

an essay:

ON THE HEARTS OF SAUL VERSUS DAVID

Robert Baral
2/27/2007 AD

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION

II. THE FIRST SIN OF SAUL

III. THE SECOND SIN OF SAUL

IV. THE HAUGHTY AND IMPENITENT RESPONSE OF SAUL'S HEART

V. THE FIRST SIN OF DAVID

VI. THE SECOND SIN OF DAVID

VII. THE HUMBLE AND PENITENT RESPONSE OF DAVID'S HEART

VIII. IN CONCLUSION

IX. REFERENCES

I. INTRODUCTION

Here we will look briefly at the careers of Saul versus David, the first and second kings of the united monarchy of ancient Israel, as recorded in The Scriptures. Both men were anointed by GOD through the prophet Samuel to rule of His people. Both men committed grievous sins against GOD and man, profoundly failing each in their turn in keeping fully The Law given to Israel by The LORD through Moses. Both men were confronted of their sins by a prophet of GOD. Each man in his turn handled that sin and its consequences before The Almighty in profoundly different ways, which reflects the contents of their hearts and the nature of their characters.

II. THE FIRST SIN OF SAUL

In I SAMUEL 15:10-11 we find the bitter words of The Almighty coming to the prophet Samuel, who had at GOD's directive anointed Saul as Israel's first king: "Then came the word of The LORD unto Samuel, saying, It repenteth Me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following Me, and hath not performed My Commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto The LORD all night."¹ Why did The Almighty grieve for having made Saul king over Israel? Did not The Creator of All Things know that Saul would harden his heart from following The Law which He had decreed? Certainly He did! But in His grace, GOD gave Saul the opportunity to prove what was in his heart.

So after Saul had lead the Israelites to victory over the Amalekites, he had yet spared their king, many of their people and much of their wealth – all of which he had taken to himself as tribute – in direct violation of his Divine commission to utterly wipe these heathen people from The Land. So Saul justified his actions to the prophet Samuel upon his arrival in I SAMUEL 15. He offers up the unconvincing words to the prophet in verse 13, "Blessed be thou of The LORD: I have performed the commandment of The LORD!"² The prophet asks sarcastically, "Do you think I have no eyes to see with, nor ears to hear with? If you have done as The Almighty commanded of you, why then do I

¹ KJV, I SAMUEL 15:10-11.

² KJV, I SAMUEL 15:13.

hear all these animals of the Amalekites bellowing in my ears, Saul? And why does the king of this wicked heathen nation kneel before you in your tent, Saul?” Now Saul is confronted, having first directly disobeyed the direct orders of GOD, now shifts the blame to the people whom he was charged to lead, “And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.”³

And what was Saul’s response? Did he have a heavy heart for his sins and earnestly seek to repent, that he might be forgiven by The LORD? No. What the heart of Saul could not do was to obey GOD fully and completely with a total love for Him, but instead loved himself and the glory of the world more. Therefore Samuel rebukes Saul in verse , “...Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king!”⁴

At these words, a man who truly loved GOD with all his heart, mind and soul would have accepted the judgement of The Almighty, but Saul did not. Instead he compounded his disobedience, deceit and denial of responsibility by offering up excuses for his sins and hoping to retain the throne over Israel for his own glory. He replies in verse 24, “...I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of The LORD, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice.”⁵ Saul did not grieve because he offended the heart of GOD, but because he feared in his own heart the loss of the applaud of men.

III. THE SECOND SIN OF SAUL

In I SAMUEL 28, when Saul could see the approaching day when, as the prophet Samuel prophesied, the throne over Israel slipping from his hands, he sinned still further.

³ KJV, I SAMUEL 15:15.

⁴ KJV, I SAMUEL 15:22-23.

Samuel had before this anointed David to be the next king over Israel and had since died. Saul did not here seek the counsel and judgements of The LORD, but instead sought the counsel and judgements of the witch of Endor! As the armies of the heathen Philistines gathered to war against Israel once again, no doubt Saul felt his oncoming demise, for The Almighty did not answer him.

IV. THE HAUGHTY AND IMPENITENT RESPONSE OF SAUL'S HEART

I SAMUEL 28:16-18 records the awful words from the spirit of the dead prophet Samuel, "...Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing The LORD is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy? ...for The LORD hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, even to David: Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the LORD, nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the LORD done this thing unto thee this day!"⁶ Saul's desperate trust was not in The LORD, but in divinations and witchcraft, which lied at the very core of his heart. Therefore again, as I SAMUEL 15:23 observes, "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry ...!"⁷

V. THE FIRST SIN OF DAVID

King David was not a perfect saint, and he also sinned against The LORD and his fellow Israelite. David saw the wife of his servant Uriah bathing on her rooftop from his palace and, desiring her in the lust of his flesh, abused his royal power to compel the woman to be brought to her. II SAMUEL 11:3-5 records David's deed of fornication and adultery: "And David sent and enquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bathsheba, ...the wife of Uriah the Hittite? And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house. And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, I am with child."⁸

⁵ KJV, I SAMUEL 15:24.

