

LIFE OF DAVID

STUDY NO 3 - DAVID'S LAMENTATION

PROVERBS 24:16

With Saul and Jonathan, we are dealing with the lives of two different types of men, as we are when we consider Saul and David. Proverbs 24:16 declares "For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief." This proverb deals with two classes of people against a background of trial, trouble, and tribulation.

A JUST MAN FALLETH SEVEN TIMES, AND RISETH UP AGAIN

Jonathan was such a man. Despite the difficulty, he remained true to both Saul (his father) and to David. He never betrayed either. In accomplishing this he underwent suffering which it is difficult for us to understand. To continually rise up in the face of distress and difficulty requires faith, courage, determination, and keeping one's mind centred firmly on Yahweh and His word. The faith - the Hope of Israel - remains the paramount thing in such a person's life. No matter what happens they will always try and claw their way back to the Truth which means so much to them.

BUT THE WICKED SHALL FALL INTO MISCHIEF

The word "mischief" is translated as "calamity" by the R.V. and the N.I.V.. Once Saul began his decline in the Truth, we never read of any incident where he tried to get himself back into a spiritual frame of mind and fellowship with Yahweh. He never rose up again, but fell into calamity.

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These words became a very important part of Scripture. They reveal the mind of a man with a Christ-like spirit. When the Amalekite came to David he did not realise that a true Israelite does not think like an Amalekite - a man of the flesh - a man of the world. He would not have understood David's attitude to Saul as Yahweh's anointed. He would not have understood David's loving, Christ-like disposition. In many of the words of this Lament, David is shown as a type of the Lord Jesus Christ.

DAVID'S LAMENTATION - A SUMMARY

- 2 Samuel 1:19-22 David in mourning for the national defeat at Mt Gilboa
- 2 Samuel 1:23 David remembers Saul and Jonathan in happier times
- 2 Samuel 1:24-25 David calls on Israel to remember that Saul had been King
- 2 Samuel 1:25 - 27 David's personal mourning over the death of Jonathan

David reveals absolutely no recognition of the advantages that would come to him now Saul was dead. This is typical of the integrity of David's character. He shows forgiveness for all that Saul had done to him. There is no room in the life of a son or daughter of God, to hold an attitude of 'maintaining the rage'. Such an attitude shows bitterness - a bitterness that eats out the heart of the person maintaining it. Bitterness is disastrous not only for the person harbouring it, but for those associated with them as well.

From a natural point of view, it might have been expected that David and his men would have 'thrown their hats in the air' and rejoiced in that all their

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sufferings at the hand of Saul were now at an end, and now David would be able to rise to power and glory in the Kingdom. But there is none of that. David calmly awaits the guiding hand of Providence (2 Samuel 2:1). David's mind is not on power and promotion, but on Yahweh, his God.

The words of David's lament show David's continuing loyalty to Saul. David never said anything disloyal about Saul either during his life or after his death. Until Yahweh removed Saul, David treated Saul as Yahweh's anointed. He views the death of Saul and Jonathan as a terrible tragedy which need never have happened, if Saul had manifested a more Godly attitude.

Samuel had adopted a similar attitude, even before Saul was dead. "And Samuel said unto him, Yahweh hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou (1 Sam 15:28). And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death: nevertheless **Samuel mourned for Saul**: and Yahweh repented that he had made Saul king over Israel" (1 Sam 15:35). Saul's rejection by Yahweh provided no basis for joy or rejoicing so far as Samuel was concerned. He regarded the situation as a tragedy. Samuel realised how different the situation could have been if Saul had been a different man. And Samuel mourned over the sad spiritual state of Saul. "And Yahweh said unto Samuel, **How long wilt thou mourn for Saul**, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons" (1 Samuel 16:1).

In this lamentation, David chooses to ignore the evil that Saul had perpetrated against him. He tries to express the best that he can about Saul. He does not mention or dwell on his failings. Some commentators think that David is hypocritical in this. But so far as David was concerned, the sin of Saul awaited a higher court. David would not 'maintain the rage'. He would not sow bitterness in the heart of his followers. David's attitude was that of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Matthew 18 the Lord sets out how to deal with sins against Yahweh of a moral or doctrinal kind in verse 15 to 18, while Matthew 18:21-22 deals with sin against ourselves. The point of Peter saying "till seven times" is because the Jews taught that you only forgave three times, but not four. So Peter is trying to be generous. He doubles the Jews three times and adds one. He thinks that that should be enough. The Lord points out that it was not.

