

Unfolding Unveiling: Studies of Christ Revealed in the Types of Joshua, David, and Solomon

Part Six: David

Chapter Nineteen: David in the Wilderness

The Making of a Son

Let us now turn our attention to what was perhaps the darkest and most difficult time of David's life: the days and years spent in the wilderness hiding from Saul. We will discover why it is that God allowed David to suffer so terribly at the hands of Saul, what was accomplished in David's life, and most importantly, how it is both a picture of Christ and of those who desire to be conformed into His image. Intimately entwined with the account in I Samuel chapters 20-31 is David's own personal record of his inner life, which he wrote into his Psalms of this time period. There are quite a few Psalms, which, in their introductions, tell us the occasion that inspired the writing of them. Their content includes David's fears, struggles, viewpoints, and what God was revealing of Himself to David at the time.

David was forced to flee for his life after Saul made several attempts on it. To evade Saul's search parties, David stayed on the run, keeping mostly to the mountainous region of southern Judah and hiding in the caves and natural strongholds in the rock.

It would be difficult to see much in the rocky terrain, which would afford the fugitive an advantage over his pursuer. How long this game of cat-and-mouse went on, the Scriptures do not say exactly, but if we conjecture David's age to be seventeen at the time he killed Goliath, then he could have been on the run from Saul for up to thirteen years (cf. II Sam. 5:4-5). Thirteen years is a long time not to know whether you will be dead or alive the next day. It is a long time to live in caves. It is a long time to be without your family and your loved ones.

How could God permit a thing like that to happen? How could He allow him who was the greatest man of the offspring of Abraham besides Jesus to be at the mercy of a rejected king? David was God's man of the hour. He had faith in God. There was no one in Israel who pursued God as David did, with the exception of Samuel.

What would we have done had we been in David's position? I suspect that most of us would begin to question God and His motives. Our natural minds fail to make the connection between a God who loves us and a God who allows us to suffer. We do not mean to misinterpret the Lord's actions, but apart from the Holy Spirit teaching us otherwise, we equate suffering and hard times with the Lord being displeased with us and temporal peace and prosperity with having somehow earned the Lord's favor. If this is

the case, however, then God has not truly bound Himself to us by a covenant of grace but by a covenant of law.

On the other hand, if God relates to us by grace (and we know that He does), then the issue of suffering is still left unexplained. Let us look to the Scriptures to see what they have to say about undeserved suffering. No matter what our ideas on the subject may be, the Word of God is our final authority for the New Testament believer. When our ways of thinking come into conflict with God's point of view, then it is our ways of thinking that must go, not God's Word. The book of Hebrews holds a key that will unlock the mystery of unprovoked suffering that seems to plague David so unjustly.

“Who, in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared, though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him...”

Hebrews 5:7-9

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews reminds his readers that Jesus suffered while in the flesh. This suffering is not to be confused with the suffering he experienced on the Cross for taking on the sin of the human race. The latter had an atoning purpose, but the suffering referred to in Hebrews 5:7-9 has an educational purpose. Jesus was a Son. But even though He was the very offspring of God, there was necessity for learning. How could it be that the Son of God lacked all He needed to be the author of salvation? And yet there it is, plainly stated that Jesus “learned obedience through the things that he suffered and being made perfect...”

God had it in mind that being the Son of God alone was not enough to be the author of our salvation. This Son had to learn obedience, and suffering was the tool God used to teach Him. It was not that Jesus needed to be punished; he was not a disobedient Son. He was an unblemished, innocent sacrifice. Yet there was something necessary for His preparation to be a sacrifice.

How does this apply to us? “The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his Lord,” (Matt. 10:24). We as believers were put to death at the Cross and raised up in a whole new creation in which Christ is the head. As we know Him, we take on His identity and all that pertains to Him: His position before the Father, His victory over the world, the flesh and the devil, His mind, His nature, and His sufferings. To be the Lamb of God will by virtue of what it is be subject to a particular kind of suffering, and it follows that all who embrace the life of the Lamb as their way will experience the same suffering. For Jesus, this suffering was to prepare Him for the culmination of His life's work: the Cross. David as a type of Christ revealed would be incomplete if the Cross were not seen. David's time of suffering in the wilderness, as we shall soon see, was a time of preparation for the Cross in type, which will in turn bring about a glorious resurrection.

