



FEED MY SHEEP

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The Character of Saul & David

For decades now, many Christian books (fiction and non-fiction) and movies have popularized the idea of an any-moment-now “rapture” of the saints, based on 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 and a few other passages. While we agree there will be a “rapture,” we take exception with many of their fundamental teachings about it.¹ But in connection with the theme of this FMS, we wish only to note that the “rapture” is in reality the first resurrection, and it will *not* include all Christian believers, as is commonly taught. It is reserved only for those saints, past and present, who qualify as overcomers.

In addition to just being “saved,” being an overcomer is a most desirable goal for every Christian. But exactly how does one become an overcomer? One method of instruction is found by looking at the fruit, the *character qualities*, of two men: Saul and David. One shows us how *not* to act and the other shows us how we *ought* to act.

The lives of Saul and David were types and shadows. Most Christians know that David was a type of Christ. But David was also a type of the class of people whom we call the overcomers or the Barley Company—those who will be the first to go on to perfection of body, soul and spirit—those who are elected by God to be resurrected to immortality at the first resurrection. They will rule and reign with Christ during the millennial kingdom age.

Although David is a type of perfected people, David himself was certainly not perfect. He was just as human as you and me and he committed some major sins. Saul, on the other hand, is a type of those who fail

to overcome. His life was a picture of tragic failure. Therefore, in the understanding of many Christians, Saul’s eternal fate will be in the flames of hell. We disagree.

Saul does not represent a vast class of lost souls doomed to a burning, eternal hell. Many Christians who have not studied into this may be shocked when we state unequivocally that, in fact, Saul represents the vast majority of *Christians*. We call them the Wheat Company, as opposed to the Barley Company. They are the non-overcomers. They will not be raised to immortality at the first resurrection. They will sleep in their graves until the second resurrection.

Meanwhile, the overcomers will have already entered into immortality, into their permanent tabernacles. That is one reason why the overcomers are associated with the Feast of Tabernacles and the Age of Tabernacles: they will be the first group to attain what Tabernacles represents: incorruptible immortality. (All of this is review for many long-time students of our tape ministry, but it is pertinent background for our study of Saul and David.)

From the Exodus to the cross was what we call the Age of Passover. The church in the wilderness was centered around the bloody sacrifices which temporarily made a covering for sins. After the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord and Savior, the bloody sacrificial system came to an end. Jesus was our once-and-for-all blood sacrifice. He was the perfect sacrifice which was more than sufficient to atone for all sin—past, present and future; and hence, it need never be done again.

A few weeks after the ascension, the Holy Spirit came like tongues of fire upon the heads of a number of disciples in the upper room. He indwelt people, but yet it was only a down payment of the fullness of indwelling Spirit. Thus began the Age of Pentecost, which is also called “the church age.” It is an in-part age; a down payment age. It is an age of imperfection. This is borne out by the symbolism of the feast itself.

From our studies of the tabernacle in the wilderness,² we recall that the feast of Pentecost was characterized by the offering of two loaves made of wheat mixed with leaven (Leviticus 23:17). From the parable of the wheat and the tares in Matthew 13, we observe that the wheat represents the children of the kingdom, i.e., Christians. Leaven represents sin and false doctrine.

Therefore, wheat mixed with leaven symbolizes Christians mixed with sin and false doctrine: imperfection, incompleteness, in-part-ness, if you will. And, true to type, this is what has characterized the entire Age of Pentecost. The church age has been twenty centuries of Christian people struggling to lead perfect lives and every one of us failing to reach perfection. But some succeed more than others. Nevertheless, it must be understood that to whatever level they do succeed; it is wholly, always and only by the grace of God.

Throughout these twenty centuries there has been a small percentage of Christians who have made the grade as overcomers. What percentage? I don't know; maybe a tithe (10%). That's just a guess. In any event, we must remember that there were also overcomers in the 4,000 years of Old Testament [OT] history as well. The patriarchs, notably, Jacob, Joseph, David and Daniel and others were all OT types of overcomers. With the preceding as background, let us investigate the lives of David and Saul so that we will be instructed by both the negative and the positive case histories—both how not to be, and how to be an overcomer.

Saul a type of church leaders

Although King Saul was a civil ruler, in type *he represents the church leadership under Pentecost* every bit as much as he does Israelite civil rulership. How do we make the connection between Saul and the Pentecost church? Several things in Scripture tip us off. First of all, we know that the *wheat* harvest is

associated with Pentecost, and we find Samuel being made king on the day of Pentecost.

