

1 Samuel 16-18

**Saul has
an "evil" spirit?**

This morning I am going to share from three chapters and I am going to pass over some of the most famous scenes.

I listened to Abby's message from two weeks ago.

One of the things I like about how Abby shares...she brings humility when she speaks.

Humility - seeing yourself...and presenting yourself with honesty.

THIS is why we are drawn to David rather than Saul.

So I am going to share 2-3 things from these three chapters...

I am going to pass right by David killing Goliath.

I realize this is probably one of THE most famous texts in the OT.

But I am seeing some of the subtleties...similar to what Abbey presented.

In 1 Sam 16:14 the text reads:

[Slide]

Now the Spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul, and an **evil spirit** from the Lord tormented him.

I was thinking...it bothered me that God would send an evil spirit on Saul to torment him.

So I started thinking about that and did some digging.

[Slide]

In v23 the text says,

Whenever the spirit from God came on Saul, David would pick up his lyre and play.

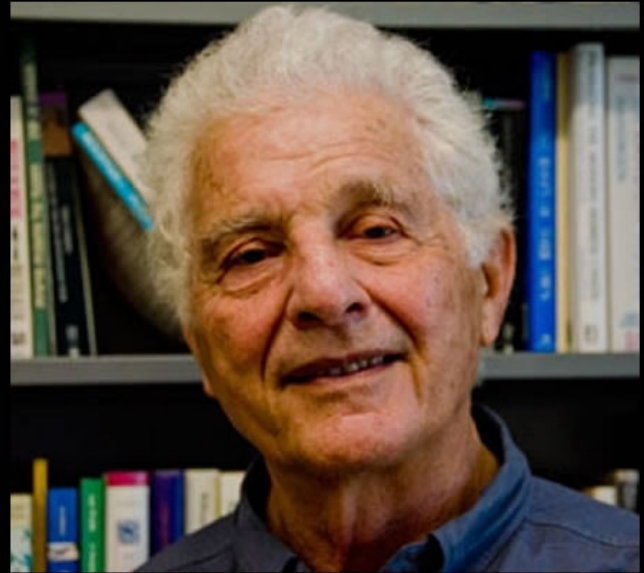
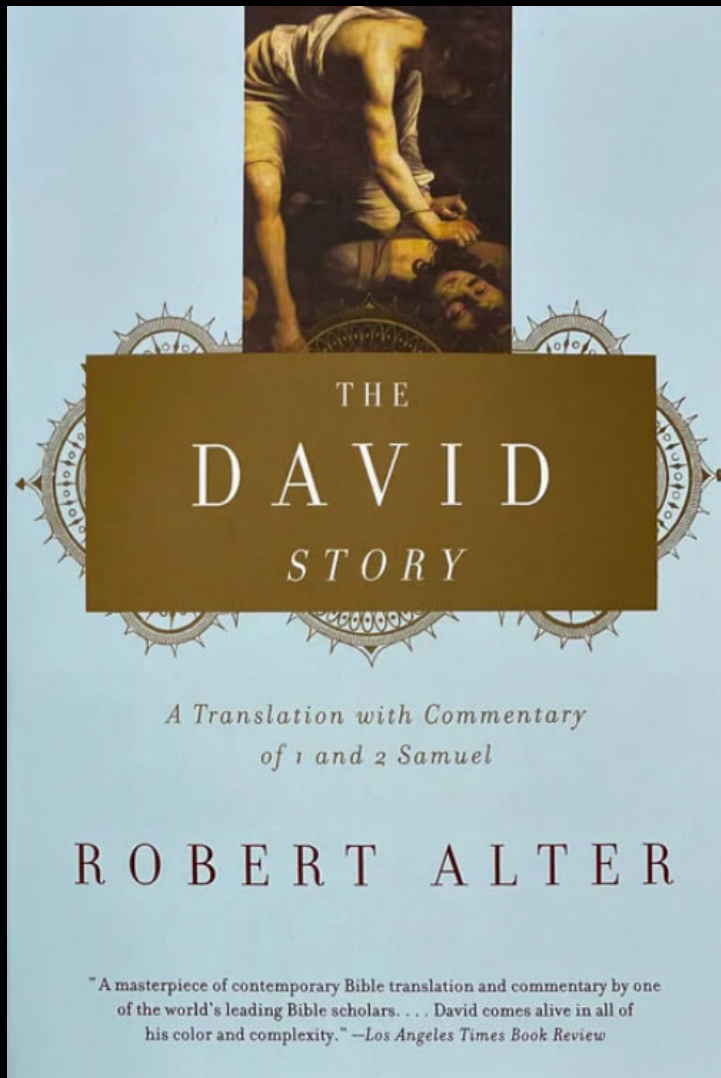
Then relief would come to Saul;
he would feel better,
and the evil spirit would leave him.

