

Deliverance Brought About by God's Direct Intervention

Call to Worship: Psalm 84:10-12

Hymn #152- *O Little Town of Bethlehem*

1st Scripture: 1 Samuel 10:1-16

Hymn #168- *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*

2nd Scripture: 1 Samuel 19:18-24

Hymn #157- *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear*

Introduction:

David is now a fugitive on the run, and he will continue to be so, until the end of Saul's reign. Like the later, glorious Son of David, he will have no real place to call home; no place to rest his head, until he is exalted to his throne. "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to rest His head" (Matt. 8:20). David will flee for his life, from one place to the other, some 15 times before God's promise comes to pass, and David makes it to the throne. And where will our journey take us, brethren, in our walk with the Lord? What path of rejoicing, sorrow, trial and affliction, will we tread before reaching our eternal state of exaltation? Only God knows, but let us never get too comfortable within the sphere of temporal things, and let us be prepared to cling to Christ, while losing all things, if necessary, to obtain the eternal prize, which neither rots nor rusts nor loses its precious value!

As we continue to follow David's already difficult and sanctifying trek to the throne, we have found God, always faithfully delivering His blessed servant, from what many of us would naturally assume to be "close calls." Up to this point, God has used Jonathan (Saul's son) and then Michal (Saul's daughter), both, as means of delivering David from their father's raging madness and bitter hatred. Now God, who is never short of saving resources, will directly intervene by the influential power of His Holy Spirit, as David finds a brief place of refuge among Samuel and his school of prophets.

While we are not told much about the origin or inner workings of the school of the prophets, the Scriptures do clearly mention them on different occasions. Perhaps, these were like our modern day theological colleges and seminaries, used as a means of training those who were gifted with prophetic abilities? These students prophesied and ministered in various ways,

through the proclamation of revelation (both old and new) and through the playing of musical instruments (1 Sam. 10). In some way, prophesying, in this sense, has a broader ministerial meaning than simply proclaiming new revelation. Suffice it to say that there was indeed a "school of the prophets," where Samuel taught and trained men of God unto various forms of ministry.

And so, David flees to Samuel in Ramah, where he informs Samuel of all that has transpired, and probably issues forth the question, "What do I do now? God has anointed me with his sanctifying oil, unto Israel's throne; I have hung in there up to this point, but I have been forced to flee for my life. I am at a loss as to where to go, and what to do now?" And from there, Samuel takes David to Naioth, where the "school of the prophets" was located.

I. Deliverance Brought About by God's Direct Intervention

At some point, word got back to Saul that David was at Naioth. And that reality can be translated into two very different and yet, accurate ways. From the perspective of man, "Someone happened to notice David there, and ratted him out, leading to David having to flee once again." From the perspective of God, "God caused a traitor to see David at Naioth, allowing word to get back to Saul, so that God would glorify His great name in delivering David with a mighty intervention, while moving David along to the next sanctifying stepping stone of preparation, for his future reign." Our walk with the Lord will help determine, which perspective we use to view His providences, when we face such trying challenges in our own lives. And furthermore, perhaps the school of the prophets was about to get a bonus lesson on "experiencing the power of God" 101.

Upon receiving word that David was at Naioth, Saul then sends messengers to take David into custody. And then something quite enigmatic happens. When the messengers witness the group of prophets prophesying, and Samuel leading them, not only were they forbidden from interfering with what was going on, but we are told that the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul, leading them to join the prophetic chorus as well. Perhaps one way to illustrate this scene, would be as follows:

Imagine a group of soldiers coming here this morning, having the desire to take one of our members into custody (to be unjustly murdered), and as we are caught up in the sincere worship of God, God literally overwhelms them with His glory and carries them into the worship, preventing them from moving forward with their assigned task.

Well here, God, by His Spirit, carries the guards into a prophetic trance, where in some way (be it by means of chanting divine revelation or prophesying in music and song), they are distracted away from laying hold of David. And so, Saul sends other messengers a second time, and the same exact thing happens; and then a third time, and the same thing happens again.

Finally, Saul decides that he is going to go and lay hold of David himself. On the way there, he stops at a great well, at a place called Sechu, to get the exact whereabouts of Samuel and David, and a person there, indeed, points him to Naioth in Ramah. And the Spirit of God comes upon Saul before he gets to Naioth, leading him to prophesy the whole way there. And furthermore, Saul strips off his clothing (probably his outer garments; his armor and royal robes) and embarrassingly lays down on the ground all day and night, prophesying before Samuel, in some enigmatic, ecstatic trance. Needless to say, what happened to Saul was quite humiliating, and probably symbolized the fact that, try as he may, he could do nothing whatsoever to change the fact that his kingdom would soon be "stripped" from him and given over to David. God here intervenes in the most direct way imaginable, affirming that it is beyond foolish to ever attempt to contend with the living God, and His will! Those who do so, will find themselves humbled in the dust, ultimately bringing praise, honor and glory to God. Even the wicked will praise him; and every knee will bow before Christ, acknowledging His position as universal divine Ruler, proclaiming Jesus as Lord!

