

The guilt of Saul

The Old Testament is rich in narratives (incidents with a strong storyline) we can indeed apply in a very appropriate and practical manner. A very popular figure is of course King Saul who was known for his jealous heart. "Heart" typifying the seat of man's emotions and mind. From the heart, says Solomon, flows many wicked things.

Now, Saul was a person who gave the impression of a "good" man, but his heart was for sure a well of immense evil. And all because Saul lacked one salient characteristic God, to this very day, desires of all of us, and that is a teachable spirit. We are therefore not born perfect, but through God's help we can change, i.e. if we want to! Fact is, Saul was a jealous man who shunned correction from God and his type of jealousy was therefore as if he was completely caught in an inescapable net of evil. This guy was then totally obsessed with his rival – a sign that Saul was insane as only an obsessed person can go so intensely in competition with his rival and to whom he then could not and did not want to give any credit (Compare, on the other hand, David's constant good intentions with Saul – he had ample opportunity to destroy Saul but he time and time again chose the path of good over evil!) And in the end David won the battle!

Caught then in a net of insane self-love, Saul became a very pliable tool in the hands of Satana (satan). He became so embroiled in an intense psychological battle against David that he was gradually pulled in deeper and deeper until he could not and did not want to change. Fact is Saul, by allowing jealousy to control his soul and mind, also refusing discipline from God, handed his soul over to his deepseated, all-consuming, negative, destructive emotions.

Saul's mind was indeed so taken with David and God's anointing that was upon him – he could, however, not succeed in destroying David regardless of all his efforts - that David became his obsessive object of hatred and to the extent where whatever he had to say and think about David was dipped in poison. (What Saul did indeed succeed in, was to cause a painful rift between David and his daughter - David's first wife – proving again to what terrible lengths jealousy can go, causing division and even lasting separation – God is always for mending relationships while satan is always doing the opposite).

Now, we can gather that Saul refused discipline from God and eventually the first King of Israel was so caught up in a narcissistic spirit of self-love and self-assertion that eventually he destroyed himself. However, Gilboa was not God's perfect desire (will) for Saul. He in reality destroyed himself and in the process he also pulled his son along with him – Jonathan who was David's bosom friend and whose friendship was sacrificed because of Saul's constant pursuance of David and his intense desire to see his own lineage established over that of David. This should be clear should we objectify this very issue properly.

Saul's fierce hunting down of God's anointed, David, at last culminated in God's removal of Saul from among his own people. God clearly, in the end, treated Saul as an alien although David bided all the time by God's prescriptions - right to the end dealing with Saul in accordance with the sacred written text.

Now, if this was not a sign to God's flock that Saul had caused his own downfall – fighting God and his beloved – then what is? So, let's consider a few salient aspects in the life of Saul and David. Since David's victory and slaying of Goliath, Saul's jealous spirit was so deeply stirred that, in stead of bending his own spirit before God and acknowledging his sin of self-glory – the sign of a contrite heart and a broken spirit - he stood up with all his might against David. And he did so with such vehemence of heart that had it not been for God's protection, David would have been removed from the scene long before his time.

What of course stands out, should we attempt a personality evaluation of Saul on what is available to us in the Bible, is that he was not able to accept correction from God due to his extreme obsession with himself and his own esteem. To Saul there was then none as important as he was in the eyes of his people and therefore he hated, to the core of his being, the shine that God (!) had bestowed upon his rival. When the anointing fell on David, Saul having been found wanting in the eyes of God – and clearly because of his own unteachable spirit – left no stone unturned to try and destroy that very one whom God had wedged in to establish the Kingdom of ancient Israel

We can then gather from the history of Saul and David that, although Saul, up to the bitter end, had his ample share of comrades believing in his excellent qualities and leadership (and of course being their choice through and through, i.e. over David, God's beloved), he was later rejected by God, not because he was not able to rule properly, but because he permitted evil to take control. Evil was then the cause of Saul's downfall and the type of psychosis that eventually took control of Saul was the worst of all diseases (insanity - he became so paranoid that he just had to pursue David with all his might).

It was then not "normal" jealousy but an evil, demonic spirit bent on killing an innocent guy (David) who was indeed also entitled to live and enjoy just as Saul had claimed "the good life" for himself - the former "normal" degree of jealousy boiling down to guarding one's own in a healthy and wholesome way and keeping watch over especially one's beloved (= a natural instinct within man to preserve himself and his own territory and which conduct of course boils down to God's love for his people and as a man would protect his wife and family against destructive forces).

