

## Message #47

## I Samuel 19:18-24

There are amazing stories in the Bible that truly do dramatically show the sovereignty of God. For example, in the book of Esther, there is a story of Haman, who one night decided he was going to hang Mordecai the next day. During the night, King Ahasuerus (Xerxes) could not sleep so he asked someone to read for him a book of historical records. As the person was reading, he read how Mordecai had protected the king, so the king decided to honor Mordecai the next day (Esther 6:1-9). Just think of this. One person is planning to do evil and at the same time one person decides to do good to the same person. Only a sovereign God could do that.

There is no doctrine more important for us to hold tight to right now like the doctrine of the sovereignty of God. There is no doctrine more precious when we see a world is running out of control than a doctrine that teaches God is in total sovereign control.

This doctrine of the sovereignty of God is a doctrine that we need to cling to in times of adversity, trial, afflictions and troubles. If there is one doctrine God's people need to grasp, it is the precious doctrine that the God of the Bible sovereignly rules over everything, including things we don't understand.

That lesson was one that David needed to learn and that lesson is vividly seen in this passage from the life of David. There is a powerful and comforting point to see from these verses. It does not matter how spiritual one is or how evil one is, **no one may escape the sovereign presence and influence of God and no one may escape the sovereign presence and influence of the Holy Spirit.**

A person may actually start out to do something evil and may ultimately come under the influencing power of the sovereignty of God and the Spirit of God to the point that they are dramatically changed and do just the opposite.

We certainly know from the life of the Apostle Paul that is true. He started out to track down and kill Christians and God stopped him and completely turned him around. He made him the Apostle to the whole grace age.

**GOD'S SPIRIT CAN SOVEREIGNLY AND POWERFULLY DIRECT AND INFLUENCE EVERYONE TO ACCOMPLISH THE WILL OF GOD.**

God's Spirit can sovereignly direct God's people to do God's will and at the same time prevent people from doing things according to God's will.

This is a remarkable passage of Scripture. There are three historical facts we want to observe:

**HISTORICAL FACT #1** – David runs away from Saul and runs to Samuel. **19:18**

David fled to Ramah, which was only about two miles away from Gibeah, where Saul was located. He could easily have made this in less than ½ hour. Now Samuel had not been in contact with Saul for quite a while. In fact, we have not heard anything about Samuel in Saul's life since the end of chapter 15, where Samuel grieved over the disaster Saul had become.

Saul was on a personal vendetta to kill David. His goal was to track him down and execute him. In fact, David will be on the run from Saul for about the next 10 years. It is interesting to observe that many of the Psalms were written during this period of time and a critical theme of those Psalms is the sovereignty of God.

David's theology developed in trials. He came to understand that God was His sovereign refuge, defense and protection. He believed that God sovereignly was above all and ruled over all.

Now when David found himself in this horrible life-threatening situation, the first thing he did was to flee to Samuel. He does a very smart thing here. Samuel was the godliest man on the face of the earth and this was a very wise thing for him to do. Had Saul consulted Samuel first, he would not have ended up the disaster that he had become.

There is a good lesson to learn here and that is when we find ourselves under attack, we do not want to run to a bunch of spiritual deadbeats for help; we need to run to the Lord. We need to be around people who know the Word and love the Lord.

According to **verse 18**, when David told Samuel all that happened, the first thing Samuel did was take David and go to Naioth. It probably did not shock Samuel that Saul was such a spiritual disaster. What would have shocked him is if David had told him he was really living his life for the Lord.

There are some people that you know who do not surprise you when you hear they have gone further deep into their cesspool of sin. The surprise would be they got serious about God and His word.

Well Samuel took David to Naioth. The word "Naioth" is one that refers to a dwelling or settlement, as in a college.

This place was located in Ramah (**19:20**). Most are of the opinion that this was a compound type school or college for the prophets. Some believe this was the very place that Samuel had once taken Saul (I Sam. 9:22).

This may be a place where prophets were trained and Samuel was in charge of the prophets. We do learn from **verse 20** that Samuel was in charge and he may have been like the president of the school.

In the New Testament age, the training of young people preparing for ministry has pretty much been turned over to theological schools. But as we carefully search the New Testament, it would appear to me that the plan of God was that people be carefully trained in the church, not in a school. Had the church taken its responsibility seriously to carefully teach the books of the Bible and the doctrines, things would be much better.

One of the highest compliments of this ministry, in my opinion, was given by a person who no longer goes to this church. The person said, "If I wanted a Bible Education, I would go to a school, not the church." This person was going to a church that featured a lot of stuff, but not careful study of God's word. That is the job of the church.

Samuel took David to Naioth. Now why did Samuel take David to this place?

**Reason #1** - It would be a relatively safe place of refuge - safer than Saul or Samuel's house.

**Reason #2** - It would be a place for David to grow and gain spiritual strength - refresh his spiritual life.

**Reason #3** - It would be a place that featured the presence and power of God.

Being in a place that features the presence and power of God is never to be taken lightly. It is a place that can stop evil in its tracks.

People who are in turmoil need to flee to church, not from church.