Once again, the proverb stated earlier (1 Sam. 10:10-12--though perhaps in a more positive sense then), resurfaces here (in a more negative sense), as the people say, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" Saul is used as an illustration for those awkward, unexpected and improbable events that transpire throughout life. Well, needless to say, once again, David then escapes for his life and flees to Jonathan. Perhaps, the one who had been used to deliver David in the past, and the only one who seemed to be able to talk some sense into his father, would once again, be of help to David?

II. Closing Thoughts and Applications

Brethren, if the hand of God could not be clearly seen up to this point, (and it most certainly was), here, God intervenes in the most direct way. When necessary, His Spirit overtakes the enemy and sways his heart in whatever direction God chooses. The heart of the king is in the hand of God, and like a river, He turns it in whatever direction He wills. God hardens the heart of Pharaoh, so that he will *not* let the Israelites go, because God is going to manifest His glory to His people (and to the world for that matter), by putting a heavy beaten upon Pharaoh and his gods. God causes the guards to fall into a deep sleep, when the stone is rolled away, and the risen Christ walks right out of the tomb. You see, brethren, God uses all manner of means, within and without the confines of His natural laws, to unfold His divine will. He has done so throughout all of history, and He does so today. And while far more often than not, he uses secondary means (Jonathans and Michals...etc) to bless and preserve His people, every means ought to be seen as finding its origin in God's divine power and influence. There are no true coincidences in God's world, brethren. God wants us to look at David's life, from the beginning of what is revealed to us, right to the very end, and to say, "God is at work there, in a host of different ways." And he wants us to carry that application; that revelation of how God works in a variety of different ways, right into our own sphere of living! He wants us to remain continuously conscious of His presence (felt or not); He wants us to, by faith, see His hand at work, right here and now; He wants us to know for certain that God is not out there far away somewhere (out of touch with our realities); He wants us to know that He is a *very present* help in times of trouble, so that we might glorify and praise Him, as an all-wise Sovereign over His entire creation, leading us to say, "Thy will is perfect...this is not according to my plan, Lord, but nevertheless, Your will be done!"

Brethren, when we are standing in the midst of promotion and times of great visible and felt success in this world, He wants us to stop and worship Him for His wonderful providence and His goodness toward us. And when we are standing in the rubble of a life shattering explosion, He wants us to stop and to worship Him for His harsh (but all wise) providence and for His goodness toward us. Both will serve to lead us to glory! "The Lord gives"..."and the Lord takes away,"..."Blessed be the Name of the Lord!" For, in the end, brethren, it will all

make perfect sense...none of us will ever say in glory, "Lord, but did you really have to let that happen in my life...etc."

Notice again, as well, how God humbles the proud, and gives grace to the humble. The Lord was a shield and a buckler, indeed, a strong, impenetrable tower to David, but He was an enemy to Saul. Saul had no desire to subject himself to God's greater dominion and authority, and he found himself naked (as a man), in the dust, prophesying before God, by compulsion. Better to lay yourself in the dust now, of your own design and will, where we belong, lest God should do it in due time, and cause you to bear the shame of your pride, in eternal anguish and humiliation. Friends, no former big shot of this world is a big shot in hell. The mere fleshliness of the human make-up is exposed in full there...and I believe that the proudest in this world, will bear the greatest shame of humiliation in the next. Everyone remaining outside of Christ will bear their eternal cross.

And so, when we are taught, in example and word, to reckon ourselves better than everyone else, because of our talents, because of our finances, because of our smarts, because of our physical physique, because of our position or status, because of our artistic abilities (all gifts of God's design)...etc, I ask you friends, who is the author of such a vain culture? Is it not the devil, preparing a people for an upcoming eternal wave of humiliation and wrath, when God's anger is no longer restrained? The way of the proud is the sure way to destruction. It may gain you some attention and praise for a time, but in the end, you will be found naked, and on the ground before the glory of God, with Saul, only *not* limited in duration to a day and a night, but rather forever! May God wake us all up to our true nature and personhood; to our true state as dust, so that we do not have to be put in the dust by Him. Better to humble yourself and to flee naked (of your own glory) to the Rock of Christ's glory, than to be stripped by God, humiliated, exposed and crucified in your own shame forever.

You see, but the good news is that Christ bore that shame, that humiliation, that torment, that agony, and that pain for His people! [He was *exposed* and condemned for our sin]

The Gospel!

Amen!!!

The Lord's Supper!