⁶ KJV, I SAMUEL 28:16-18.

⁷ KJV, I SAMUEL 15:23.

⁸ KJV, II SAMUEL 11:3-5.

VI. THE SECOND SIN OF DAVID

Next David attempts to conceal his sexual sins with the wife of Uriah by calling him into his presence and feigning friendship with him, hoping to convince him with false fellowship, flattery and the fruit of the vine to go home afterwards and lie with his wife in their marital bed. But Uriah was a steadfast servant of GOD and the king, for he would not allow himself the pleasures of the love of his wife Bathsheba while GOD's honour and the comfort of the people of Israel suffered. II SAMUEL 11:11 records, "And Uriah said unto David, The Ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents; and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields; shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? as thou livest, and as thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing!"⁹

Therefore David compounds his sins of abuse of his kingly power, his adulterous fornication with his servant's wife, his false friendship and deceit with the ultimate sin – the murder of Uriah, that he might cover up his sin before Israel and take Bathsheba to be one of his wives! So David's iniquity was piled on top of iniquity by his own hand. II SAMUEL 11:14-15 records next the king's brazen plot, "And it came to pass in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah. And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die."¹⁰ It being done as King David instructed, Uriah died in battle as a faithful servant of GOD, Israel and the king. David then took Bathsheba to be a wife and thought the matter hidden from both GOD and men.

VII. THE HUMBLE AND PENITENT RESPONSE OF DAVID'S HEART

King David was confronted by the prophet of Nathan, sent by GOD, of his sins. Nathan reported an account of a poor man who owned but one poor lamb, which he treated with great love and care. A cruel rich man who owned many sheep, desiring to offer up a meal of a lamb to a visitor, took this one poor lamb of this poor man and slew it. II SAMUEL 12:5-7 records, "And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man;

⁹ KJV, II SAMUEL 11:11.

¹⁰ KJV, II SAMUEL 11:14-15.

and he said to Nathan, As The LORD liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die... And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man...!"¹¹ Nathan pronounces the awful judgement upon David for his sins in II SAMUEL 12:11: "Thus saith The LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun."¹²

And further, the prophet pronounces that, because David had given the enemies of GOD cause to blaspheme His Holy Name, the first child that would be born to David and Bathsheba would die. But here Saul and David diverge. David confessed from his heart in verse 13, "...I have sinned against the LORD..."¹³ Therefore when the child was born, as was sick, David prayed and fasted earnestly that the child's life be spared. But when the child shortly after its birth died, David ceased his mourning and accepted the judgement of The LORD. In accepting GOD's punishment for his sins, David wrote PSALM 51, in which he beseeches GOD – not to spare him from the consequences of his sins – but to purge his heart from them. In PSALM 51 we see a truly humbled and penitent heart that loved GOD. This was a heart that grieved, not because of the finding out and consequences of sin, but because of the sin itself which offended GOD. Therefore David's heart cried out to The Almighty in PSALM 51:10-11, "Create in me a clean heart, O GOD; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy Presence; and take not Thy HOLY SPIRIT from me!"¹⁴

VIII. IN CONCLUSION

Saul's heart, when confronted with his sins, sought to deny both his sins and the responsibility for those sins. His heart was not a heart that loved GOD first, but rather one that loved himself and the allures of the world first. David's heart, when confronted with his sins, confessed both his sins and the responsibility for those sins. While Saul cried out in rebellion and witchcraft to the dead spirits of men, David cried out in submission and

¹¹ KJV, II SAMUEL 12:5-7.

¹² KJV, II SAMUEL 12:11.

¹³ KJV, II SAMUEL 12:12.

¹⁴ KJV, PSALM 51:10-11.

humility to The Spirit of The Living GOD. David cries out to The Almighty with a broken spirit and a contrite heart for forgiveness. David seeks everlasting joy of salvation in The LORD and not the passing acclaims of men.

The shadow of The LORD's mercy that David sought - to be washed of sin and to receive a new heart of righteousness – is what we may receive fully through the atoning Body and Blood given for us by The Messiah Himself. Saint Paul writes in that GOD is great in mercy and love towards us, ever ready to forgive us our sins when we confess and repent at The Cross of our Lord JESUS CHRIST. So Paul echoes in EPHESIANS 2:4-6 the heartfelt desires of David in PSALM 51: “But GOD, Who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with CHRIST, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in CHRIST JESUS!”¹⁵ Therefore may we cry out from our hearts with David to The Throne of Grace, “Create in me a clean heart, O GOD; and renew a right spirit within me!”¹⁶ In The Name of GOD The Father, and The Son and The Holy Spirit, AMEN.

¹⁵ KJV, EPHESIANS 2:4-6.

¹⁶ KJV, PSALM 51:10.

IX. REFERENCES

“King James Version [Bible].” Bible Works 6. Norfolk, Virginia. 1992-2003.