As believers, God's intention for us is no different. If Jesus as the author of our salvation had to learn obedience through suffering, then we who have His nature within ourselves should not expect to circumvent the same sufferings as God perfects us for our life's work: to take up our Cross, deny ourselves, and follow Him.

And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto sons, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, of which all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

Hebrews 12:5-8

The writer of Hebrews seems a bit surprised at his readers' reaction to the difficult circumstances in their lives. It seems as though they did not recognize that the source of their hardship was their heavenly Father, who had a certain goal in mind: that they be sons: sons in the image of the Son, sons who could carry on the work of their Father, the ever unfolding and manifestation of the complete work of the Son.

How does this apply to David? And what good does David's story do us if the question of innocent suffering can be answered so succinctly in the New Testament? The Old Testament is replete with visual imagery that can help us understand this chastising process. Sometimes seeing a story unfold is something we can grasp with mind's eye, and it brings more clarity to a subject than an abstract definition of explanation. Jesus, though He was the Son of God, was thirty years old before he began His ministry. David, too, was thirty when he began to reign at Hebron. It took years of suffering and preparation for both of them to be fit for their ministries. I think it would help each believer immensely to walk someone else's path of training and preparation, put ourselves in their shoes, feel what they felt, learn what they learned, and come away from it all having seen the Lord the way they did. The record of David's life and Psalms give us this opportunity.

Being born again happens instantaneously for anyone who believes. It takes time, a lot of time, for God to make a son out of a believer. The process is long, tedious, and at times painful. Hebrews 12:3 even exhorts us not to become wearied and faint in our minds. But what makes this long process not only bearable but effective is when we open our hearts to the Holy Spirit and allow Him to draw us out of the realm of the old creation – this realm of lack and decay – into the heavenly places that are in Christ, into the invariable spiritual realm of completion, fullness, and life.

I put before you that the Psalms written by David while hiding from Saul are not just a group of songs written for their own sake without any purpose except to satisfy David's creative side. Rather, they are David's way of meditating on that which God was revealing of Himself. It was God who appointed David's time in the wilderness (cf. Lk. 4:1-2), to bring him into a deeper knowledge of Himself that we will find to be most precious and indispensable.

We will now trace David's steps during these most difficult years to discover what was in God's heart, not only for David, but for every believer who truly desires to know the Lord.

The Scriptures do not tell us the complete story of David's time in the wilderness. There are references to friends and hiding places that do not come out in the chronological account (cf. I Sam. 31:26-31). I think that perhaps the accounts in I Samuel are not a complete record, but vignettes – small yet important glimpses into David's life – to see God's revelation of Himself. Scripture is never biographical of anyone except the Son. The stories are used to point us to a higher reality. We can safely assume it to be so. The Psalms tie in here.

The Wilderness Psalms

I Samuel 19:9-7/Psalm 59 – Our High Place

The first of the wilderness Psalms was written when Saul was watching David's house to kill him. Saul had been jealous of David's victory over the Philistines and had once more tried to kill him. He fled to his own house and had to escape out a window to save his life.

There are a few points of interest in this Psalm which will be useful for our study. First of all, three times in this Psalm David says that God was his defense. The Hebrew word here does not mean a legal defense, as though he was on trial for breaking the law. Instead, it means a stronghold, a fortress, or high place. The Lord is David's defense from the onslaught of an attacking foe. How interesting that David would consider God his High Place while the rest of Israel was sacrificing in idolatrous high places. How interesting that David would think that a Spiritual place (actually a Spiritual Person) would be a sufficient defense against flesh and blood men who were trying to take his life.

We must consider, then, whether God has allowed these tragic events in David's life that He might teach David something of Himself. That David could find no security in natural society caused him to look elsewhere, and he began to dwell in God instead of in the earthly realm. Here is David's first lesson in the wilderness Bible school: God is our stronghold.

I Samuel 22:1/Psalm 142 - In the cave of Adullam

The inscription of this Psalm does not specify what cave David was living in at the time, but the cave of Adullam will serve the purpose of our study as well as any other.

