

## What's the Message – Lesson 53

In today's lesson we look into the relationship of Saul and David, and see the price of hate.

Greetings in the name of Jesus, our Savior. We pray today that the Lord would guide you to see in this lesson not only the futility of hate, but that hate poisons the person that holds it, to his or her detriment. Amen.

Last time we saw David anointed to be the future king of Israel, and defeating the giant, Goliath. The ensuing victory was credited to David and the public sang his praises. This did not set well with Saul, and chapter 18, verse 9 tells us *“And Saul eyed David from that day on.”*

Originally David had been brought into the service of Saul to comfort him with soothing music when Saul's mind was tormented, but now even that did not work. Twice Saul tried to throw his spear at David and kill him, but David eluded the spear. Next, Saul put David out into his army as a commander in the hope that the Philistines would kill David for him. But instead, David had great success in his battles, and his fame and popularity grew.

So Saul tried a completely different tactic. He gave his younger daughter, Michal, to David to be his wife, thinking that now David would be compelled to continue to fight for Saul against the Philistines. He asked David to give him, as a wedding present, proof of the death of 100 Philistines, again thinking that David would be killed in the attempt. But David brought back evidence of the death of 200 Philistines.

When that attempt failed, Saul tried to get his son Jonathan to kill David. But instead, Jonathan pleaded David's case. After another great victory of David and his troops against the Philistines, Saul plotted to kill him in his bed at night. But David's wife, Michal, learned of the plot and warned David to get away. She put pillows in the bed to make it look like someone was there, and when Saul's men came to do the dirty deed, they soon realized they had been deceived.

Now the great chase begins, with David moving from one hideout to another, sometimes just a step ahead of Saul. Sometimes those that had helped David suffered the wrath of Saul, and even priests were killed. The behavior of David toward Saul, however, was a complete contrast.

Once, when David was hiding in the wilderness of Engedi, Saul went into a cave to relieve himself. David and some of his men were in that same cave, hiding in the darkness. David stealthily snuck up behind Saul and carefully cut off a piece of his robe. After Saul had left the cave, David came out and called to him with these words from chapter 24 of first Samuel, beginning at verse 11: *See, my father, see the skirt of your robe in my hand; for by the fact that I cut off the skirt of your robe, and did not kill you, you may know and see that there is no wrong or treason in my hands. I have not sinned against you, though you hunt my life to take it. When David had finished speaking these words to Saul, Saul said to David, You are more righteous than I; for you have repaid me good, whereas I have repaid you evil.* Then Saul departed, and a truce was in effect.

But the truce was not to last. Once again Saul gathered his army and went to find David. Once again, David slipped into the camp of Saul in the darkness of night, while Saul lay sleeping, with a spear stuck in the ground at his head, and a jar of water beside it. And once again, David removed these items and left the camp. Verse 12 of chapter 26 tells us:

*No man saw it, or knew it, nor did any awake; for they were all asleep, because a deep sleep from the Lord had fallen upon them.* Then David went to the top of the mountain and called out to Saul and his army that was led by Abner; and said to him: *Abner, why have you not kept watch over your lord the king? . . . Now see where the king's spear is, and the jar of water that was at his head.*

Saul recognized David's voice, and said: *I have done wrong; return, my son David, for I will no more do you harm, because my life was precious in your sight this day; behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly.* They departed from one another, but David

realized that Saul would eventually catch up with him unless he went away and lived outside of Israel.

David was able to convince one of the Philistine kings that he could be of use to them, and was permitted to live in one of their cities. But he was not allowed to go with the Philistine army in an attack against Saul and the Israelites. Chapters 28 through 31 of 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel give a more complete story of this event, but the outcome was that Israel was defeated, and Saul and his sons were all killed.

And that Teacher, is a greatly condensed summary of chapters 18 through 31 of 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel. One thing that sticks out to me is that Saul was certainly persistent in his pursuit of David. But as intriguing as this story may be, I still must ask: what's the message for us?

The message is the statement that you made in the introduction to this lesson, and in the prayer you gave. These chapters and verses show us the lesson of the price of hate, and is a classic example of how hatred poisons the one who carries it. Saul was filled with jealousy because he could see that Samuel was right, that the kingdom would be taken from him and given to another. And Saul saw clearly that "other" as being David. And he was persistent in the pursuit of David with the intent of removing him, just as you said. But see what a wasted life Saul led by doing this. Instead of doing his job as the one charged with the protection of Israel, he spent his time and his army in the pursuit of David. He was fighting against God's will, instead of keeping God's will and commands.

And we must ask ourselves, to what extent are we just like Saul? What perceived obstacle to our own goals do we chase after, wasting ourselves, our time and energy? Is hatred of another a part of our problem in life? If so, look to Saul for the lesson of the price to be paid. Then look to David for the example of love – love toward God, and respect for the authorities that He has established around us.

Next time we shall begin the study of the second book of Samuel, and some of the accomplishments – and failures – of David.