



FEED MY SHEEP

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Seeing God in Your Enemies

Our study of the character qualities of David has brought us to one of the greatest crises of his life—the attempt by his son, Absalom, to usurp the throne and presumably assassinate his own father. David and his partisans have evacuated the capital, relocating to the plain on the near side of the Jordan river. But David is not resigned to defeat with a fatalistic attitude. He is pro-active. He has sent spies into the midst of Absalom's rebel government. David's men, the counselor Hushai, and the co-high priests Zadok and Abiathar were in place. The respective sons of the high priests, Ahimaaz and Jonathan, had been stationed to act as couriers. As we left off last month, Hushai had clandestinely conveyed to the priests the advice which had been given to Absalom, and to give warning to David not to camp on the near side, but to pass over to the far side of Jordan. The word was passed on to the couriers.

2 Samuel 17:17 Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz stayed by Enrogel; for they might not be seen to come into the city: and a wench [maidservant] went and told them; and they went and told king David.

In the standard manner of Hebrew historians, the writer of 2 Samuel here gives a one-sentence summary and then proceeds to fill in the details. While the two high priests actually went into Jerusalem, their two sons did not. Instead, they lodged at Enrogel. In the book of Joshua, we find Enrogel was an important landmark which designated part of the border between the territories of Judah and Benjamin.

Apparently, the sons of the high priests were well known as partisans of David, and therefore they could not risk being in Jerusalem, lest they be unable to get out of town and report back to David. It seems, there-

fore, that the high priests entrusted one of their maidservants to relay the intelligence to their sons at Enrogel. Unfortunately, the boys were spotted.

18 Nevertheless a lad saw them, and told Absalom: but they went both of them away quickly, and came to a man's house in Bahurim, which had a well in his court; whither they went down.

You might recall from several issues back that stone-throwing Shimei, the Saul partisan, was from this same town of Bahurim. But not all the men and women in Bahurim were Saul supporters (and therefore anti-David), as seen by the following action.

19 And the woman took and spread a covering over the well's mouth, and spread ground corn thereon; and the thing was not known.

This incident is reminiscent of another woman who hid two spies over four hundred years earlier in this same general vicinity. It was the woman of Jericho, named Rahab, who hid the two spies which Joshua had sent. (See Joshua 2.) Certain details are worth reciting at this juncture. For example, Rahab hid the spies *on the roof*. And on the roof, she hid them under *stalks of flax*. Linen is made from flax, and in the Bible linen represents righteousness. Thus, being covered with flax symbolizes that the spies were clothed in righteousness.

Being covered by flax, the spies themselves are a type of the overcomers. Flax is symbolic of overcomers because it is closely associated with the barley (Exodus 9:31). Barley is probably the preeminent

symbol of the overcomer company. Now observe the similarities in the case of David's two spies. Instead of being hid *up* on the roof, they are hidden *down* in a *dry well*. In the New Testament, churches should be bodies of believers where the water of the Word is plentiful and where it is ministered abundantly to all believers. A living, vibrant, dynamic church is like a well full of sweet water which nourishes the spiritual life of its participants.

Conversely, a dry well would be a church that has all form but no substance. It is a dead or dying church. People are dying of spiritual thirst because there is no living water there. Instead, there are a plethora of doctrines and traditions of men, the primary purpose of which is to corral and control people. The forms of a church are there. Perhaps there is land, buildings and equipment. Perhaps they have 15 church buses for Sunday School and lots of activities. They can have all that and still be dry wells. Many of us have come out of dry wells, and have found our spiritual thirst being quenched by home churches, para-church ministries and the like.

So here are David's two undercover agents who are now literally *undercover* in the dry well. It would be easy to overlook the fact that the woman spread "ground corn" upon the covering. This is highly significant. Strong's lexicon does not give this, but in more scholarly works, we find that "ground corn" actually means "peeled barley."

Peeled barley is the result of the barley having had its hulls removed. From the types and shadows perspective, we have understood that the barley company overcomers seem to be blest, in that instead of having to be threshed like the wheat company to get the chaff separated, the barley company only needs to be winnowed. That is the process of the farmer taking his pitchfork, lifting a bunch of stalks of barley high into the air and letting the wind gently separate the grain from the chaff.

I have cautioned us, though, that the barley company is not immune from pain and suffering. All prospective overcomers know that by personal experience, don't we? I suggest that we will go through fire just as the wheat company. Both grains are baked in the oven to make cakes or bread for our Father's use. It is our baptism of fire in this life, which is a much preferable alternative to undergoing the lake of fire in the next.