It should be noted that the Lord words recorded in Matthew 18:23-35 are only recorded by Matthew and no one else. The final verse - Matthew 18:35 reads - "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." But the words "their trespasses" are not in the original text. The reason that the Lord does not include those words, is because the emphasis is on **FORGIVENESS** not our brothers trespasses. "If you **forgive** not every man his brother" - that David's spirit.

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In the Colossian ecclesia there were personality problems which needed to be sorted out if the ecclesia was to live in harmony. Paul's exhortation in that situation was "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, **so also do ye**" (Col 3:13). David manifested that spirit in relation to Saul. David does not use Saul's lack of faith, or lack of understanding of the Truth, etc. to demean Saul. Rather David thought in harmony with Peter who said "For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (1 Peter 2:19-21)

The Lament is written in a poetic form. In the Hebrew language, in order to express a love for one thing, a hatred for another is sometimes stated, without the hatred necessarily being literally true. Two examples of this are found firstly in Malachi 1:2-3 "I have loved you, saith Yahweh. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith Yahweh: yet I loved Jacob, **and I hated Esau**, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness": and secondly in Genesis 29:30-31 where Jacob's abounding love for Rachel is expressed as a hatred for Leah - "And he went in also unto Rachel, and he **loved also Rachel more** than Leah, and served with him yet seven other years. And when Yahweh saw **that Leah was hated**, he opened her womb: but Rachel was barren."

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V18 HE BADE THEM TEACH THE CHILDREN OF JUDAH *THE USE OF THE BOW*

Note that the words "the use of" are in italics and should be omitted. David wanted the children of Judah to learn "The Bow" i.e. The Lamentation of the Bow. The N.I.V. has "the lament of the bow". Saul and Jonathan were Benjamites, and the Benjamites were especially noted for their skill with the bow. See 1 Chron 8:10; 1 Chron 12:2; 2 Chron 14:8. See 1 Sam 20:36-42 regarding Jonathan's own use of the bow. However there is another aspect concerning the bow. The bow is a symbol of Yahweh's militant power used on behalf of Israel. When the Lord Jesus Christ returns the House of Judah is going to be his bow, and the House of Israel his arrows, in helping to defeat his enemies (Zech 9:12). In that day Jonathan and David will both be part of the Rainbow Angel (the immortal saints), who will go forth to assist the Lord Jesus Christ to subdue the gentile nations. Perhaps in view of their spiritual stature they will be at the forefront of that army of saints.

IN THE BOOK OF JASHER

"Jasher" means the upright - see the margin. This lamentation, apart from being found in the inspired record, was also recorded in the Book Of Jasher, which was apparently a collection of odes which extolled the virtue of uprightness, and gave examples of it, such as is found in David's attitude in the Lamentation of the Bow.

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V19 THE BEAUTY OF ISRAEL

The Hebrew word for "beauty" literally means the roe or gazelle. It was the symbol of beauty. It was an animal noted for its swiftness, and sure-footedness, grace of movement, etc..

HOW ARE THE MIGHTY FALLEN

This statement is repeated three times in this Lamentation; here, in verse 25, and in verse 27. It is the theme of the Lamentation. This statement is often used in a wrong way; viz. a well respected brother makes a mistake or falls into sin, and somewhat sneeringly it is said "How are the mighty fallen?" But this is not how David uses it. Isa 40:6 declares that "all flesh is (as) grass". Ultimately, in the end, no matter what status a person has in life, ONE thing comes upon all, and that is death. We all decay in the grave. "The Mighty" and the commoner, the rich and the poor, all die. Ecclesiastes 3:19 expresses it this way - "For that which **befalleth** the sons of men **befalleth** beasts; even one thing **befalleth** them: **as the one dieth, so dieth the other**; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity." "How are the mighty fallen". Jonathan of course was mighty in spirituality. Saul was a mighty man of the flesh. But their end was the same - death. The "mighty" had fallen.

V20 TELL IT NOT IN GATH, PUBLISH IT NOT IN THE STREETS OF ASKELON...

David's point is that the ecclesia should be separate from the world. Let the ecclesia mourn apart. We cannot be comforted by the world. Our comfort is to be found in another direction altogether "Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted" (Matt 5:4). The world does not understand that we mourn the death and absence of our Lord each week. And no one in the ecclesia should tell the gentiles about some catastrophe or calamity or sin that overtakes a member of the ecclesia. We are strangers and pilgrims on the earth. We are in the world, but not of it.

V21 VERSE 21

In this verse David curses Mt Gilboa - the place of the death of Saul and Jonathan. However, it needs to be understood, that in doing this, David is following the custom of the Hebrew language. For example Jeremiah curses the day he was born in order to give expression to his grief in the circumstances in which he found himself (Jer 20:14).

