all costs.

g. David had spent most of his life **under pressure**: fleeing Saul; fighting; commanding an army; taking care of logistics; facing dangers, trials, and hardships, etc. **Now he wasn't needed or busy with necessary tasks, but found himself rested, satiated, yet without a mission, purpose, or meaningful project to focus on.** **Joab** was a competent commander to conclude the conflict with Ammon and there were servants to take care of matters in the palace. **In this void, combined with affluence, we are all more vulnerable to temptation** ... *Your children have forsaken me and sworn by gods that are not gods ... they committed adultery and thronged to the houses of prostitutes. They are well-fed, lusty stallions, each neighing for another man's wife, Jer.5:7-8* . **David had neglected the spiritual disciplines that had kept his heart true to God thus far [See my short essay, MEANS OF GRACE.], so his guard was down and the devil is always there to take advantage of such things.**

h. Uriah was one of a number of non-Israelite men in David's service who would have sworn an oath to David and adopted the Israelite faith. **Uriah is Hebrew** and means my light is the LORD. He was

a member of an elite group of fighters in David's bodyguard, **2 Sam.23:39**. A Philistine contingent from Gath and their commander who had sworn allegiance to David were also with him, **2 Sam.8:18; 15:18-22**.

Figurative language refers to words or phrases that are meaningful, but not literally true. **Ps.51** is David's confession to God for committing adultery with Uriah's wife, arranging to have Uriah murdered, and taking his wife for himself. It certainly is **not true** that his sin was against God and no one else. *Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight ... Ps.51:4*. Nevertheless because David's confession was sincere, God forgave him, **2 Sam.12:13**.

David's Righteous Anger Comes Back to Bite Him

David had not seemed to be affected by his sins. He continued to sit in judgment and conduct the business of the crown as if nothing was wrong. He seemed oblivious to the **callousness and horror** of what he had done. *David himself speaks regarding the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness ... Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the one against whom the Lord will never count sin, Rom.4:6-8. So the LORD sent Nathan the prophet to tell David the story* of a rich man who stole a poor man's only beloved lamb and ate it [This is a method used to trick someone into pronouncing judgment against themselves and bypass their defense reaction]. Joab also used a similar ruse to constrain David to allow the murderer Absalom to return to Jerusalem without judicial reprisal, **2 Sam.14:1-21**. *David was furious ... any man who would do such a thing deserves to die! He must repay four lambs to the poor man for the one he stole and for having no pity, 2 Sam.12*. This story fires up David's righteous indignation against the rich man. His sense of justice was still intact, though blind with respect to his own sin. Nathan's pronouncement shocked him back to reality.

Then Nathan said ... You are that man! The LORD says, After all I have done for you and given you ... Why, then, have you despised the word of the LORD and done this horrible deed? For you have murdered Uriah the Hittite with the sword of the Ammonites and stolen his wife. From this time on, your family will live by the sword ... I will cause your own household to rebel against you. I will give your wives to another man ... and he will go to bed with them in public view. You did it secretly, but I will make this happen to you openly in the sight of all Israel, 2 Sam.12:5-12. Though David confessed his sin and God forgave him so that he did not die as required under the law, the consequences rolled on beginning with the death of his child, 13-14.

[When Rabbah, the chief city of the Ammonites was finally ready to be taken,] Joab sent messengers to tell David to bring the rest of the army and capture the city. Otherwise, I will ... get credit for the victory. So David did so, **27-29**. This was strictly political, for show. David had changed.

Amnon, Tamar, and Absalom

Beginning with the death of Bathsheba's child, the consequences of David's sins began to unfold according to Nathan's prophecy. **Amnon**, one of David's sons, became obsessed with his half-sister, **Tamar**, Absalom's sister, so he raped her. *Then Amnon hated her with intense hatred* so he had her thrown out and the door bolted, **2 Sam.13:1-18**. *David was furious when he heard this (v.21)*, but because of his own sins he was in a poor position to do anything about it. Tamar went to live with Absalom as a desolate woman, **v.20**. Absalom hated his half-brother Amnon for disgra-

cing his sister (v.21) and two years later had him murdered, v.28-29 and then fled from David's jurisdiction to Geshur where he stayed for three years, v.38.

