

Introduction: The toxic relationship of Saul and David, which began with Saul's inability to surrender his pride to God due to his self-centered heart; and, countered by David's heart for his covenant God, even after his failures, can be summed up by the first song on Bob Dylan's first album after he became a Christian: 'Gotta Serve Somebody' There are only two options as to whom we will serve: the devil or the Lord. *** In the new Testament, Paul says we become 'slaves' of that to which we yield ourselves: if we serve sin and the one who leads the whole world astray (Revelation 12:9), the result is death; but, if we serve God in the obedience of faith through the Lord Jesus Christ, according to the gospel given through the prophets of old (Romans 1:1-5), the result will be righteousness and life (Romans 6:16-22). *** In our study of the story of David, we are in the early years of a decade long struggle between Saul and the 'son of Jesse', whom he hates. In our first two passages in September, we saw Yahweh reject Saul as king and have Samuel anoint David as the new king (1 Samuel 13, 15, 16). At that time, Saul was in his mid-forties and David in his mid-teens. *** In his forty years as king, Saul never fully accepted and surrendered to God's will through the words of His prophet Samuel. At the time of today's encounter, David was in his early twenties and the people's favorite. This made Saul so jealous in his pride that he was determined to kill the 'son of Jesse'. *** In our passage, Saul learns through his Edomite servant officer that the high priest gave Goliath's sword to David. This will inflame the anger Saul is expressing over the lack of support from his soldiers, which he will take out on all who support God's chosen king, David. *** Years later, David wrote a psalm of faith about this very time in his life. It expresses his growing confidence that his God will indeed bring ruin on those who plot evil by both tearing them down and uprooting them.

I. Outcasts gather around David, he provides for his parents and is warned by Gad; Saul accuses his men of supporting David and chastens his son, an Edomite betrays the high priest. (1 Samuel 22:1-10)

A. Four hundred hurting, poor and distressed men come to David, he provides for his parents, and the prophet Gad tells him to go to Judah. (Verses 1-5)

1. Then David went from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam, then his brothers and all his father's family heard, and they went down to him there. (Verse 1)

David's family: Adullam was on a plain in the northeast corner of Judah near Saul's tribe of Benjamin.

When his older brothers, who disregarded him in the days of Goliath (1 Samuel 17:17-29), heard of Saul's hostility to their brother, they rallied around him with the rest of his family.

2. Then gathered together to him all distressed, and debtors, and discontented (bitter in soul); then he became (their) captain (prince), there were about four hundred men. (Verse 2)

Stressed, in debt and bitter: God's favorite people, those hurting, down and out, oppressed, poor and needy, gather together as David's rag-tag army, recognizing him as God's chosen king.

3. Then David went from there to Mizpeh of Moab and said to the king: Please, let my father and mother come out with thee until I know what God will do to me. (Verse 3)

David's parents: The people of Moab were Lot's descendants (Genesis 19:30-38). David considered that his parents were safer with them than with him due to Saul's murderous intentions.

4. Then he brought them to the king of Moab and they stayed with him all the time David was in the stronghold. (Verse 4)

David to stronghold: After taking care to protect his parents, David returned to his fortress stronghold somewhere in Judah, near Benjamin and Saul.

5. Then the prophet Gad said to David: Thou will not remain in the stronghold, thou must go and come into the land of Judah; then, David went and came into the forest of Hareth. (Verse 5)

Prophet Gad: God had His prophet tell David to move to another location deeper in Judah.

Application: Let us all be persuaded by God's Spirit to help hurting, poor and needy people, even when we are being pursued by wicked people, because this is obedience to God's will in His Word. If we act like David, we will be empowered by God's grace through faith in David's great descendant Jesus.

B. When Saul comes to know David's location, he accuses his men of implicitly supporting 'the son of Jesse' and he is upset with his son; then, an Edomite servant betrays the high priest, Ahimelech. (Verses 6-10)

1. Then Saul heard that (the location of) David, and the men with him, had been made known; Saul is sitting at Gibeah (in the hills of Judah) under a tamarisk tree in Ramah (the height) and his spear (is) in his hand, and all his servants were stationed about him. (Verse 6)

David's location made known: Saul receives intelligence about David's location. Saul is in Judah because tamarisk trees grow in semi-arid regions like Judah. Saul is resting, but armed and ready.

2. Saul said to his servants: Y'all must hear, now! (Men of) Benjamin, all of you alike: will the 'son of Jesse' give to all of you fields and vineyards, and will he make (all of you) commanders of thousands and hundreds? (Verse 7)

Saul's anger: He never uses David's name, but rather the derogatory term of being a child of his lowly father. He challenges his leaders if they will be better off with David as king.