David was very human, as we all are, and staying on the run from Saul wore on his emotions. In the first several verses, we see that fear has gotten the better of him, and he has run to the Lord to tell Him so. Verse four is his realization that there is nothing in the

created realm that can protect him from Saul. No cave is high or deep enough, no man is loving or protective enough. The first step for any believer who desires to learn to live in heavenly places is to realize that the earth has nothing for us to draw from. This is a frightening realization that can shake a person to the core, as it had obviously done for David, and yet it is the path on which the Lord leads His own.

When we who love the Lord see that the natural world is incapable of giving us what we need, we will instinctively turn to the Lord, though we may not understand what is happening or what the right answer to our problem is. In turning to the Lord, however, we find Christ revealed as the answer, as is the case for David in verse five. He turns from the refuge that the cave had to offer, knowing that it could not ultimately protect him from his insane pursuer, to see the Lord revealed as his refuge once more. David rejected the natural fortress and embraced the revealed reality of the Lord as his true fortress. David was learning to dwell in the spiritual stronghold of the Lord Himself, while God was using natural things, such as the cave, as an example of the reality.

The only place where we are safe from the onslaughts of the self-life is in the Resurrection. There we are safe from the attacks of our enemies of the Land. In the high place, you are hidden. Our life is hid with Christ in God (Col. 3:3).

I Samuel 21:1-9, 22:21-23/Psalm 52 - After learning what Doeg had done

David calls Doeg a liar in verses 1-3 of this Psalm. Doeg had been an eyewitness of the goings on at Nob. He told Saul that Ahimelech the priest had inquired of the Lord for David, which would have made the priest an accessory to the “crime” of David’s flight from Saul. But according to I Samuel 21:1-9, David did not ask Ahimelech to inquire of the Lord on his behalf. Therefore Doeg did bear false witness against the priest and against David, and in doing so transgressed the commandment of the Lord. This should not be too surprising, since Doeg was not in covenant with God as Israel was and could not be expected to keep their laws. What is truly appalling is that Saul took the word of one witness only, instead of following the law, which requires that a man be put to death at the testimony of two or three witnesses. Eighty-five priests died at the command of Saul that day.

David wrote Psalm 52 about Doeg upon hearing of this tragedy from the young priest Abimelech, who had fled the scene. David contrasts the wickedness of Doeg’s motivations with himself, who chose to trust in God. He has seen from the Lord that since the Lord is eternal, he who makes Him his strength will remain, and that he who trusts in his own strength will inevitably be wiped out. This is truly a statement made in faith, since all of the circumstances said the opposite!

I Samuel 23:14/Psalm 63 - The Wilderness of Judah

Let us set the scene for the writing of this psalm. David was living in caves and had been for awhile. He was separated from his parents and loved ones, who had gone into hiding for their own safety. Saul was in hot pursuit, and David did not know what each day held, whether he would live or die. He was always on the run; it was not safe for him to settle down and make a home. His accommodations were less than comfortable, and the food was probably not of the best quality. He had been betrayed by his brethren in Judah. And finally, the ministry for which he had been anointed was not coming to pass. He was probably experiencing fear on a regular basis.

It would not be surprising if any believer would have a hard time with the Lord while living in these conditions. A believer might become upset with Him, or I might question His motives. What would you have done? Some of us may grow bitter over such misfortune. Others might think that such a negative turn of events could only be from the devil and therefore reject it all on that basis. But we see something different from David. Let us take a closer look. Verse one says that David's soul was in a dry and thirsty land. There was nothing in the natural that would gratify him, satisfy him, make him feel better, or encourage him. He had been stripped of all that was pleasing. How similar this sounds to the state of the wilderness wanderers of Exodus and Numbers! I see God's hand in David's situation, orchestrating the circumstances to bring His son into a deeper knowledge of Himself. Once again, the setting is the wilderness, and once again, the choice is the believer's, to either demand that God relate to him by outward things, or to enter into the Lord Himself by revelation.

In verse five, we see David move from thirsting to satisfaction, in spite of the fact that his terrible circumstances have remained the same. What is the key to this change in David? There are several indications throughout the psalm, but the most obvious one comes in verse six, where David says that his satisfaction came from remembering when he was in bed and meditating upon the Lord when it was his turn to guard the camp at night. And what did he remember? He remembered that he had seen the Lord in the sanctuary in verse two. In this verse, he says that he both has seen the Lord already and desires to see Him again.