Meanwhile **Joab** enlisted the services of a woman and concocted a fictitious story to sell it to David. It was subterfuge to allow Absalom, the crown prince, to return to Jerusalem without facing execution for murder (2 Sam.14:1-21) under the condition that he not see the king's face, 23-24. After a couple years, he did go to the king *I want to see the king's face, and if I am guilty of anything, let him put me to death ... the king summoned Absalom ... and kissed him [signifying his forgiveness and Absalom's reconciliation with the royal family. But he avoided the issues of repentance and justice], 32-33. David had become no different than pagan kings. He was trapped by the constraints of his own sins. Forget obedience to the law of God, forget justice. Lawlessness had become the norm; Anarchy the standard when man overruled the Law of God. [This is reminiscent of what was taking place during the time of Judges, only here king David is himself acting lawlessly like "every man," In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes, Jud.17:6.]*

Absalom began undermining David's administration by endearing himself to the people, 2 Sam.15:1-6. Four years later, he initiated a conspiracy and gathered an army to overthrow the king, 10-14. When David was told, he fled, 13-18. David had commanded his men not to harm Absalom (18:5,11-12), but when the two armies met, Joab killed him, 14-15. Absalom had appointed Amasa [David's nephew; Absalom and Joab's cousin who deserved death for treason] over the army in place of Joab, 17:25; 19:13; 20:4. Though not officially in command, Joab was obviously the leader and recognized as such by the soldiers, 20:7, 11, 15. He then murdered Amasa, 8-10.

David Takes a Census

Once again [21:1] the anger of the LORD burned against Israel , and he caused David to harm them by taking a census . [Satan rose up against Israel and caused David to take a census of the people of Israel, 1 Chron.21:1] Go and count the people of Israel and Judah, the LORD told him. So the king said to Joab and the commanders of the army, Take a census of all the fighting men of Israel But Joab replied to the king ... why ... do you want to do this [This is a clue to David that the census was wrong. It doesn't make sense even to Joab .] ? But the king insisted ... so Joab and the commanders of the army went out to count the people of Israel ... Joab reported the number of people to the king ... 2 Sam.24:1-9 .

But after he had taken the census, David's conscience began to bother him [there is no such prohibition in Scripture, but David's conscience told him something was wrong with doing this. This is an antinomy , see Beyond Abraham p.9-10 . Here God and Satan are causes, and David takes the blame] . And he said to the LORD , I have sinned greatly by taking this census [no denial, self-defense, or shifting the blame here] Please forgive my guilt , LORD , for doing this foolish thing ... the LORD said: I will give you three choices [remember this all results from God's anger with Israel, 2 Sam.24:1] ... let us fall into the hands of the LORD , for his mercy is great [the wisdom of this choice and reliance upon the Lord's mercy was proven correct] ... So the LORD sent a plague upon Israel ... A total of 70,000 people died throughout the nation ... But ... the LORD relented ... David ... said to the LORD , I am the one who has sinned and done wrong . But these people are innocent ... Let your anger fall against me and my family [He is willing to take the blame and pen-

alty] , 10-17 .

Adonijah [probably David's oldest surviving son] attempted to usurp the throne (1 Ki.1:5-10) but David found out and had Solomon anointed first, 32-40, 49. David reigned over Israel 40 years and he died, 2 Sam.2:10-11. To see how David had changed and how profoundly it affected his ability to rule, see the sermon, David: Lawful and Unlawful Vindication NLP chap.8 . No kidding. **This sermon is essential to the completion of this story. G**

Addendum: A TRIBUTE TO JONATHAN, son of Saul, friend of David

A COURAGEOUS AND GODLY YOUNG MAN: We are first introduced to Jonathan at the end of 1 Sam.13 where he is camped with his father and about 600 soldiers. A detachment of Philistines were camped nearby and he secretly took his armor-bearer there to see if the Lord would grant them success in battle. *Jonathan said to his young armor-bearer, Come, let's go over to the outpost of those uncircumcised men. Perhaps the Lord will act in our behalf . Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving, whether by many or by few , 14:6 .* He attacked the Philistines and together they killed some 20 men, 13-14. God shook the ground and panicked the rest, v.15. When Saul and his men arrived, *They found the Philistines in total confusion, striking each other with their swords, v.20 .* So Israel pursued their enemies that day and *the Lord rescued them, v.23 .*