**HISTORICAL FACT #2** – Saul learns where David is and sends messengers to get David.

**19:19-21**

These are critical verses. Saul learns exactly where David is and he sent his people to get him. That is their assignment and that is their mission and goal. That is what they set out to do. Saul sent these messengers to kill David at his house and that didn't work, so he sent them again to kill him where he was staying.

Ask this question: who actually permits Saul to learn where David is staying? It is God. God in His sovereignty is letting Saul learn this because God has a sovereign plan in all of this.

God was going to sovereignly permit Saul to send a delegation of people to try to capture David. God was actually permitting this to happen, but they would never be able to capture David. So God is showing David that He is protecting him and God is showing David's enemies that He is protecting him.

According to **verse 20** they saw "the company of the prophets" prophesying at Naioth. We don't know much about these prophets, but they were there prophesying. At the end of **verse 20** we learn that the men Saul sent actually came under the power of the Spirit of God and the word of God and they began to prophesy.

These men are not looking to do this. They are totally out of touch with God's word and will and are out to kill David, but God's Spirit intervenes and does exactly what He sovereignly wants to do. God's Spirit not only prevents them from taking David, He causes them to prophesy.

We know that the Spirit of God has a restraining ministry and actually holds back evil from happening (II Thess. 2:7). That same Spirit also at times does not restrain (Rev. 9:20-21). This whole matter is under the sovereignty of God.

According to **verse 21**, three times Saul sent men to get David and three times the Holy Spirit stopped them and they started prophesying.

We do not learn what they were prophesying here. It may be that they were prophesying about how God would not allow the wicked to succeed. Perhaps how God had removed Saul and would raise up David. No matter what they were prophesying, they were prophesying and were under the influence of the power of the Spirit of God, when they were not even looking to be under that influence.

I truly believe that one of the best things we can do is to get people to come to church because when they come to church that preaches the word, they come into the presence and under the power of the Holy Spirit. When they go to a place where God's Spirit is at work, they come under the convicting power of God and they will not be able to escape it.

That is what happened to these men of Saul. They had the goal of capturing and even killing David and the Spirit of God stopped them dead in their tracks.

**HISTORICAL FACT #3** – Saul goes after David personally and he ends up under the Sovereign power of the Holy Spirit. **19:22-24**

Keep in mind that Saul is demonic. He is not right with God and David is right with God. This is not just some personality clash. One is walking close with God and the other isn't.

Well Saul decided that he would go to get David himself. There are three facts we learn here:

**Fact #1** - Saul goes to Secu where he learns of the location of Samuel and David. **19:22**

It is not known exactly where Secu is located, but apparently it contained a great well which was well-known at the time. It was obviously some landmarked place.

When Saul got there, he asked where Samuel and David were. He was informed that they were at Naioth in Ramah. So he was informed that he is at the school of the prophets with Samuel.

Now God could have prevented Saul from learning about this. He could have turned the minds of everyone so that no one would know where they were.

But God had a different sovereign plan and strategy in view. He let Saul learn where David was so that Saul would go there so His Spirit could stop him.

**Fact #2** - Saul moves toward Naioth and comes under the influence of the Holy Spirit. **19:23**

Now Saul is probably traveling with several armed men whose goal it is to find David and kill him. But Saul is going to be stopped by the Sovereign power of God and the Sovereign power of God's Spirit.

As soon as Saul started to move toward Naioth, he came under the influence of the Holy Spirit. There was not a thing he could do to stop this. Saul had no power to thwart what God's Spirit would sovereignly do. Saul actually started prophesying.

Keep in mind that Saul is demonic, but demons are no match for God. God just completely overrules and permits His Spirit to come upon Saul.

**Fact #3** - Saul is completely humiliated by the power of the Holy Spirit. **19:24**

Keep in mind that Saul's goal is going to Naioth to proudly and arrogantly kill David. That is his goal. He is led by demons, but those demons are subject to the sovereignty of God.

It is fascinating what happens here. The Holy Spirit caused the Satanic Saul to strip off his clothes and lie down naked all day and night. This is supposed to be a stately king and he is stark naked prophesying. What we have here is God's sovereignty ruling over bizarre behavior. Here is the king of Israel totally and completely humiliated and lying naked on the ground because the sovereignty of God's Spirit put him there.

Obviously the people saw this because they said Saul is like one of the prophets.

God's Spirit can sovereignly accomplish what God wants Him to accomplish with anyone at any time.

Saul tried to kill David by having him fight Philistines and David kept winning.

Saul tried to kill David by throwing his spear and he kept missing.

Saul tried to order David killed and David was rescued by the words of Jonathan.

Saul again ordered David killed and David was rescued by the actions of Michal.

Saul sent men three times to kill David with Samuel, and David was rescued by the Sovereign work of God's Spirit.

Saul himself went to kill David with Samuel, and David was rescued by the Sovereign work of God's Spirit.

Do you see a pattern here? Saul cannot kill David because David is sovereignly protected by God.

We are living in a time when we need to know this. God's people are sovereignly protected by God and even if the most powerful people in the world are out to destroy us, they cannot touch us. Let us live and rest in the truth that God is our fortress and our strength in times of trouble. We can trust in Him and His sovereignty.