

CONTEXT:

- We are witnessing the decline of King Saul, and the rise of David as the Lord's Anointed.
- Earlier in CH 19, we saw Saul ordering his men, along with his son Jonathan, to kill David. However, Jonathan stepped in and advocated for David, leading to David's restoration to Saul's service and presence.
- Saul made an oath to God that he would not kill David (CH 19:6), but that oath will be quickly broken.

THE STORY: Three episodes describing Saul's attempts on David's life

Episode 1 (vv8-10)

⁸ And there was war again. And David went out and fought with the Philistines and struck them with a great blow, so that they fled before him. ⁹ Then a harmful spirit from the Lord came upon Saul, as he sat in his house with his spear in his hand. And David was playing the lyre. ¹⁰ And Saul sought to pin David to the wall with the spear, but he eluded Saul, so that he struck the spear into the wall. And David fled and escaped that night.

This is a very familiar episode, which we saw happening last chapter (CH 18)

1 Samuel 18:10-11 (ESV)- ¹⁰ The next day a harmful spirit from God rushed upon Saul, and he raved within his house while David was playing the lyre, as he did day by day. Saul had his spear in his hand. ¹¹ And Saul hurled the spear, for he thought, "I will pin David to the wall." But David evaded him twice.

- Saul has already attempted twice, to pin David with a spear, but the difference this time is that David now knows for certain that Saul is trying to kill him.
- Saul's previous actions could have been passed off as "having a bad day," or "being in a bad mood" due to the evil spirit from the Lord that was tormenting him. But this time, in light of Jonathan's warning earlier in the chapter, David knows for sure that Saul wants him dead, which is why he flees, never to return to Saul.
- * From this point on in the story, David will be on the run from Saul.

Episode 2 (vv11-17)

¹¹ Saul sent messengers to David's house to watch him, that he might kill him in the morning. But Michal, David's wife, told him, "If you do not escape with your life tonight, tomorrow you will be killed." ¹² So Michal let David down through the window, and he fled away and escaped. ¹³ Michal took an image and laid it on the bed and put a pillow of goats' hair at its head and covered it with the clothes. ¹⁴ And when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, "He is sick." ¹⁵ Then Saul sent the messengers to see David, saying, "Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may kill him." ¹⁶ And when the messengers came in, behold, the image was in the bed, with the pillow of goats' hair at its head. ¹⁷ Saul said to Michal, "Why have you deceived me thus and let my enemy go, so that he has escaped?" And Michal answered Saul, "He said to me, 'Let me go. Why should I kill you?'"

- In this episode, Saul sends some hitmen to David's house to kill him. But ironically it is another one of Saul's children (Michal) who helps David escape.
- * This is highlighting the fact that God is with David.

The issue of lying (v14, 17)

- In **Psalm 59**, David speaks of this event, being ultimately praising God for His providence and deliverance. How do we make sense of Michal's lying?

Thomas Aquinas

1. lies of necessity
2. lies of jest
3. lies of malicious or evil intent

Episode 3 (vv18-24)

¹⁸ Now David fled and escaped, and he came to Samuel at Ramah and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and lived at Naioth. ¹⁹ And it was told Saul, "Behold, David is at Naioth in Ramah." ²⁰ Then Saul sent messengers to take David, and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as head over them, the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied. ²¹ When it was told Saul, he sent other messengers, and they also prophesied. And Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they also prophesied. ²² Then he himself went to Ramah and came to the great well that is in Secu. And he asked, "Where are Samuel and David?" And one said, "Behold, they are at Naioth in Ramah." ²³ And he went there to Naioth in Ramah. And the Spirit of God came upon him also, and as he went he prophesied until he came to Naioth in Ramah. ²⁴ And he too stripped off his clothes, and he too prophesied before Samuel and lay naked all that day and all that night. Thus it is said, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

"Is Saul also among the prophets?"

- This same question was asked before in chapter 10, in awe and amazement at the fact that Saul, after having been anointed and empowered by the Spirit, started to prophesy. However, now this question is asked in ridicule and contempt, as Saul is now prophesying under the control of the Spirit, stripped of his royal robes, and laying naked all day and night,

THE MAIN POINTS:

This story is highlighting two things:

1. THE UTTER REJECTION OF KING SAUL

- This chapter marks the official close of Saul's kingship. Saul's rejection is "complete."

* Saul's story began with him meeting the prophet Samuel at Ramah, being anointed as king, and having the Spirit of the Lord rushing upon him (empowering / enabling him to be king), and prophesying for all to witness and wonder, "Is Saul also among the prophets." But now, Saul's story closes with him finding Samuel again at Ramah, only this time looking to kill the Lord's anointed, but being prevented and controlled by the Holy Spirit, prophesying naked, with his royal robes stripped, being humiliated, leaving everyone questioning again, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

- From this point on, David will never again be serving or ministering to Saul in his courts, but will be on the run, fleeing from Saul.

2. GOD DELIVERS HIS ANOINTED

- "escape" in Hebrew is the word "ma-lat", which literally means "to slip away", but also has the meaning of being "saved" or "rescued" or "delivered."

- This word occurs five times (v10, 11, 12, 17, 18) to clearly emphasize that the LORD is delivering David.

2 Samuel 22:1-3 (ESV) ¹ And David spoke to the Lord the words of this song on the day when the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul. ² He said, "The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, ³ my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge, my savior; you save me from violence. ⁴ I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies.

* Saul cannot lay a finger on David, no matter how hard he tries, because the Lord is David's "Rock" and "Fortress" and "Deliverer." God is with David.

APPLICATION

- Though we may not be exactly like David, in his specific situation and circumstance, we (in and through Christ) are like David in that God is with us and for us.

- This means that we too, can claim the promises of God given to David, God's Anointed, here in this story.

* God is OUR Deliverer

What does God promise to deliver us from?

- The greatest threat we could ever face: SIN, which fully deserves and fully merits eternal death and punishment from God in an eternity of hell.

- Christ, our Deliverer, has bled and died for all of our sins on the cross, in our place, so that we could be completely delivered from the penalty of sin.

* This means that God is with us, and He is for us, not against us. We are no longer enemies with God! Which means, we do not need to fear any trouble that this life brings because we know that God is on our side, working all things for our eternal good.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In this story, Michal lied in order to protect and help her husband David escape from Saul. This, according to Thomas Aquinas, is a “lie of necessity” which is morally justified in light of living in a broken world. Have there been times in your life where you had to lie in order to protect the good of others, or even yourself? Share about this experience.

2. Another category of lies that Thomas Aquinas spoke of was “lies of jest”, which are lies made in a joking fashion. What do you think about the nature of these sorts of lies (whether they are acceptable or not) and why?

3. According to Thomas Aquinas, the only category of lies that are always and clearly a sin are “lies of malicious or evil intent.” These are lies, for example, where we try to cover up sin. In what ways do you struggle with these sorts of lies and why? What can help you to be more truthful and repentant in these areas?

4. In this story, we see Saul being finally and utterly rejected by the Lord for his persistent disobedience. What are some ways that you might be persistently rejecting the Lord by disobeying Him? What steps of repentance do you need to take this week to submit and obey the Lord? How can your brothers and sisters help you in this endeavor?

5. One of the main points of this story was to show us that God delivered David time and time again because He was with David. In what ways have you experienced the deliverance of the Lord in your life? Or in what ways have you been discouraged that the Lord did not deliver you in ways that you wanted or expected Him to? How did you handle those disappointments? What could help us in those times to endure and trust God?