

AN EVIL SPIRIT FROM THE LORD TROUBLETH THEE

1 SAMUEL CHAPTERS SIXTEEN AND SEVENTEEN

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~ Most people have heard the story about David slaying a giant with a slingshot. It's generally presented as a children's story. They'll usually say something like "so, God was with David" – and that's about the extent of the lesson. Well, that's not even half the story, friends. Remember, Luther said, "*... one with God is a majority.*" David was bigger than Goliath – but not because David was a good aim. When we go into a spiritual battle today in this world, friends, you better make sure that (a) God is with you and (b) you know how to use your weapon. You'll never win a single battle without both of those accounted for. I see many people claim power over Satan and asserting that they'll defeat the devil – and all I can do is pray for them. They don't study the Bible. That talk is woefully foolish. We're no match for the devil. Satan will defeat us every time we fight in our own power.

Our Spiritual Safari begins examining a new subject altogether in this leg of our expedition through the entire Word of God. David will walk on the stage of our Bible study in this report, and we'll finally meet God's true man. We've spent a whole lot of type in our previous several reports examining King Saul. Now, we're going to place David, the chosen man of God, in contrast to Satan's man, Saul. In our last report, we saw the complete rejection of Saul by the Lord. God provided Saul several opportunities – not just one – and Saul repeatedly demonstrated he was completely and willfully disobedient to the commands of God. Even so, God gave Saul one chance after another to turn to Him. The Lord has given other men several opportunities to turn to Him, and they have made good – but not Saul. Of course, God didn't have to wait for the results – He already knew in chapter nine what Saul was going do; but Saul needed to know, and Samuel needed to know. Remember, Samuel loved Saul, and Samuel deeply regretted seeing him set aside by God. Also, the people who had chosen Saul needed to know what type of man Saul really was. So, God let it play out.

Today, you and I need to know what type of men we are; so, the Lord tests us to determine if we will call upon the Spirit of God or continue to attempt to work things out our own way. We are told very definitely that whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth. That was God's method at the time in which we are studying, and that's His method today. It will be His method throughout history. If you aren't being chastened by the Lord, then there is something radically wrong with your relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ, friends. Further, we are told that the man who endureth testing is blessed of the Lord. I know most self-professing believers don't like that truth one little bit – but – there you have it. See, there comes a time when we have to ask ourselves if we really believe the Bible is the Word of God – or not – and this report will certainly be one of those times, I promise you that. When the tested man endures to the end, he shall receive the crown of life. How do we endure to the end? Keep reading. That is what the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

We witnessed extreme surgery prescribed by God in His command to Saul to totally exterminate the Amalekites in our last report. Most find that as shocking to contemplate as do I. Well, Amalek was a son of Esau, and the Amalekites fought the children of Israel, nearly destroying them as they attempted to enter the Promised Land. God promised He would fight Amalek from generation to generation and He would finally judge them altogether. Well, after about five hundred years, God appointed Saul to execute His judgment on Amalek, because they had continuously turned their back on God. Saul disobeyed God and spared Agag. Agag was of the royal family of the Amalekites, of course; and, if we move ahead about five hundred years, we find a man named Haman in the Book of Esther, chapter three at verse one - and Haman was an Agagite. If Saul had obeyed God, many Israelites would have been spared throughout their history. Obedience to God just happens to be important to Him.

See, friends, God knows the end from the beginning, and He knows what's best in any immediate situation. You and I are in no position to make any suggestions whatsoever to the Lord concerning anything. Period. God doesn't take advice from you – or me – and we have no right to sit in judgment of what God decides to do. In fact, God sits in judgment over us. So, with that, God sets Saul aside and chooses David to succeed him; and

we see God sending Samuel to Bethlehem to deliver the bad news and, as we begin reading, to anoint David king of Israel. It really hurt Samuel to have to do this. I think that makes this account all the more impressive. God will have trouble with David, too, as we know – but not deliberate evil willful rebellion as we see in Saul. After all, doesn't God have trouble with all of us? What kind of trouble is the Lord speaking to you about in your life from this passage? ~

XVI

1 And the LORD 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.

2 And Samuel said, How can I go? if Saul hear it, he will kill me. And the LORD said, Take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the LORD.

3 And call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will shew thee what thou shalt do: and thou shalt anoint unto me him whom I name unto thee.

~ Saul was a desperate man by this time in his life, and he would have killed Samuel in a heartbeat if he had known what was going on in the kingdom. God isn't giving Samuel advanced inside information, though. I think God withheld the name to protect Samuel. So, Samuel travels to Bethlehem and over to the house of Jesse.

Throughout this entire section of Scripture, beginning in chapter nine concerning Saul, we have been and will further consider several outstanding Biblical principles. In our most previous report, Samuel instructed us that to obey is better than sacrifice. It's better to listen to the Lord today as opposed to asking forgiveness tomorrow, friends. The only way we can demonstrate we love the Lord is through our obedience of faith in keeping His commands. What we say in a testimony is, candidly, perfectly meaningless.

