

“Things Written Aforetime”
After God’s Own Heart

After King Saul’s illicit sacrifice, Samuel solemnly told him, “But now your kingdom shall not continue; Jehovah has *sought* Him a man after His own heart, and Jehovah has appointed him to be prince over His people, because you have not kept that which Jehovah commanded you” (1 Samuel 13:14). In the New Testament, it is said that when God had removed Saul, “He raised up David to be their king; to whom also he bare witness and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My heart, who shall do all My will” (Acts 13:22). God counts a man to be molded after His own heart, therefore, when that man shows that his own will runs parallel with God’s.

When we examine the life of David, we discover several ways in which David submitted to the will of God. He was a man who was “ahead of his time” in morality and spirituality. Even though sin marred the perfection of his life, he still stands out as a prime example of faithfulness to the will of God. Good kings after him were extolled for their similarity to David (2 Chronicles 17:3-4), and bad kings were exposed in contrast to him (1 Kings 15:3). Thus, David’s obedience set a standard by which to judge his regal heirs.

In at least three different ways, David serves as an excellent example to us. First, he had confidence in the promises and the care of God. In the Law of Moses, God promised His obedient people “rains in their season” and “bread to the full.” There would be “peace in the land,...and none shall make you afraid.” Again, “You shall chase your enemies...five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall chase ten thousand” (Leviticus 26:3-8). David had no doubt but that this applied to him personally, for when he prepared to confront the giant Goliath, he could say in complete trust, “Jehovah that delivered me out of the hand of the paw of the lion...will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine!” The giant boasted of a personal single-combat victory over David. But, David boldly replied, “I will smite you, and take off your head...and I will give the dead bodies of the *host of the Philistines* this day unto the birds of the heavens” (1 Samuel 17:36-37, 45-47). Such confidence was not born of ignorance of God’s power.

In the second instance, David showed a godly heart by counting no one his enemy among his brethren. He knew the Law said, “You shall not hate your brother in your heart...You shall not take vengeance against the children of your people; but you shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Leviticus 19:17-18). Consequently, when King

Saul malignantly hunted him down, uttering murderous threats, David did not fall into the temptation to return that animosity. Instead, he professed his righteous and merciful attitude toward his enemy, because he was of the children of Israel, and “God’s anointed” (1 Samuel 24:1-19).

David’s adherence to the Law, in the third example, sees him fulfilling his vows. The Law of God was clear. “When you shall vow a vow unto Jehovah your God, you shall not be slack to pay it...” (Deuteronomy 23:21-23). When David was a fugitive, Jonathan, the heir-apparent to the throne of Saul, would not interpret the set-backs suffered by David in the obvious light. He steadfastly professed the belief that David was destined to displace King Saul, and occupy the throne. Therefore, Jonathan made David promise to show kindness to his descendants. David vowed to honor Jonathan’s request.

Years of hiding, exile and civil war followed for David. Yet, when peace at last came to the nation, one of David’s first actions was to seek out Mephibosheth, the crippled son of Jonathan, the sole survivor of his famous father, and restore him to the honor that his vow required (1 Samuel 20:13-17, 2 Samuel 9:1-8). We should observe that God never deviates from His promises, and He expects His servants to have the same attitude.

Children of God who serve under the New Testament are likewise obligated to look to the character of God for a pattern of their own. They are to “put on the new man, that after God has been created in righteousness and holiness of truth” (Ephesians 4:22-24). By the way, they are also “created in Christ Jesus for good works” (Ephesians 2:10). Peter urges them, “...like as He who called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living; because it is written, ‘You shall be holy; for I am holy’” (1 Peter 1:13-15). In a similar fashion, Christ teaches them, “Be merciful, even as your father is merciful” (Luke 6:36). Dozens of such references could be cited, but these should be sufficient to make us realize that God would have all Christians to be “filled unto all the fulness of God” (Ephesians 3:14-19).

God still seeks men who are willing to be fashioned “after His own heart, who will do all of His will.” There are greater blessings in reserve for such men today that were given to King David. Who will seize them and husband them till eternity? Then, use God as a pattern, and fashion yourselves in His character!