This is the key to satisfaction. To see the Lord and to feed on what we have seen is to draw from Him and to abide in Him in such a way that we have no need of anything in our natural surroundings to be of satisfaction to us.

As we can deduce from the previous wilderness psalms, to turn one's soul toward the Lord and therefore from the natural realm is not a one-time act but a repetition of acts due to the nature of our circumstances which were designed by the Lord in such a way so that we would ultimately learn to be governed by the Spirit-realm. In these psalms, we see David being taught of God in his bad circumstances to turn his soul to the Lord repeatedly. To continually turn from the lack in the natural and delight oneself in the

Lord and find all satisfaction there results in verse eight: our soul following close behind the Lord. It is the product of the Lord's lesson.

Let us look again at the three elements necessary to bring about such a government in the life of the believer: (1) revelation on a regular basis (v. 2), (2) a God-initiated wilderness which gives no pleasure, comfort, or security to the soul, and (3) the soul turning to the revealed Lord from the wilderness conditions with the intent of finding its satisfaction in Him. This death to the soul will result in living in resurrection reality.

Looking ahead to David's reign, we see the entire nation of Israel living in the resurrection. But had David not learned to turn his soul over to death as recorded in Psalm 63, Israel would not have been able to live in the resurrection, for they lived in David who was their resurrection. David denying his soul-life resulted in him living in God, in the resurrection. It is from this place that he would govern Israel.

When the Lord tries to teach us to deny self, let us not resist and struggle. Let us learn to deny our self that we might live in the resurrection. It is from that place that we will be governed. It is from that place that we will bring life and resurrection into the earth that others might know the glory of the Lord

I Samuel 23:19-28/Psalm 18 - After the Lord delivered David out the hand of his enemies

The Ziphites, David's own brethren, betrayed his location to Saul. When Saul came looking for him, he was delivered by the Philistines invading the Land.

The first thing to notice in the psalm, in line with the theme already mentioned before, is that David recognizes the Lord to be his rock and fortress and deliverer, not the mountains, not the cave, not an upward turn in his circumstances. While David had lack and troubles in the natural, God was teaching him where his stability lay! Saul's men had David surrounded. There was no way that David could have escaped (cf. I Sam. 23:26).

Another point: a recurring theme is found in verse 17 of the Psalm: "they (the enemy) were too strong for me." Our enemies are too strong for us. When we try to follow the Lord, we will begin to see how strong they are. Only God can deliver us from the strong enemies.

In light of the backdrop of events which inspired this psalm, verses 37-42 are interesting. Who are these enemies to whom David refers? David never fought Saul, or any of the children of Israel. He would never have laid a hand on Saul. David ran from him and would not lay a hand on him. Those particular enemies, I believe, were intangible ones, perhaps the enemies resident within every person. Maybe they were fear, or unbelief or unforgiveness. Regardless, these enemies were not Saul or his men, for David went to war against them, which he never did with Saul. He went to war against them, and he

won a decisive victory. Perhaps the enemy was the strivings of the peoples (see v. 43), the fleshly striving that is motivated by self.

Regardless, David likens his deliverance to the resurrection of our Lord in verses 43-50. This is where David's life was headed in type. David saw not just the circumstances where he was delivered out of the hand of Saul, but the spiritual reality of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection that made such a deliverance possible.

Little did David know that what seemed to be the lowest point of his life would turn out to be the very training he would need to lead Israel into the next stage of the Lord's plan. During this time, David learned to pour out his soul and deny it of any earthly satisfaction and turn to the Lord's spiritual realm for satisfaction and the meeting of his needs. Did David need protection from Saul? He no longer looked for a natural, geological formation; the Lord was his defense. Was he discouraged by the type of life he was forced to lead? The Lord was his expectation. Did he ever despair of taking the throne of Israel? No matter; the Lord was already king of Israel.

David learned to draw only from the Lord during this time. The chastising of the Lord would be more profitable than he could have ever guessed! He learned to turn to the Lord repeatedly, and not look to anything the earth had to offer, which in turn equipped him to lead Israel into greater glory than they had ever seen since the days of Joshua.