After the barley has been winnowed—after the

chaff has been separated from the grain—there is another process which is necessary before it can be used for bread. The barley must be peeled. The hull must be removed. It is a process which today is called *pearling* the barley. Now that is an interesting Bible word, isn't it? How is the barley pearled? You're not going to like this. The barley is fed between two stones—two *grind* stones. And of course, to have flour, the grain must be ground further. The reality is that no matter which company we are in: overcomer barley, non-overcomer wheat or non-believer fall fruits; there is some painful processing involved in each one of them. Knowing that, do you still want to go for the gold? Do you still want to strive for the high calling of the flax and barley company? (Hear my lectures, *Rewards of the Overcomers*, CD or tape # 369, 370; \$10.)

The spies Ahimaaz and Jonathan are part of David's company, so that, in type, they are part of the overcomer company. What I see here is that sometimes overcomers are in very lowly positions. They were in the *bottom* of the well. Does that not speak of humility?

Overcomers are sometimes hidden in the churches doing janitor work, or caring for the babies in the nursery. There *are* overcomers in these dry-well churches. The great news is that not only are the overcomers covered with flax-barley, but that the *whole* church—the dry well—is covered by barley, which speaks of the ultimate blessing of the entire church because the barley—the peeled barley, the processed barley—provides their covering.

We have taught on that concept before in great detail—how the barley provides the covering for the wheat company. That was in our album on Universal Reconciliation [12 CDs or tapes (specify format) Album A-104; \$36 ppd.] This album will be the core for the third book of our trilogy, but that is at least a year from publication.

Frequently, in times of persecution, the Saul leaders, the Absalom leaders and their spiritual henchmen, will seek out to destroy those whom they deem to be their enemies. But they will not always find them because they are right under their noses in their very own churches. The overcomers are undercover, doing a stealth work, showing their love for the brethren in all that they do; forgiving and laboring for the glory of God.

20 And when Absalom's servants came to the

woman to the house, they said, Where is Ahimaaz and Jonathan? And the woman said unto them, They be gone over the brook of water. And when they had sought and could not find them, they returned to Jerusalem.

The similarity with Rahab and the spies continues. When the bad guys show up, Rahab lies to save life by saying “They went that-away.” When Saul’s SWAT team went to David’s house to kill him, David’s wife, Michal, puffed up some pillows under the blankets and lied to them, saying that “David was sick. Come back in the morning.” But David had already “scampered down the beanstalk” outside the window and headed for Samuel’s “seminary” (1 Samuel 19:11-24; see FMS #46 through #50 for detailed exposition.)

Now a generation later, when the new Saul in town, Mr. Would-be King Absalom, sends his SWAT team after David’s spies, this woman lies to them and tells them “They went that-away.” Are we seeing a pattern here?

21 And it came to pass, after they were departed, that they came up out of the well, and went and told king David, and said unto David, Arise, and pass quickly over the water: for thus hath Ahithophel counselled against you.

Remember the spies had only the knowledge of what Absalom had been counseled. But Absalom was indecisive and therefore no one knew whether or not Absalom would perhaps follow Ahithophel’s advice after all.

22 Then David arose, and all the people that were with him, and they passed over Jordan: by the morning light there lacked not one of them that was not gone over Jordan.

Notice how David did not suffer from indecisiveness. He acted immediately and in so doing, he saved all the people and ultimately his throne.

23 And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass, and arose, and gat him home to his house, to his city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the sepulcher of his father.

One would be correct in surmising that

Ahithophel was a proud man. He shared that trait with Absalom. This was Ahithophel’s burden, his temptation to overcome. After all, when you have a reputation in the nation for not just being *one* of the best and brightest, but being so brilliant that when you speak, people have such awe for you that they think they heard from “Gawd” himself; this would easily tempt a person to become inordinately proud.

Therefore, when Ahithophel’s advice to Absalom was so obviously wise and yet it was rejected and deemed foolishness in comparison to Hushai’s counsel; certainly Ahithophel would feel more than slighted, more than stung. He would feel deeply rejected. More than that, though, his wisdom also allowed him to realize that from a political and military standpoint, the ballgame was over.