However, what things then do boil down to, in a nutshell, is that Saul allowed (!) satan to completely take control of his senses (in Old Testament translations stating that God had "allowed an evil spirit from God" to take control of Saul, but which actually would be better interpreted as "God allowing an evil spirit" in stead of "from God" as God is not dualistic in nature - He is then not, as in Essenism, both good and evil (God remains good and satan remains bad but God permits evil as a means of punishment and when man goes out of God's will. Yes, God did create satan, but satan chose evil above good and he is therefore indeed the originator of evil).

Saul in the end changed completely. He became a total psychotic personality when his jealousy took control of him and we can sense from his personal profile that things have then taken a drastic turn for Saul, i.e. when David became his sole object of extreme hatred. His jealous heart caused terrible division and failure to befall Israel and this was also the main reason why Saul could never subjugate the Philistines. He remained broiled in battle until, at last, he fell by his own sword on Gilboa. (We find something similar in the history of Ahab and Jezebel – Naboth's vineyard).

The lesson we can learn from Saul and David's history is perhaps this very important lesson: One can do whatever one wants to do, but God will in the end prove the innocence of those who have found favour in His sight! And we can only find favour with God if we shun evil! We can then go out, bent on keeping divisions in place and spreading hatred against the innocent (the Davids who are the beloved of God), but God's plan will ultimately unfold before the eyes of all.

Today, in retrospect, Saul's subtlety against David is clear and everybody knows that jealousy, driven to extremes, is a sure sign of psychosis. Fact is Saul permitted a spirit of jealousy to take fully control of him and in his mad chase of David, in his obsession with control and his anxiety that his own posterity would be required to bow the knee to David's dynasty – something which did happen in the end - he lost it all. A jealous person always deals obsessively in comparisons - and therefore is always bent on outsmarting his/her rival.

Had Saul come to God admitting his self-love, an obsession with his own self-importance and something that generated his deepseated hatred of David, making him a rival in stead of accepting that David too had a right to be blessed by God, this evil King of Israel's destiny would have taken a better turn had he timely taken heed of God's instructions. But Saul chose to proceed in the path of evil and eventually he had to dearly pay the price of the choices he himself had made (we can change if we are willing to open our ears to God's discipline).

The moral of this piece of history from the Bible? God will definitely, in His time, act, helping the innocent and destroying then that one who choose evil above good! Another lesson we can learn from Saul and David is that God helps those who help themselves! (Doing what God demands of us).

The Old Testament is then not a mere "historical" book. It breathes with the presence of God Most High, that very One who sent His Son into the world to save sinners (1 Tim. 1.15). But "sinners" must repent, rectifying their ways as God is indeed a slow but a very sure God!

Can a jealous person ever change?

This characteristic is of course so ingrained within the DNA (it seems so) and the psyche that there is little hope for real and lasting change, depending of course on the degree and level thereof and the choices we make to rid ourselves from this scourge. A biblical stance would be that jealousy is indeed Satan's spirit and a jealous obsessive (paranoid) personality can then only come to salvation (deliverance) once true repentance can set in and if a true infilling with God's Holy Spirit Power can be had - so that God can transform the jealous, obsessive person via a complete renewal of mind.

Prayer and especially fastings (!) can accelerate change too IF the guilty party can gain self-insight and acknowledging his/her mad desire to constantly outsmart what he or she may regard as their "rival".

Usually, and on the whole, a jealous person is deep inside a very insecure person and therefore the obsessive desire to always be in control (of situations and of lives) – no matter the means(!). But the danger is that should such a person be confronted because of his or her jealous spirit, chances are good that, not being able to accept a reprimand – like Saul – such a person may fiercely turn around to attack and destroy that very one who has taken control over the evil, i.e. to give a reprimand. A jealous person may sometimes target a rival personality with the insane (!) motivation to "put that rival (usually someone talented and therefore seen as a rival) "appropriately" in his/her place!". We sense then a distortion of the mind here – thinking in an unnatural, destructive way.

Compare David and Saul once again and especially their particular interests finding especially expression in, what I would like to call, "environmental similarities" – jealousy can only operate in relatively close contact and where opportunities and interests are more or less shared as such a stage usually renders the fertile soil for eliciting rivalry – a jealous person wants the whole scene for himself/herself and therefore this type of personality does not want to loose out but to win all the time – finding then out about the jealous person's schemes, and reprimanding such a person accordingly, would then elicit anger, not necessarily acknowledgement of especially this type of competitive "weakness" - remaining in control is seemingly always the determining factor here and a reprimand would then elicit anger in order to retain control - in Saul's case it seems that he was repressing his anger and one may perhaps ask the question: Was everybody around him indeed aware of his intense hatred of David?