1 Samuel 12:13 Now therefore behold the king whom ye have chosen, and whom ye have desired! and, behold, YHWH hath set a king over you. ...

17 Is it not wheat harvest to day? ...

The “day of wheat harvest” is literally the day of Pentecost, and Saul being made king on that very day is a prominent indicator that he is a type of the church under Pentecost. Just as Saul was crowned king on the day of wheat harvest, so in the New Testament [NT] the church began its great commission on that very same day of Pentecost (Acts, chapter 2). Another witness which connects Saul with the in-part Pentecost realm is found in

1 Samuel 9:3 And the asses of Kish Saul's father were lost. And Kish said to Saul his son, Take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses.

4 And he passed through mount Ephraim, and passed through the land of Shalisha, but they found *them* not: then they passed through the land of Shalim, and *there they were* not: and he passed through the land of the Benjamites, but they found *them* not.

5 And when they were come to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant that *was* with him, Come, and let us return; lest my father leave *caring* for the asses, and take thought for us.

What is this all about? It goes on for several more verses talking about Saul trying to find his father's asses. Why did God spend a half dozen verses here and another passage a bit later relating the story of Saul looking for *asses*? Consider the contrast: When we first come across David, he is a lad tending flocks of *sheep*. But God saw fit to make the point that Saul was searching for some lost asses. The fact is that both wheat and asses are symbols of Pentecost.³

Incidentally, when we speak of the Pentecost church or the age of Pentecost, it should be understood that we are not simply speaking of the Pentecostal and charismatic-type churches which have arisen since about 1900. Rather, we are speaking of the entire Christian church of all branches and denominations over the past twenty centuries. The Pentecostal and charismatic churches are part of it, to be sure, and God sure seems to have a sense of humor in the way that

some of these things seem to be connected.

For instance, in the Pentecostal-type churches, there is a great emphasis on speaking in tongues, and you will recall that the first creature that spoke in tongues in the Bible was Balaam's *ass* (Numbers 22). Not only that, one of the largest denominations of the Pentecostal-charismatic variety is called the Assemblies of God, and their headquarters is in Missouri, where the folks out there have a saying about being as "stubborn as a Missouri *mule*." (We relate this with a wink and grin of affection for all our friends in Missouri.) Isn't our Father absolutely brilliant to be able to bring about all these "coincidences"?

In 1 Samuel 9:2 the physical description of Saul includes the fact that "from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people." As we apply the types to subsequent history and to our own times, we can see that "being head and shoulders above everyone else" has become a metaphor for someone whose talents or reputation allows him to attain to a position of leadership. Do you know someone like that? Beware! Just because a person has the *talents* to be a leader does not mean he has the *heart* to be the kind of leader God desires.

Who chose Saul as king?

1 Samuel 12:13 Now therefore behold the king whom ye have chosen, and whom ye have desired! and, behold, YHWH hath set a king over you.

As He often does, God inserts a little play-on-words here since the name "Saul" means "desired!" Saul's selection as king was really a three-step process. Some think that *the people* chose Saul; after all, it says in v. 13 above, behold the king whom ye have chosen. But as we will see, the people did not really choose Saul, they merely accepted God's choice. Let's set the stage further by going back to chapter 8, where we see the people were getting tired of the current political governance and began demanding a visible king.

They had reason enough to be disenchanted with the status quo, at least from their perspective. In the nearly 400 years since the time of Joshua, they had been in captivity over one-quarter of the time. They found they simply could not get away with

disobedience to the heavenly King, because every time they did, He sent them into captivity to or in tribute to one of the surrounding nations. The Israelites began to feel that Yahweh was too strict; so they wanted an earthly king who could "feel their pain," as it were.

They probably also were not inclined to favor the idea of Samuel trying to set up a hereditary judgeship by making his sons judges after him. After all, Samuel, as good a man as he was, had the same failing as his predecessor, Eli. His sons turned out to be wicked individuals. Perhaps like Eli, Samuel was probably so preoccupied with his ministry that he did not spend enough time raising his sons to be law-abiding, God-fearing men.