This self-centered and proud man is about to 'go off' on his own men for implicitly helping David.

3. Because all of you have conspired against me; no one revealed to me when my son cut (a covenant) with the ‘son of Jesse’; no one is grieving for me that my son has stirred up my servant (David) to lie in wait for me this day. (*Verse 8*)
- Men passive, son supports his enemy:** Saul is paranoid. As events will prove, David would do nothing to harm Saul. But he is angry at the passivity of his leaders and he overreacts to his son’s love and support for David. These are angry words for everyone, especially his own son.

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4. Then Doeg, the Edomite answered, he being stationed with Saul’s servants: I saw the ‘son of Jesse’ coming to Nōb, to Ahimelech to son of Ahitub. (*Verse 9*)
- Doeg:** Doeg’s name means anxious. This verb is used negatively by Isaiah because the anxiety of unbelieving Jews is causing them to lie (Isaiah 57:3-11), and positively by Jeremiah about those trusting in Yahweh not being anxious in drought because they are like trees planted by water (Jeremiah 17:7-8; see Psalm 1). But here an Edomite (from a nation Yahweh will destroy (Obadiah 1), is looking to gain favor with Saul by exposing God’s priest.
5. Furthermore, he inquired of Yahweh (for David) and gave him the sword of Goliath. (*Verse 10*)
- Betrays priest:** This Edomite betrays a priest to doubly ingratiate himself with Saul. He uses the contemptuous name for David and gives vital intelligence to Saul.
- Comment:** The stage is now set: Saul’s anger is now inflamed against a priest who helped his enemy in what he perceives to be rebellion. Stay tuned: we will see Saul’s wicked action next week.

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II. The introduction to David’s psalm is about the pride of mighty and strong people who reject God’s strong Love to their ruin. (*Psalm 52:1-5*)

- A. David’s psalm about this incident contrasts the evil pride of some mighty people and God’s strong, life-giving, life-changing Love. (*Verses 1-4*)
1. To the chief (musician): maskil to David: when Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul: David has come to the house of Ahimelech (the chief priest). (*Header*)
- Setting:** This header is considered to be the first two verses of the song in the Hebrew Bible. It was inspired by God to David about the incident we just considered.
2. Why do thou boast of evil, mighty man? / The steadfast Love of God (is) all day (long). (*Verse 1*)
- Contrast:** Will the proud, evil, mighty man Saul continue to boast evil against God, or will he change his mind (repent) and receive God’s strong life-giving, life changing Love? All who repent receive forgiveness from, and reconciliation to, God
3. Thou will plot destruction (with) thy tongue / as a sharp razor, (thou are) working deceit. (*Verse 2*)
- Tongue:** This evil man, Saul, is using the words of his tongue to cut his enemy as he is plotting to work deceitfully. James taught the tongue of the natural man is a fire that sets a forest ablaze and cannot be contained without the help of God, and apart from the wisdom that comes down from God (James 3:5-17).
4. Thou have loved evil more than good / lying more than truth. *Selah* (*Verse 3*)
- Evil heart:** Saul had an evil heart by this time, as we have already seen. He refuses to speak truth.
5. Thou have loved all words that devour / tongue of deceit! (*Verse 4*)
- Devour foe:** Saul is not going to rest until the ‘son of Jesse’ is totally consumed!
- B. David is confident that God will both tear down and uproot such evil people. (*Verse 5*)
1. Now God will tear thee down. (*Verse 5a*)
- God will tear down:** Saul will not only be brought down, but he will be torn apart in the act.
2. Also, God will take thee away and tear thee from (thy) tent / He has uprooted thee. (*Verses 5b-c*)
- Also take away and uproot:** David is so sure of what his God will do for him, he puts the last action in the past tense, confident that God will take away and uproot Saul, taking him from being king.

Application: In light of all we have seen and heard, and the gospel of Jesus Christ, we must all accept and receive God’s grace to turn from our wicked desires and receive His eternal, strong, life-giving, life-changing Love in order to be forgiven by God and reconciled to Him by the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus, and not be brought to ruin.

God will bring ruin to those who plot evil

Conclusion: As outcasts gather around David, he provides for his parents and is warned by Gad. Saul accuses his men of supporting David and chastens his son, then an Edomite betrays the high priest. The introduction to David’s psalm is about the pride of mighty people who reject God’s strong Love to their ruin.

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