And it is often a subtle, hidden anger that is enacted against those who have laid bare the evil motivations hidden behind the facade of innocence. Again compare Saul and the prophetic word given through Samuel to him – even Samuel was at a stage compelled to guard his steps lest he be murdered by Saul and all for the prophetic word given by him to David!

Extreme hatred can then indeed be set in motion against an innocent person - fired through jealousy - even though such a person may not be bent on "proving" himself/herself but whose profile may also spell success – something of great importance to a jealous person and therefore "success" will be observed as having been gained by the jealous person's rival, the very playground which is desired for him/herself – as was the case with Naboth and Ahab on the one hand and then with Jezebel as accomplice.

Jealousy is undoubtedly then about control and therefore manipulating one's environment (those around) to one's own benefit and in accordance with one's ability to effectively outsmart one's rival. And a jealous person, like Saul, would then indeed have gone to great lengths to hurt the innocent David.

A jealous person is indeed a murderer at heart and murder is of course condemned by the Almighty (the Ten Commandments). Jealousy is therefore a sin that will, at one time or another, elicit God's wrath for He detests murder - robbing someone of his/her divinely appointed "successes" in life (= God's blessings) is therefor the same as a physical murder. Jealousy = a murderous spirit! God, and as was the case with Saul, usually gives opportunity upon opportunity for repentance, i.e. before He acts swiftly and without regret to rectify the wrongs done by an evil person.

Note that hatred is the basis on which jealousy thrives. So obsessive jealousy is indeed the spirit of Satan! Like

Saul who projected himself as "chosen by God" - even after God had stripped him of his illustrious royal title as "King of Israel" – a jealous person does not want to be "uncovered". (Always keep in mind that there are degrees and levels of jealousy but unbridled, obsessive jealousy can and will turn psychotic unless something drastic is not done to curb such destructive behaviour).

It will also not help to try and repress hatred as it must be gotten rid of! Yes, the blood of Jesus cleanses and rids us from all sin (1 Jn 1.7-9) but then a complete change, inside out, must take place in the heart of those who claim rebirth. Jealousy must be laid off and total reorientation of soul and spirit must be attained (Gal. 5)!

For this very reason the wise Solomon gave us this wonderful piece of insight: "Who can stand against jealousy?" (Who can neutralize it?) And as the prophetic word to an anointed of God once went: "A jealous spirit will follow you throughout your life, but your strength will lie in quietness of spirit!"

If you then should come up against the Sauls in your life, be still and know that God is God and that He always has the last say. And He always has a way to rectify the wrongs that are ruthlessly done to His own (the Davids).

In my honest opinion, I have never found a proper cure for jealousy. Therefore, I like the "quietness of spirit" approach but what I also want to advise is that, should you meet a person on your journey through life who has nothing good to say about a talented person, know that, ten to one, it is a jealous spirit manifesting and bent on destroying someone who perhaps has no inkling of what is being done and said behind his/her back!

No wonder David so often complains in his Psalms, always being the target of evil pursuance and slanderous gossip!

Once anger is elicited, especially in the heart of a paranoid/jealous personality and sometimes brought about by the slightest provocation, one can unleash venomous behaviour against oneself and to the extreme, proving once again that intense jealousy can and will be triggered by thoughtless words and actions yet the fierce stab of jealousy can be aimed at the totally innocent, i.e. even when nothing deliberately is done to give rise to jealousy (see David's and Naboth's history). Fact is, a fiercely jealous person has an inward evil drive to push those who are regarded as jeopardising his/her desire to excel clean out of the way! There is then nothing that can unleash unhappiness/destruction upon one's life as when this type of venomous/poisonous acting out against one's life is set in motion. And should we laugh this type of statement off as "mad", think again! It is no wonder that the Scriptures advise us : "Be still and know that I am God!"

[God eventually anointed Jehu to destroy the wicked Jezebel and the envious Ahab (for what was selfishly done to Naboth's vineyard), and Saul who did so much harm to not only David, God's hunted-down, faithful servant, finally encountered God's concluding chapter, death and humiliation, via his own sword!]

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