1 Samuel 8:3 And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment.

4 Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah,

5 And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.

6 But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto YHWH.

Did the people ask for Saul by name or simply a king? Then Samuel goes on in a long speech to warn Israel that they are making a big mistake. He tells them how kings become oppressive and tyrannical. Then, in v. 19, the people respond to Samuel's warning:

19 Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us

Next, we are introduced to Saul, the Pentecostal, looking for his father's asses, and Saul's servant suggests they go into this town up the road and ask the prophet there where the asses might be. So they locate Samuel to ask his help, but their visit is not unexpected by Samuel.

1 Samuel 9:15 Now YHWH had told Samuel in his ear a day before Saul came, saying,

16 To morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel,

that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me.

17 And when Samuel saw Saul, YHWH said unto him, Behold the man whom I spake to thee of! this same shall reign over my people.

It is patently clear by this that *God* singled out Saul to be king; the people did not select him.

18 Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is.

19 And Samuel answered Saul, and said, I am the seer: go up before me unto the high place; for ye shall eat with me to day, and to morrow I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that is in thine heart.

20 And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them; for they are found. And on whom is all the desire of Israel? Is it not on thee, and on all thy father's house?

Somehow Samuel knew (1) that Saul was looking for asses, (2) that he had been looking for *three* days, and (3) that the asses had been found. From all the evidence it appears that Saul was a herdsman, not a shepherd. This is an important identifying mark of Saul and a mark of church leadership under a Saul anointing; that is, under a Pentecostal age anointing. It is imperfect; flawed.

Metaphorically speaking, they would rather *drive cattle* than *lead sheep*. Saul-types (technically, Saul-antitypes) try to *force* (drive) the believers to go whichever way they deem is correct. Any member of the herd that steps out of line is subjected to the harsh whip of the Saul-type leader. David-type leaders, on the other hand, lead the flock by example and gentle nudges of persuasion, rather than by driving them.

Saul-type church leaders set themselves above and apart from the rest of the body. That is why the Roman Catholic church with its elaborate hierarchical system of priests, bishops, cardinals and popes arose during the Pentecost age. They set themselves above the people. They claimed to have special knowledge and privileges which the laity (the ordinary believers) were not entitled to. Unfortunately, since shortly after the commencement of the Reformation, the same criticism applies to most Protestant denominations.

Of course, one of the reasons church leaders

wanted separation from the people is because if people got too close to them, they would see that their leaders are just as imperfect as the people whom they are allegedly serving. Saul-types would rather that the people think they are perfect (or very close to it) and therefore immune from criticism of what they preach and how they behave. Saul-types are *especially touchy* when it comes to anyone questioning their authority. This is a prominent character failing of King Saul throughout his reign. Anyone whom Saul even suspected of disloyalty to him personally was persecuted in one form or another.

From the perspective of the Saul-type leaders, it would be risky for the people to see how utterly fallible they really are. That would be bad for business because whether it's civil government politics or church politics, it's always easier to tumble someone off the pinnacle of power when he can be exposed as having weaknesses. Hence, Saul-types have great difficulty with humility, with admitting weakness. Thus, a large portion of church leaders for the past two thousand years have exhibited great pride and have lorded their authority over believers in typical Saul fashion. Nevertheless, all hope is not lost for the Saul in us and the Sauls among us.⁴

ENDNOTES

1. Hear *The Pretribulation Rapture Doctrine and Its Origin*, a C-90 audiotape of James Bruggeman on a 2-hour radio interview (with station breaks edited out). \$6 ppd.

2. See the syllabus page or our catalog or order form. *The Tabernacle in the Wilderness* is a 30-tape series split into four albums (with numerous charts and graphics): A-105, 106, 107, 108.

3. For additional proofs of the asses aspect, see the book, *The Wheat and Asses of Pentecost*, by Stephen Jones. (B-111 on our order form; \$3 + s & h.)

4. This FMS is condensed from the first message in our current series of studies on the tape ministry. The series (now up to #16) consists of stand-alone messages, meaning that one need not necessarily have heard all previous messages to understand the latest one. Since they are enjoying considerable popularity with listeners, we decided to give FMS readers a sample. However, we will not go into the depth in the FMS as we do in the taped teachings.

Feed My Sheep is a part of the teaching ministry of James W. Bruggeman and is sent out freely upon request. The tithes and gifts of those who are fed by it make it possible for us to continue in ministry. Gifts may be sent to P.O. Box 6388, Asheville, NC 28816.