V24 WEEP OVER SAUL WHO CLOTHED YOU IN SCARLET

In earlier times, the women of Israel had rejoiced and celebrated Saul's triumphs (e.g. 1 Sam 18:6). David says, in mourning for Saul, don't forget his triumphs.

LIFE OF DAVID STUDY

STUDY NO 4 - DAVID REMOVES TO HEBRON

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The depth of feeling which David expresses in his Lament for Saul and Jonathan is better seen in other versions such as Rotherham; Jerusalem Bible; N.A.S.B. etc., Set out below is the Jerusalem Bible translation -

2 Samuel 1:19-27

Alas, the glory of Israel has been slain on your heights!
How did the heroes fall?

Do not speak of it in Gath,
nor announce it in the streets of Ashkelon,
or the daughters of the Philistines will rejoice,
the daughters of the uncircumcised will gloat.

O mountains of Gilboa,
let there be no dew or rain on you;
treacherous fields,
for there the hero's shield was dishonoured!

The shield of Saul was anointed not with oil
but with blood of the wounded, fat of the warriors;
the bow of Jonathan did not turn back,
not the sword of Saul return idle.

Saul and Jonathan, loved and lovely,
neither in life nor in death, were divided.
Swifter than eagles were they,
stronger were they than lions.

O daughters of Israel, weep for Saul
who clothed you in scarlet and fine linen,
who set brooches of gold
on your garments.

How did the heroes fall
in the thick of the battle?

O Jonathan, in your death I am stricken,
I am desolate for you, Jonathan my brother,
Very dear to me you were,
your love to me more wonderful
than the love of a woman.

How did the heroes fall
and the battle armour fail?

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V26 I AM DISTRESSED FOR THEE, MY BROTHER JONATHAN

"Distress" does not mean sorrow of heart or sadness; the hebrew *tsarar* means cramped, crushed, or confined within a little space. This is how David felt over the death of Jonathan. The same hebrew word occurs in Psalm 69:17 where it is translated as "trouble" - "And hide not thy face from thy servant; for I am in **trouble**: hear me speedily."

VERY PLEASANT HAST THOU BEEN UNTO ME

"Pleasant" is not from the same hebrew word as occurs in verse 23 (*naiym*). Here it is a much stronger word (*naem*). This hebrew word is used by the groom (the Lord Jesus Christ) in describing his bride (the ecclesia) in Song of Solomon 7:6 - "How fair and how **pleasant** art thou, O love, for delights!" David and Jonathan type Christ and the Ecclesia.

THY LOVE TO ME

The word "love" occurs twice in the last part of this verse. In the Septuagint (the greek version of the Old Testament) the translators have employed the greek word *agape* as befitting the depth SPIRITUAL love which existed between these two men. They were drawn together by a deep mutual understanding of the things of the Truth. Jonathan's love for David was based on a profound respect and reverence for the things of God. Though their association was cut short by Jonathan's tragic death, the Kingdom will supply what was lost in their mortal life. See also 1 Samuel 20:17 and the notes on page 46 of Volume 1 of THE LIFE OF DAVID. In 1 Samuel 23:16-17 we read "And Jonathan Saul's son arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God. And he said unto him, Fear not: for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and that also Saul my father knoweth." Jonathan resigned his heir-ship to the throne to David, because he recognised Yahweh's purpose with him. Consequently Jonathan was more than willing to "strengthen David's hand in God". Jonathan's statement "and I shall be next unto thee" may well find its fulfilment in the Kingdom. In view of the fact that David spent so much time and effort in PREPARING for the building of the Temple, some think that possibly David may be given charge of the Temple Services in the Kingdom, and if that is so, Jonathan may be next unto David in that work.

PASSING THE LOVE OF WOMEN

See previous note on "thy love to me". This was not phileo love but agape love. What Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 fittingly describes the relationship between Jonathan and David "Charity suffereth long, and is kind [Jonathan showed this to David]; charity envieth not [as Jonathan did not envy David's position as Yahweh's anointed to succeed Saul]; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own [Jonathan was vitally interested in David's welfare despite being replaced as heir to the throne], is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with (mg) the truth [as Jonathan encouraged David with the Truth]; beareth all things [better "covers" all things, as Jonathan tried to do for David], believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

2 SAMUEL 2

V1 DAVID ENQUIRED OF YAHWEH

Here we have the disposition of a spiritually minded man. David could have acted like a man sensing victory and taken off with his men to seize the throne. But David's desire is not to do his own will but the will of his Heavenly Father. In this he types the Lord who said in John 5:30 "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." What would have happened if the Lord had acted independently of his Father? We have to learn to wait on Yahweh and seek his guidance. Proverbs 14:12 declares "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Psalm 89:19-21 which is prophetic of Christ, is to a lesser degree true of David who types the Lord - "Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people. I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him: With whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him." But Yahweh's arm could never have strengthen the Lord or David unless they were malleable and prepared to accept the will of their Heavenly Father. As this verse shows David's mind is in the Truth. His mind is on God. He wants advice as to what he should now do.