Because Absalom had “dilly-dallied” in making a decision to go after David, the element of surprise and catching David and his group in disarray was totally forfeited. Ahithophel now knew for certain that the coup attempt would end abortively. Further, that when David returned, that he, Ahithophel, would be executed as the traitor that he was.

Much like King Saul falling on his own sword on Mount Gilboa because he could not bear to be disgraced, so Ahithophel, being so proud, could not bear the thought of being disgraced and publicly executed. So he took his own life by hanging. One thousand years later, the antitype of Ahithophel was played out in the person of Judas Iscariot. Judas had been part of Jesus’ inner circle, just as Ahithophel had been of David’s. Judas was a political zealot. He had fantasies of Jesus leading the Judah nation to a great and glorious military victory over the oppressive Roman government.

Furthermore, he had this problem with the love of money. He was in fact the treasurer for Jesus and the apostles, and he helped himself to the bank account. And so probably in an attempt to force Jesus to get started with the rebellion and lead them to military victory, Judas betrayed the Greater David for thirty pieces of silver.

Matthew 27:3 Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he [Jesus] was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, 4 Saying, I have sinned in that I have be-

trayed the innocent blood.

You see, Judas was full of remorse and regret when he saw that Jesus was not going to put up a fight. He was probably shocked to the core when he saw that Jesus was actually going to allow himself to be executed. Inside himself, Judas was panicking: “Wait! Jesus! You’re supposed to do one of those miracles *now*. I’ve seen what you can do. Even in the garden last night, when I brought the soldiers to take you, you just spoke a word and they all fell down backwards.

“You’re supposed to kill them with a wave of your hand; then we will drive these cursed Romans out of our land. That’s what the Messiah is supposed to do. Jesus! Jesus! You’re not following my plan!”

No, but Jesus was following THE Plan. Consequently, when Judas realized the awful truth, he tried to renege on the deal. He tried to trade back the thirty pieces of silver for Jesus’ life, but it was a no-go. He tried to explain that it was all a big mistake.

4b And they [the chief priests and elders] said, What is that to us? see thou to that.

5 And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

Just as the traitor Ahithophel had done, so did Judas follow true to type.

2 Samuel 17: 24 Then David came to Mahanaim. And Absalom passed over Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him.

As the two spies of David paralleled the two spies of Joshua, we now come to yet more parallels. Mahanaim means “two camps.” Remember General Abner and King Ishbosheth? Mahanaim is the place where Ishbosheth reigned for a few years over the ten tribes of Israel while David reigned over Judah in Hebron. So the name “two camps” was really symbolic of what happened at that time. The nation was divided into two camps. Not only that, but it also presaged the split of the kingdom after the death of Solomon into two camps: ten tribes and two tribes.

However, the very first incident recorded about Mahanaim is when Jacob was returning from his many years of service to his father-in-law Laban. He

was very fearful that Esau might still be angry and seek to kill him. As Jacob came to Mahanaim, he saw a host of angels and he declared that this was God’s army, so he named the place “two camps,”—which can be taken in a number of different ways. There was Jacob’s camp and Esau’s camp. There was Jacob’s host, and the angelic host. As he prepared to meet Esau, Jacob divided his entire entourage into two camps: the maidservants and their sons, and Leah, Rachel and their sons—which he kept closest to himself. All this, he did out of fear of his enemy, Esau.

It was upon that very night when Jacob wrestled with the angel, which I believe was a theophany of the Lord Jesus Himself, but Jacob very likely thought—at least for a time—that it was Esau who had sneaked into the camp and attacked him. You see, Jacob was operating from a mindset of constant fear. It was only when he saw God in Esau, that he overcame.

What I mean by seeing God in Esau is not to say that Esau was a godly man. He certainly was not. But seeing God in Esau is very much akin to what we saw previously when David saw God “speaking” through his enemy Shimei. Remember how Shimei was stoning David and kicking dust on him as he passed by in the ravine? Can we see God’s hand in the actions of our enemies towards us?

It was that very night when Jacob wrestled with the Lord, thinking it was Esau, but finally seeing God in Esau, that was the night when he overcame. That was when the angel declared to him that henceforth, he would be named Israel. Jacob-Israel had experienced a *new* revelation—a life-changing revelation. When we see the hand of God in *our* enemies, it will also be a life-changing revelation for us. It is the revelation which enables us to love our enemies. Can you comprehend that? If you have never seen God in your enemies, pray to God that He will grant you that grace. You will find release from the bondage of bitterness and fear and receive love, joy and peace.

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