Bearing His Reproach: Suffering Outside the Camp -- Hebrews 13:13-14

There were those in Israel who recognized the anointing upon David from the Lord while he was still in the wilderness, running from Saul. These left the kingdom of Saul and chose to be identified with David while he was yet an outcast. They did not identify with David because he was popular (because he wasn't) or because he had something to offer them that would be to their advantage (because he didn't). These chose to "go outside the camp, bearing His reproach," (Heb. 13:13). They chose to identify in the sufferings of their Lord. When David slept in caves, these men slept in caves. When David ran from Saul, these men did, too. When David had nothing to eat, they went without. David's reputation as an outlaw was their own reputation. What a precious faith did these men have!

The kingdom of David could not be seen by the natural eye. It could only be seen by the eyes of the understanding as it was revealed by the Holy Spirit. To identify with David's kingdom the way that these men did was to see David for who he really was and follow that reality, regardless of the fact that the natural realm said exactly the opposite.

When a believer sees the Lord clearly, he will stop living his life after the seeing of the eye and begin to conform to Him who has been revealed. This life of faith means leaving behind the carnal lifestyle that is governed by time and senses. One who does this is held in reproach, and sometimes even derision, by those brethren who still walk after the flesh. Jesus bore this reproach among His own people, for He walked after the invisible and

they after the senses (cf. Heb. 13:9-13). Paul bore this reproach when the Galatians received the doctrines of the Judaizers (cf. Gal. 5:10-12). We bear the same reproach when Christ is anointed before our eyes by revelation (cf. Heb. 13:13) because of those Christians who have not begun to walk after the Spirit but still continue after the seeing of the eye.

To bear His reproach, according to Hebrews 13:13, is to suffer outside the camp. We see this in type with the sin offering (Lev. 4:11-12), with the consecration offering for the instituting of the priests (Ex. 29:14) and the offering of the red heifer (Num. 19:1-6). Much of the sin offering was burned outside the camp. Jesus Himself suffered and died outside the walls of Jerusalem. When we identify with Christ in His death, it includes “going outside the camp”.

I was always under the impression that the part of the sin offering was taken outside the camp because it was the part rejected of God, but perhaps this is not so. After all, God accepted the offering that was burned outside the camp, and it was to be burned in a clean place (cf. Lev. 4:12). So it was not a picture of God rejecting the sacrifice. Perhaps it is a picture of God’s people rejecting the sacrifice! Remember that Hebrews 13:12-13 says that this offering was offered outside the camp, and that it was offered outside the camp signified reproach.

Perhaps this is the reproach that David’s men suffered for David, like Jesus, who suffered outside the camp. To identify with David was to identify in David’s sufferings. David was rejected by God’s own people, in the same way that Jesus would experience in a time to come. But the sufferings of Christ are not just as a sin offering for the people, but that those people for whom He died rejected him. Conversely, perhaps David’s sufferings were not only because he was rejected by the people but because he was suffering for their guilt in some way. It seems as though Psalm 22 may give us some insight into David’s suffering. It is considered the “prophetic” psalm that relays the experiences of Jesus on the Cross (cf. vs. 1, 16, 18). Maybe there was a substitutionary work going on in Israel at the time, and David was the “Lamb” as he suffered for the sins of Israel outside the camp, the picture of which is David’s time in the wilderness.

We see that David’s suffering was a result of two things: 1) rejection on the part of the people of God because they desired to be ruled by the self-life, and 2) suffering the just for the unjust. Saul was unjust. Israel was unjust. They were wrong, but David suffered. Israel did not suffer. They did, however, partake of the benefits of David’s suffering. The only ones who suffered were the ones who chose to identify with David. Those of Israel who did so were subject to all the hardships and sufferings and wrongdoing and persecution that David was. They physically and geographically had to leave the comforts of Hebrew society to do so. Of course, they had to leave it in their hearts, first. They went outside the camp, bearing His reproach, in order that they might be subject to the One who was king in God’s eyes. It is part of being identified in Him.

David did not only hide in the wilderness of southern Judah; he also spent one year and four months within the borders of the Philistines (cf. I Sam. 27:1-6). He was outside of

the established borders of Israel at that time. A type of death, is it not? For to Israel, to live outside of their own borders was to be removed from the sustenance and provision of God. There must have been some kind of submitting to the king of Gath. But while David “suffered outside the camp”, he wrought great and complete victories on behalf of his brethren – the very brethren who rejected him – by utterly destroying their mortal enemies (cf. I Sam. 27:8-12, 30:16-20) and gave the blessing of his victories to those very brethren. This is accomplished in his “death”.