A TRUTHFUL AND HONORABLE MAN: Unknown to Jonathan, *the king had [foolishly] bound the people under an oath [which directly invoked God's involvement] , saying, Cursed be anyone who eats food ... before I have avenged myself on my enemies!* [He perceived the conflict more as a personal vendetta than as a battle for the honor of the Lord and security of his people. Contrast this with David's words to Goliath, 17:26, 45-47] *So none of the troops tasted food, 1 Sam:14:24, 27-28 .* Saul's rash requirement that the troops fast unnecessarily placed them at a disadvantage in the battle and reduced the extent of their victory (v.30), thus illustrating his **lack of fitness** to rule as king. *He made trouble for the country (v.29)* rather than contributing to the victory [pursuing and fighting expends a tremendous amount of energy that leaves one exhausted and craving food and refreshment to boost his stamina, v.31].

They were so famished that they ate animal meat with the blood, v.32. Saul himself caused the men to commit this sin! Later he was prevented from taking advantage of the battle's outcome because the Lord refused to give him the go-ahead to continue pursuing the Philistines, v.37, 46. When he discovered that Jonathan, though ignorant of the oath, had tasted honey, in anger **Saul blamed HIM** for what resulted from his own foolishness. He set out to have him executed but the men spoke up and saved him from such a perversion of justice, 43-45. **Saul's growing egoism was turning into an all-consuming passion that threatened the welfare of the nation.**

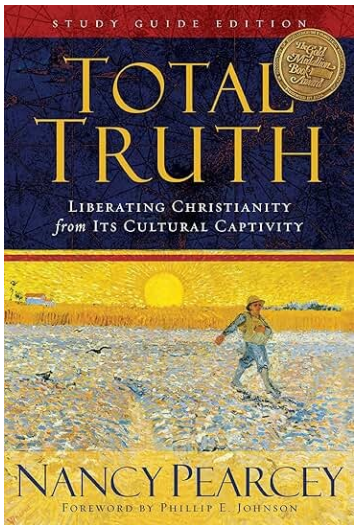
JONATHAN AND DAVID'S FRIENDSHIP: 1 Sam.18:3-4. **Saul ordered Jonathan and all his attendants to kill David, but Jonathan warned him instead, 19:1-3.** He talked his father out of it and secured his oath not to harm David, 4-7. But once again Saul tried to murder him in violation of his oath to the Lord, but David escaped, 9-18. When Saul came after him, God intervened in no uncertain way, 20-24. Jonathan tried to cover for David's unexpected absence from the king's table [Saul strangely acted as if he couldn't understand why, 20:24-27], but the king didn't buy it. When Jonathan tried to argue against murdering David, the king attempted to murder HIM, 32-34! Jonathan warned David that his father was **bent on murdering him**, so he fled for his life, 35-42. *Day after*

day Saul searched for him, but God did not give David into his hands, **23:14** . During this time Jonathan visited David to encourage him, **15-18**.

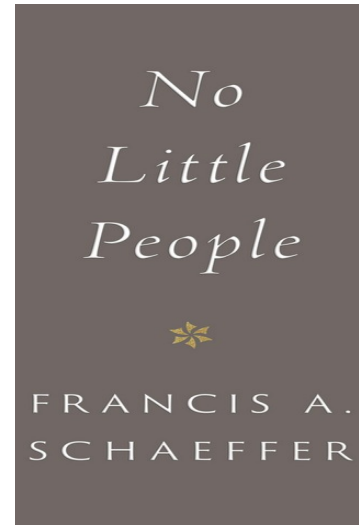
Jonathan remained with his father's army until he was killed along with his two brothers and Saul fighting the Philistines, **31:2-3**.

I recommend the following books for further study:

Total Truth, Liberating Christianity from its Cultural Captivity by Nancy Pearcey, 2004, 479 pgs (Study Guide Edition, by Nancy Pearcey & Phillip Johnson, 2008)



No Little People, NLP by Francis Schaeffer 1974, 271 pages, 16 sermons.



The last essay, **Beyond David**, concludes this series with specific training in implementing what the Scripture says to do, but doesn't specify how to under the subject heading of FORGIVENESS.

Hallelujah!