

David Spares Saul Again

I Samuel 26

Introduction:

- There many textual critics who see this as a duplication of chapter 24 and attempt to cast doubt on I Samuel among many other books
- Modern textual criticism has led to uncertainty in the Biblical Text
- “The ultimate text, if there ever was one that deserves to be so called, IS FOR EVER IRRECOVERABLE” (F.C. Conybeare, History of New Testament Criticism, 1910, p. 129).
- Modern textual criticism has resulted in “the tyranny of the experts.”
- “The critical point of departure had been made [with the ascendancy of the Westcott-Hort Text]. No longer was the majority of the Greek manuscripts, preserved by the churches, the basis for recognizing the original reading. From now on, the learned professors would deliver the Christian world from their ‘blindness and ignorance.’ By their scholarly expertise they would deliver to the churches a purer text of the N.T. Dr. Machen called this kind of scholarship ‘the tyranny of the experts.’ Now the ‘experts’ would rule over the churches and decide for them which variant reading was the acceptable one. After Westcott and Hort, the Pandora’s box had been opened. As a result, all the evils of German rationalism began to tear at the foundation of the Faith, the Holy Scriptures. This ‘wrestling’ of the Scriptures has continued on until this day in both the higher and lower forms of textual criticism. The situation today involves almost as many different texts of the Greek N.T. as there are scholars. Each ‘scholar’ decides for himself what he will or will not accept as the Word of God. It comes down to two choices. We can accept the text handed down by the churches for nearly two thousand years or accept the findings of modern scholars, no two of which agree. If we go with the scholars, there is no one text that is accepted by all of them. Confusion reigns among the scholars. There is no standard” (Charles Turner)
- This sadly has opened the door for theological liberalism, given ammunition to enemies of God, and a decline in believing in the authority of the Scriptures in this generation

- Will we lord ourselves over the Bible or the other way around?
 - This chapter is identical to ch. 24, but there are differences. This should not pose any problems in our understanding of the Bible!
 - The people of the city of Ziph – had betrayed David’s whereabouts to Saul before (1 Samuel 23:19-23). Now they try to gain King Saul’s favor again, by helping Saul find David
 - Having three thousand chosen men of Israel with him, to seek David: This means Saul went back on his previous repentance shown in 1 Samuel 24:16-21. At that time David had opportunity to kill Saul, but did not take it. When David boldly demonstrated this to Saul, the king was greatly moved emotionally and publicly repented– but it didn’t last very long.
 - David sends out spies and they are able locate Saul
- I. (1Sa 26:5-12) David’s second opportunity to kill Saul.
 - a. So David arose and came to the place where Saul had encamped: The last time David and Saul met David was simply hiding from Saul and Saul happened upon the place where David hid. This time David actively sought Saul out.
 - b. David, with a trusted assistant (Abishai the son of Zeruiah), secretly crept down to where Saul and Abner slept. With Saul’s spear stuck in the ground by his head and all asleep, Saul was completely vulnerable.
 - c. As with the last time David could have killed Saul (1 Samuel 24:4), David’s associates pointed out that this circumstance was not an accident but designed by God – and the design was for David to take righteous vengeance upon Saul.
 - d. Poetic justice: the spear used to kill Saul would be the king’s own spear, stuck in the ground by his head. The spear that was thrown at David in attempted murder before (1 Samuel 18:10-11 and 1Sa 19:9-10) would now be used as the instrument of the Lord’s righteous judgment. It all might have seemed to be perfectly given from the hand of God.
 - e. This another episode in learning to discern God’s will

- f. Restraint and patience are shown (1 Sam 24:6, 10) but here it is deeper. David learned an important lesson in ch. 25 when God struck down Nabal (same Hebrew word used in 26:10)
 - g. Who can guess how God will work? Is 40:12-14, Eph 3:20- Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,
 - h. Destroy him not- It wasn't that David thought Saul was right. David knew more than anyone that Saul was deeply in sin. But David knew that even a sinning Saul was still the anointed king over Israel (1 Samuel 10:1). That would only change when God changed it; David would not stretch out his hand against the Lord's anointed. Scriptural principles should guide our decisions
 - i. David would not kill Saul, but he did take the spear and the cruse of water as evidence that he had the opportunity
- II. David Confronts Saul- v. 17-20
- a. Are you not a man? And who is like you in Israel? Why then have you not guarded your lord the king? In this vivid scene, David implied that he cared more for Saul's life than Abner did.
 - b. See where the king's spear is, and the jug of water that was by his head: This dramatic evidence – like the evidence of the corner of Saul's robe in 1 Samuel 24:11 – was undeniable proof that David had the opportunity to kill Saul, but did not do it.
 - c. V. 17-20- This phrasing shows that David spoke to Saul with genuine humility
 - d. David makes a point with Saul's spear!
 - e. They have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord, saying, "Go, serve other gods." David revealed his own heart's struggle under the pressure from Saul's relentless persecution. What hurt David the most was that he couldn't go to the house of God and openly be with the people of God, living his life after the Lord as he longed to
 - i. Dispensational worship- not based on location today!

ii. We exceed David in our privileges, but not in our appetite! Do we crave after God's presence like David? Ps 63:1-2; Ps 42:1- As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.

f. He neither begs his life from Saul, nor offers one argument to prevail upon him to desist [stop] from his felonious attempts, but refers the whole matter to God, as the judge and vindicator of oppressed innocence." (Clarke)

III. Saul Apologizes to David

- a. I have sinned: The last time Saul was in this situation he was overcome with emotion. His feelings seemed right but his life was not changed
- b. For I will harm you no more... Indeed I have played the fool and erred exceedingly: It seems – both from the “feel” of the verse and Saul's subsequent actions – that Saul isn't repentant but only; bitterly realizes that David got the better of him again
- c. G. Campbell Morgan on I have played the fool: “In these words we have a perfect autobiography. In them the complete life-story of this man is told.”
- d. (1Sa 26:22-25) David explains to Saul why he did not kill him.
- e. V. 24- So let my life be valued much in the eyes of the Lord: David wanted to fulfill his call to be the next king of Israel. But he wanted both the throne and the blessing of God. He refused to take the throne through murder or rebellion
- f. David went on his way: Saul invited David to return (1 Samuel 26:21) but David did not take the invitation. He waited to see if the repentant words Saul spoke showed a genuine repentance in his life
- g. They both depart never to see each other again

Conclusion:

- We desire victory- with God's blessings!
- How's your appetite for God?
- Contrast: David vs. Saul
 - Carnal vs. spiritual
 - True repentance, insincere
 - Trusting God, trusting self