In the Hebrew there is a play on words here...it makes the text not as easy to translate, but makes it a bit more clear for me.

I have never taken Hebrew...and this is beyond my scope of knowledge.

I am giving to you what came to me in my pondering of the text...that led me to look at what other scholars say about this.

I did a search on Google Books and found Robert Alter's text,
"The Story of David"



Robert Alter is an American Jewish scholar...trained at Columbia and then Harvard and retired after teaching at UC Berkley.

These are all ruined academies now,
but back when he was trained they
were world-class.

Alter is most famous for his personal
translation of the Hebrew Bible into
English.

v14 - most translations read
something like this:
[Slide]

Now the Spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord tormented him.

Some translations say a "harmful" spirit... others say, a "tormenting" spirit...

I looked it up in the LXX: the word is not always translated as "evil."

[Slide]

v15 Saul's attendants said to him,
"An evil spirit from God is tormenting
you.

16 Let us find someone who can
play soothing music for you. He will
play when the evil spirit from God
comes on you, and you will feel
better."

Interesting because the word
translated "tormenting you" also
means to "choke" or "strangle."

So they brought David and...

v23 Whenever the spirit from God came on Saul, David would take up his lyre and play. Then relief would come to Saul; he would feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him.

When the text says,
"relief would come" to Saul...

This is a verb in Hebrew that sounds exactly like the word for "spirit."

And what does the word "spirit" derive from? "breath" or "breathing"

So this play on words sounds the same, but means something different.

So if we were to translate this sequence of events using this word play it would go something like this.

v14 Now [the breath] of the Lord had departed from Saul, and he would

feel choked like he was being strangled.

v23 When the choked breathing would come from God on Saul, David would play music. And then Saul could breathe again; he would feel better, and the harmful breathing would leave him.

The NIV says
"Saul would feel better."

Other translations say Saul was

"refreshed"

one says "revived"

another says "relieved"

What does this sound like to you?

It sounds like a "panic attack" to me.
I think Saul is beginning to "feel" the
reality that God has taken him out of
service as the King.

He is technically still the King, but we
know that David has already been
anointed.

Saul is like the President of the USA who just lost the election, but stays in the White House from November to February as a "lame duck."

Saul is finished...
and he knows it...

I think he knows that David has already been anointed.

His attendants...

I think they heard through the grapevine about the anointing of David.

It seems too big of a coincidence
that they say...

"We need to find someone who can
play the lyre...hey, I know a young
man named David!"

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Saul is depressed.

He is feeling the lonely feeling of his
failure.

[Slide]

Discouragement > Depression

Depression > Self-Pity

Self-Pity > Hatred

As Saul watched David approach Goliath, he asked Abner the Commander,

"Whose son is this?"

He was impressed...dumbstruck,
and I think watching David kill the
giant...

and all the men celebrating the
victory...

is giving Saul the sinking feeling that his day is gone.

At the end of Ch 17 Abner brings David before Saul.

The text says that David was still holding the head of Goliath.

I think it is safe to say that Saul deep down gets a vision of who would replace him.

It is here, at the beginning of Ch 18 that the text says,

[Slide]

"Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself."

This is the beginning of a legendary story:

two young men becoming lifetime friends.

[Slide]

Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself.

4 He took off his robe and gave it to David,
along with his tunic,
and even his sword,
and his bow and his belt.

With the killing of Goliath...
the celebration of the troops...

and the beginning of the relationship
between Jonathan and David...

We see a shift beginning.

In the words of John the Baptist
about Jesus:

"He must increase, but
I must decrease."

Sadly, Saul is missing the depth of
character to accept the shifting of
power.

And it leads to more failure.

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P R A Y E R

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[23 min]

Servant leadership is very different from ego-driven leadership.

A good leader, a servant-leader doesn't hold his/her authority tightly.

A good leader is ALWAYS looking for their replacement.

A good leader wants God...

(now we moving into the realm of the church)

A good leader wants God to replace them.

...is always looking for God to bring future leaders into the picture.

And a servant-leader does not grab leadership and clutch onto it,

a good leader gives leadership away.

Paul famously tells Timothy in [Slide]

2 Tim 2:

"The things you have heard me say in front of many witnesses,

you need to entrust those things to others,

who will turn around and teach others the same principles."

This is the language of transgenerational leadership.

Paul is telling one of his most significant leaders...

to find others who will be leaders...

And give them a chance to lead.

This should be standard procedure
in the church.

A simple way to apply the account of
Saul's life is:

"Whatever Saul does, do the
opposite."

What have you seen today in the
text?

What comes to your mind?

PRAYER