And those who identify in Christ’s sufferings help obtain these victories and pass the blessings on to their brethren who have rejected them. This is the Spirit of Christ.

Comparison between David and the Sin Offering

There is another facet to David’s time in Ziklag that provides us with insight into the mind of the Lord, which is a picture of the Lord bearing the reproach of Israel. The children of Israel were the ones deserving of Philistine bondage, but it was David who suffered it.

Isaiah 53:1-12 shows the spirit of the sin offering. The sin offering is: 1) despised and rejected of men (v. 3) as David was, (2) suffers for the sins of God’s people, who mistake the sin offering’s suffering for God’s displeasure with it instead of them. But the suffering borne by the sin offering in their sight is their suffering being borne by Another. David “suffered defeat” and bondage, which were the just deserts of Israel. The sin offering is (3) cut off out of the land of the living. The Land being a type of Christ – the Land of the living – we see David taken out of the borders of the Land and into the Land of the Philistines, and separation being a type of death, this land became his “grave”.

David being the head of the kingdom, in whom all of Israel would be gathered, had to suffer on behalf of those who would derive their existence from him. It is the Divine side of being One; we take on Christ’s benefits, He takes on our liabilities. For David to be the ruler of God’s people, he had to suffer that side of the spiritual reality of being made One with a people. David was despised and rejected of men, and it certainly did look as though he were smitten of God. But peace came by David (v. 5), for it was while he was in the land of the Philistines that Saul was slain. Also, it was during David’s reign that peace came to Israel and brother stopped fighting brother. It is also true that David did not once open his mouth in his own defense, but meekly went to his death (v. 7). He, too, made his grave with the wicked by spending a prolonged period of time in the land of the Philistines. He was not just dead; he was buried. All that Israel was that was displeasing to the Lord was put to death and buried in David, that the Lord might begin anew and afresh with His people in the unveiling of the One in whom we are gathered.

It pleased the Lord to bruise David (v. 10), and it was the Lord who put him to grief! It truly was David’s soul that was made an offering for sin, for it was no physical death that he died; death for David was in his soul, from which he was deprived all the pleasures and benefits of living in the Land. It was that death of his soul that God made an offering for Israel’s sin. It was death to his hopes that Israel would accept him, death to being

recognized by God's people as God's anointed One, death to the hope that all of Israel would find it in their heart to follow the Lord.

But after the sin offering is complete, God's plan can go forward; for this very one who was put to grief by the Lord will be the progenitor of the seed that will satisfy the Lord. David was not only the forefather of all the kings of Judah; He was the earthly forefather of Jesus Himself. He will prosper because he will be about the Lord's business instead of his own (v. 10). Truly David's portion and spoil was in an amount to be reckoned with (cf. I Chron 29:28), as the borders of his kingdom were greater than at any time before him, and as he amassed untold wealth for the building of the temple, all because he poured out his soul unto death and allowed himself to be numbered with the transgressors.

It was while David was "buried" in the land of the Philistines that Saul's kingdom was brought to an end as the rejected king fell in battle. That these two events are concurrent is more than coincidental. David's death brought about the demise of Saul's kingdom. Originally, David looked as though he were going out against his own nation with the Philistines, but at the last minute the Philistine lords told him to turn back. So while the Philistines and Israel were locked in battle, David was back at Ziklag, completely uninvolved in the conflict.

Viewing David as a type of Christ dying both for the sins of the soul and as the self-life, we can see this lack of action as very significant. The Lord's enemies are never overcome by force; instead, it is the death of the Lamb that will overcome those who resist the Lord. The way Jesus takes care of these things is to die. He is not engaged in struggle with the self-life sitting on the throne. David never fought Saul. He never resisted Saul or tried to take the kingdom by force. Instead, he meekly allowed himself to be oppressed, and ultimately driven out of the Land. David died and was buried, and Saul was taken down. There is no other way for Saul to come to his end. This is what God had in mind when He told Samuel, "I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of everyone that heareth it shall tingle," (I Sam. 3:11). The end (cf. I Sam. 3:12) came first in the form of the ark being taken, and then was culminated in David's time in the land of the Philistines.