See, the Christian life is a life of reality – it's not a put on – and it's not a pretense. We must have a reality evidenced by obedience or, make a note, we will be judged *IN THIS LIFE*. Many great men have been set aside by God in His service throughout history – due to disobedience. When God looks at us, He is not looking to see what we are doing – He is looking to see where our hearts are concerning His Son. God is an interior renovator. God probably isn't going to give you an external make-over – and there's a good chance He won't physically heal you, either, by the way.

Well, God isn't allowing Samuel to choose the man this time, as He tells Samuel not to even consider the outward appearance. Remember, ninety percent of what Samuel saw in Saul was physical – we considered that several reports ago. God is going to pick the king this time – not Samuel – and He will do it based on the heart of His man, David. We can all thank God that He sees our heart, too. You and I, even in Christian circles, are naturally prejudiced to judge people based on outwards appearances. Another way we judge them is by their pocketbooks and wallets. Luxury cars and fine homes deceive people into believing the owner is smart, you know. Well, unfortunately, status is almost *ALWAYS* an indicator of bad things. Again, I know my teaching isn't popular, because the sound doctrine of the apostles from the Word of God isn't popular with the world, friends. It's that simple. I get it; and got it – a *LONG* time ago! God is telling Samuel to ignore the outward appearance of David as we move along....

4 And Samuel did that which the LORD spake, and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, Comest thou peaceably?

5 And he said, Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice unto the LORD: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice. And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice.

6 And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the LORD'S anointed is before him.

7 But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not

as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

8 Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this.

9 Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by. And he said, Neither hath the LORD chosen this.

10 Again, Jesse made seven of his sons to pass before Samuel. And Samuel said unto Jesse, The LORD hath not chosen these.

11 And Samuel said unto Jesse, Are here all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep. And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him: for we will not sit down till he come hither.

~ Most fundamental conservative scholars believe David was about sixteen years old. I think he could have been younger than that. Here is a little boy keeping sheep whose father never would have imagined being the one Samuel was looking for. Well, Samuel wasn't looking for David – God was looking for David. I think Jesse was sure it *HAD* to be one of the other seven boys, too, by the way. I also find it interesting Samuel isn't about to sit down and rest or eat until the work of the Lord is completed. Samuel was on a mission to anoint the next king of Israel, and that was exactly what he was going to do before he did anything else....

12 And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he.

~ "Ruddy" means "red-headed" – and David had that type of a temper, too! David was good-looking in spite of being a red-headed child. It seems the world gets everything and everyone that is beautiful today – and, quite frankly, I somewhat resent that fact. I don't know why God doesn't get more beautiful people and better talent for Himself. Of course, that would exclude me. Well, God does choose some beautiful people, but He isn't

looking at their appearances. God knew something about David you and I have a hard time realizing, and that is this: though David failed on the human plane several times, his faith was a faith that never failed. David loved God and he trusted God - and desired to walk with Him always. Saul, not so much. We will see God take David and whip him within an inch of his life, too. Interestingly, I don't find David ever crying out a complaint - or even whimpering - about the beatings God gave him. See, David wanted fellowship with God more than he wanted anything else. That made David a man after God's own heart....

13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.

14 But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him.

15 And Saul's servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit from God troubleth thee.

16 Let our lord now command thy servants, which are before thee, to seek out a man, who is a cunning player on an harp: and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well.

~ Alright, this is going to be impossible for some of you dear readers to digest: I believe Saul was completely overtaken by Satan at this time. When it says an "evil spirit from the Lord" – friends, you can just write this down: that's the devil. Satan is a created intelligence from God. Saul's servants noted a mental malady at this time, too. I think everyone in the land knew Saul had a severe spiritual sickness. People say music has power to tame the savage beast – well, you better believe it does. This is where the auditions began to find the best musician in Israel. Of course, David was an unusually multi-talented man; and that landed him in the palace – in the place of extreme danger. Saul is forsaken of God, and David, who has now been anointed to replace Saul, is brought in to help calm him down. That's precious. The Lord's humor is stunning....

17 And Saul said unto his servants, Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring him to me.

18 Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, that is cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the LORD is with him.

19 Wherefore Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, and said, Send me David thy son, which is with the sheep.

20 And Jesse took an ass laden with bread, and a bottle of wine, and a kid, and sent them by David his son unto Saul.

21 And David came to Saul, and stood before him: and he loved him greatly; and he became his armourbearer.

22 And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favour in my sight.

23 And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

XVII

1 Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle, and were gathered together at Shochoh, which belongeth to Judah, and pitched between Shochoh and Azekah, in Ephesdammim.

2 And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and pitched by the valley of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines.