INTO ANY OF THE CITIES OF JUDAH

This is not a request as to whether David should go up and take the throne. Judah was David's own tribe, and David was thinking of them as he had done before, for example, when he sent to them the spoils of war (1 Sam 30:26-31), in effect preparing the way for the day when he would return and be among his people. Here in seeking Divine guidance, David is practising a principle that he always lived by, namely, "Commit thy way unto Yahweh; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass." (Psa 37:5).

AND YAHWEH SAID UNTO HIM, GO UP

So there was an answer. David could have taken this as an all embracing blessing on any plan that he had in his mind. But David shows great care in dealing with Yahweh. So he says -

WHITHER SHALL I GO UP?

If David had presumed on Yahweh's direction to "Go up" he might have gone the wrong way, or to the wrong place. David had learn't the attitude of caution and self-restraint. He had learnt not to trust himself. He proceeded only with deference to the superior will of Yahweh.

UNTO HEBRON

Hebron means "to join or unite in fellowship". This was an appropriate place for David to commence his work of uniting the tribes that he might become their king. So David was advised to shift his whole headquarters from Ziklag to Hebron, and in doing so, David turned his back on the Philistines for ever. Hebron was one of the most ancient cities in world history. It was built 7 years before Zoan in Egypt (Numb 13:22 - see also Gen 13:18). Hebron was the city where the bodies of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob lay buried awaiting the coming of the greater David to raise the dead. It was also a city of refuge.

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V3 AND HIS MEN THAT WERE WITH HIM

Many out of Israel who were "mighty men helpers of the war" (1 Chron 12:1) came to David in Ziklag. There were men from Saul's own tribe (Benjamin), and men from the tribes of Gad and Manasseh, until eventually David had a great army (1 Chron 12:2,8,19,22). All of these removed from Ziklag to Hebron with David. These **individuals** who came to David in Ziklag did not constitute a **national** recognition of David's position as Saul's successor. This was to come later on. These men who came voluntarily and **individually** to David typify ourselves - people who may have had to leave houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, etc (Mk 10:29) in order to come to Christ, recognising him as their leader and saviour. In 1 Chronicles 12 from verse 23 to the end of the chapter we have a **national** move to make David king, but this came later.

AND THEY DWELT IN THE CITIES OF HEBRON

And so David was accepted back by the tribe of Judah. This types the future when the Lord Jesus Christ will first come to the House of Judah and be accepted of them before eventually being accepted by the House of Israel who are currently scattered throughout the world; viz "Yahweh also shall save the tents of Judah first" (Zech 12:7).

V4 THERE THEY ANOINTED DAVID KING OVER THE HOUSE OF JUDAH

This was something willingly performed by the men of Judah. They got behind David and supported him. The fact that David was to be the next king over Israel was well known. Samuel had known; Saul had known; Jonathan had known; Abigail knew - it was a well known and recognised fact. But David had to wait in patience for the time appointed of Yahweh. Despite the long period of trials and difficulties, he never lost faith in the appointment of Yahweh. Being of our nature he did show weakness as when he went to Ziklag. Although failing at times, his faith never really weakened in these matters. From this we are exhorted that it is by patient continuance in well doing that we seek for glory and honour and immortality (eternal life)" (Rom 2:7). Further, when we contemplate David's faithful, patient attitude we see a man like the Lord who did not think the crown a thing to be grasped at (cp Phil 2:7). David, like the Lord would wait for the Father's good time. He recognised that "Yahweh is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another" (Psa 75:7).

V5 BLESSED BE YE OF YAHWEH

David's very first act as king is to acknowledge the work of the men of Jabesh-gilead on behalf of Saul. No one could say that he joyfully and gladly seized the throne over the body of the dead king. It was not uncommon in ancient times for new monarchs to wipe out those sympathetic to the previous king. But David has the disposition of the Spirit. He manifests the spirit of Christ who said "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (Matt 5:7).

V7 VERSE 7

David's words to the men of Jabesh-gilead are words of spiritual strength and comfort. He concludes his words to them with a brief explanation that he is now the King of Judah, but he makes no demands upon them. He does not demand that others should submit to his will, and in that sense we have the same relationship to Christ. If we come to Christ **willingly** and in spirit and in truth, the we will be accepted by him.