David tried to go to battle with the Philistines; who knows for what reason? Perhaps he would suddenly turn on them and fight for Israel in a surprise attack. Maybe he thought that Israel was so far gone under Saul and so far from the Lord that he was no longer bound to that kingdom. Regardless of his motives, it became clear to him that the Lord achieves His purposes, not by might, or by power, but by His Spirit. Jesus does not bring an end to self by fighting but by dying, which means that no energy is being exerted. David's part in saving Israel from Saul was not to forcibly fight against the Philistines but to "give his life" in a type of death, which brought about greater ramifications for Israel's good than simply winning one battle with the Philistines would have achieved.

David's time in the wilderness, as recorded in I Samuel 21-26, is his time of being perfected and chastised that he might be offered as a sacrifice for sin. This is a picture of

Christ of whom it is said, “For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering,” (Heb. 2:10), and “Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him,” (Heb. 5:8-9). David’s time in the wilderness was ordered of the Lord to bring about the kind of kingdom that God desired. It was a time of chastising and perfecting that was brought about by suffering. It was to prepare him for his death, burial, and the resurrection into the “new thing”.

David’s chastisement was preparation for his being a sin offering on behalf of the people. Jesus’ time on the earth was his time of preparation. The Lord always tests (proves) His lamb beforehand to make sure there is no spot or blemish in it. When God determined that he would be a “perfect” offering (in type, of course), he could be offered for sin.

Let us now turn momentarily to Jesus’ difficult time in Gethsemane. Of the three gospels that give account of his prayer with the Father the night before his death – Matthew, Mark, and Luke – Luke’s record emphasizes the suffering that Jesus bore during that time. It was for him to decide whether or not he would accept the cup offered him by the Father, and his soul was in great agony as he wrestled.

John also gives us a glimpse of the turmoil in Jesus’ soul over going to the Cross. John 12:27 records Jesus’ words: “Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? But for this cause came I unto this hour.”

We know that Jesus was without sin and that he was not harboring ulterior motives and private agenda. Why the struggle, then? It is the struggle of the soul attempting to preserve itself. It is not a mark of sin or failure; it is simply how the soul is. This rising of the soul is no sin, but to give into it and allow it to govern is to be governed by the self-life. This government is pictured so clearly in Saul’s reign. It was Jesus’ death to self that made him the perfect offering for sin, but not just for the sins of the old nature; it was an offering for the sins of the soul as well, which sin Jesus did not commit that night in the garden of Gethsemane. Jesus dying for us and for our sins is seen in the slain lamb of the Passover and the crossing of the Red Sea. Believers identifying in Christ as we see that Jesus died not only for us but as us is seen in the staying inside of their houses as they ate the Passover and in the crossing of the Jordan. Our death to the sin nature is explained clearly in Romans chapter six, and was realized in type at the crossing of the Jordan. But David’s “death” opens up to us yet another aspect of the Cross, which is the atonement for sins of the soul and the bringing to an end the rule of the self-life through the soul.

That David was a sin offering for his people is evident by the passage in Isaiah 53, but since the sin nature’s hold on Israel came to an end at the crossing of the Jordan, His death cannot be a repeat of that truth. That David was a sin offering for the sins of the soul is further evidenced by the death of Saul during David’s “death”. The end of the self-life’s government only came about through the death of the One whose government would have no place for autonomous living. The Scriptures say that the servant is not greater than his master (cf. Matt. 10:24). If the head of the kingdom dies, then so do all

who are in him. David's death was both substitutionary and representative. He died for the sins of the soul as seen in the reign of Saul as the substitute for the people, and was also their representative, so that when he died, so did the entire government and way of selfish Israel.

David's death, then, was necessary to bring Israel into the resurrection reality of a spiritual kingdom, which kingdom cannot be lived out until self's kingdom is brought to an end in our understanding. But when it does come to an end, what a glorious resurrection ensues! For the kingdom is begun when we die to self, not by our own will or ability, but by virtue of our partaking in the death of the One who emptied His soul and died for the sins of our soul.

It is said of David that he would bring salvation to Israel (cf. II Sam. 3:18), and he did: he saved them from themselves.