3 And the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side: and there was a valley between them.

4 And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath, of Gath, whose height was six cubits and a span.

~ Goliath may very well be the most popular and familiar character in Scripture. Israel is at war again against the Philistines now. The Philistines are the perennial and perpetual enemy of Israel from here on throughout their history as a nation, too. They are in a stalemate and standoff. I don't think either side really wanted to fight, either.

Well, we know a cubit is eighteen inches, so Goliath was a literal monster of a man. That would stand him at about nine feet tall – and a span was about nine inches – so, he is nearly ten feet tall. This man is bigger than any modern professional athlete in football or basketball – or any other sport! It's no wonder the Philistines want to put the decisions for battle in the hands of Goliath....

5 And he had an helmet of brass upon his head, and he was armed with a coat of mail; and the weight of the coat was five thousand shekels of brass.

6 And he had greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders.

7 And the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam; and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron: and one bearing a shield went before him.

8 And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them, Why are ye come out to set your battle in array? am not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me.

9 If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us.

10 And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together.

11 When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid.

12 Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehemjudah, whose name was Jesse; and he had eight sons: and the man went among men for an old man in the days of Saul.

13 And the three eldest sons of Jesse went and followed Saul to the battle: and the names of his three sons that went to the battle were Eliab the firstborn, and next unto him Abinadab, and the third Shammah.

14 And David was the youngest: and the three eldest followed Saul.

15 But David went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem.

16 And the Philistine drew near morning and evening, and presented himself forty days.

17 And Jesse said unto David his son, Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched corn, and these ten loaves, and run to the camp to thy brethren;

18 And carry these ten cheeses unto the captain of their thousand, and look how thy brethren fare, and take their pledge.

19 Now Saul, and they, and all the men of Israel, were in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.

20 And David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and took, and went, as Jesse had commanded him; and he came to the trench, as the host was going forth to the fight, and shouted for the battle.

21 For Israel and the Philistines had put the battle in array, army against army.

22 And David left his carriage in the hand of the keeper of the carriage, and ran into the army, and came and saluted his brethren.

23 And as he talked with them, behold, there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, out of the armies of the Philistines, and spake according to the same words: and David heard them.

24 And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid.

25 And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come up: and it shall be, that the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel.

26 And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?

27 And the people answered him after this manner, saying, So shall it be done to the man that killeth him.

28 And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle.

29 And David said, What have I now done? Is there not a cause?

30 And he turned from him toward another, and spake after the same manner: and the people answered him again after the former manner.

31 And when the words were heard which David spake, they rehearsed them before Saul: and he sent for him.

32 And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine.

33 And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.

34 And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock:

35 And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him.

36 Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God.

37 David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee.

38 And Saul armed David with his armour, and he put an helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail.

39 And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them. And David put them off him.

~ David isn't about to use Saul's armor, because David wasn't trying to be someone he wasn't. What a lesson we have here! If God has called you to use a slingshot, friends, don't try picking up a sword! If God has called you to speak, then speak – but if God has called you to do something else, then you better make sure you're doing the thing the Lord has told you to do. I

should add you better do it His way, too. We have too many people today playing with spiritual swords who have no earthly idea how to use it. Others are trying to be spiritual safari guides, but they have no idea where they're going. All they ever end up doing is hurting themselves and getting everyone else lost. I think a slingshot is more appropriate for most people, by the way – but I digress, sort of.

Well, as we read on, don't think David took five stones in case he missed with the first one. David only needed one stone for Goliath. David had no intention of missing with his first shot. If you'll flip over to second Samuel chapter twenty-one at verse twenty-two, you'll notice Goliath had four sons. David knew those sons might come out to avenge their father; and he had a stone for each of them. Well, the battle is the Lord's in this ever-familiar story. It was God Who gave the victory, and He is the only reason Goliath was slain....

40 And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine.

41 And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the shield went before him.

42 And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he despised him: for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance.

43 And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.

44 And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field.

45 Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.

46 This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.

47 And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD'S, and he will give you into our hands.

48 And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine.

49 And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth.

50 So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David.

51 Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled.

52 And the men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines, until thou come to the valley, and to the gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim, even unto Gath, and unto Ekron.

53 And the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines, and they spoiled their tents.

54 And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem; but he put his armour in his tent.

55 And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said unto Abner, the captain of the host, Abner, whose son is this youth? And Abner said, As thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell.

56 And the king said, Enquire thou whose son the stripling is.

57 And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand.

58 And Saul said to him, Whose son art thou, thou young man? And David answered, I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Bethlehemite.

~ I trust we have picked up some marvelous spiritual lessons in this report, irrespective of how many times we have read this account in first Samuel. Some things can only be fully appreciated as adults, friends. As the difficulties of life continue to come at us fast and furious today, we need to be reminded again and again the battle is the Lord's. Today, as we engage in spiritual warfare, we only have two weapons: the Word of God and prayer! I encourage you learn to handle those two properly, correctly and completely; and allow God to win the battles for you ~