

The Davidic Kingdom

by Art Katz

Art Katz's sermon explores the essence of the Davidic Kingdom through the moral choices of David and their implications for believers today.

Scripture: 1 Samuel 24:1-20, Ezekiel 37:25, Matthew 5:10-12, Luke 9:23-24, John 15:13, Romans 11:36, 2 Corinthians 5:15, Galatians 2:20, Philippians 2:3-4, 1 Peter 2:9

Topics: "The Davidic Kingdom", "Righteousness and Sacrifice"

Description

Art Katz explores the significance of the Davidic Kingdom, emphasizing that God's choice of David as a symbol for Jesus reflects the essence of His kingdom. He highlights a pivotal moment in David's life, where David spares Saul, showcasing the moral integrity and character that define the Davidic spirit. Katz urges believers to embody the values of the Davidic Kingdom in their lives, recognizing that true righteousness often requires self-sacrifice and a rejection of self-interest. He warns against the dangers of pursuing personal agendas at the expense of God's will, drawing parallels between David's actions and the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. The sermon calls for a deep reflection on our own lives and the choices we make in light of God's kingdom.

Transcript

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It is interesting that in Ezekiel 37, when God restores Israel out of her death and sets His king over them, that of all of the names that God could have selected as a synonym for Jesus, He chooses David '...and David My servant shall be their prince forever (verse 25b).' In the sight of God, that which is Davidic, is the Spirit of Jesus, and vice versa. God gives great honor to King David in using his name as being emblematic of the kingdom that is God's forever. What is the Davidic kingdom? What is the essence and the character of David that God would want to employ that name to designate that kingdom? Are we Davidic saints now?

There is an episode from the life of David that, I think, gives us a sense of the essence, the character and the distinctive of the coming kingdom and rule of God through a restored nation Israel. We should not only

be anticipating the coming of the King and His kingdom, but we should be living in the light and character of that kingdom now. We might be embarrassed to realize how little we have been walking in the spirit of that kingdom as was revealed in a certain moment of time in the life of David.

The text is 1 Samuel 24. It is amazing what is revealed in a single episode. It would be good for us to look upon our own lives as moving toward a single episode, that everything is in preparation for one thing that God will require at a point of time. God forbid that when it is asked for, we are unable to produce it, because we have not seen our life as preparation toward that end.

Now it came about when Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, saying, "Behold, David is in the wilderness of Engedi." Then Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel, and went to seek David and his men in front of the Rocks of the Wild Goats. And he came to the sheepfolds on the way, where there was a cave; and Saul went in to relieve himself. Now David and his men were sitting in the inner recesses of the cave. And the men of David said to him, "Behold, this is the day of which the Lord said to you, 'Behold, I am about to give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it seems good to you.'" Then David arose and cut off the edge of Saul's robe secretly.

And it came about afterward that David's conscience bothered him because he had cut off the edge of Saul's robe. So he said to his men, "Far be it from me because of the Lord that I should do this thing to my lord, the Lord's anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, since he is the Lord's anointed." And David persuaded his men with these words and did not allow them to rise up against Saul. And Saul arose, left the cave, and went on his way. Now afterward David arose and went out of the cave and called after Saul, saying, "My lord the king!"

And when Saul looked behind him, David bowed with his face to the ground and prostrated himself. And David said to Saul, "Why do you listen to the words of men, saying, 'Behold, David seeks to harm you'? Behold, this day your eyes have seen that the Lord had given you today into mine hand in the cave, and some said to kill you, but my eye had pity on you; and I said, 'I will not stretch out my hand against my lord, for he is the Lord's anointed.' Now, my father, see! Indeed, see the edge of your robe in mine hand!

For in that I cut off the edge of your robe and did not kill you, know and perceive that there is no evil or rebellion in mine hands, and I have not sinned against you, though you are lying in wait for my life to take it. May the Lord judge between you and me, and may the Lord avenge me on you; but my hand shall not be against you. As the proverb of the ancients says, 'Out of the wicked comes forth wickedness'; but my hand shall not be against you. After whom has the king of Israel come out?

Whom are you pursuing? A dead dog, a single flea? The Lord therefore be judge and decide between you and me; and may He see and plead my cause, and deliver me from your hand." Now it came about when David had finished speaking these words to Saul, that Saul said, "Is this your voice, my son David?" Then Saul lifted up his voice and wept. And he said to David, "You are more righteous than I; for you have dealt well with me, while I have dealt wickedly with you. And you have declared today that you have done good to me, that the Lord delivered me into your hand, and yet you did not kill me.

For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him go away safely? May the Lord therefore reward you with good in return for what you have done to me this day. And now, behold, I know that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand" (1 Samuel 24:1-20).

Well, if Saul ever did anything good, it was to speak that prophetic word, which is absolutely true not only for the historical kingdom that David ruled, but the kingdom to come. The kingdom that comes must bear the same essential characteristics as was displayed in this one episode with Saul. We need to have a proper appreciation of, and understand why it is that Saul was pursuing David. What was there that was so offensive in David, who was a stripling and had no significance in himself, that Saul could not bear for him to live? We need to know that, because that is exactly a picture of the last day's pursuit and relentless persecution of a 'Saul' people against a 'Davidic' people of God. I tend to look at things in polarities. There is no neutral ground. It is either this or that. It is either David or Saul. They are two symbolic alternatives both purporting to be, so to speak, 'Christian' or 'of Israel,' and yet one is in deadly pursuit of the other and cannot abide that the Davidic thing should live.

Do you remember when a band of Jews said that they would fast and not eat again until Paul was killed, for they could not abide Paul's life? They found Paul so offensive. He was not fit to live. What is it about a David and a Paul that even religious people cannot tolerate them and want to root them out of existence? If this is all academic to us, it is because we have not been sufficiently Davidic as to arouse those 'Saul-like' forces that are everywhere about and waiting to come against us. This is a classic and eternal contest.

Saul looked every bit the king. He had all of the externalities and the outward credentials, and he was an expediency that God allowed Israel because they wanted a human king to rule over them, though God Himself was their King. We all know what kind of misrule came through Saul and how he failed to be obedient to God. When God told him to destroy the Amalakites and spare not, and utterly destroy the infants, the suckling, the camel, sheep, oxen, etc., he did not do it. He was partial in his obedience and saved the best of the sheep and oxen for a sacrifice unto the Lord. He could not bring himself to slay the Amalakite, King Agag. It was Samuel, who wept all through the night at Saul's disobedience for partial obedience is disobedience and who himself took a sword and hacked Agag to pieces. We need to further note that the same Saul, who could not bring himself to a complete obedience to God to slay the historic enemies of God, in only a chapter or two later, destroys the whole city of Nob, a priestly community of men, women, infants and suckling, camel, sheep, oxen and ass. There was not a living thing that breathed when Saul exterminated an entire priestly community because they had helped David in his flight.

What is there about this David that Saul, in his antagonism, flung his spear at him, and pursued him relentlessly unto death? We need not think that because David let him go that day that Saul would be chastened and realize that he was in error in pursuing this man. Yes, David had spared him, but it would be naive of us to think that Saul's tears were anything more than 'crocodile' tears. It is only a matter of time before what is intrinsically in Saul, that inescapable, ruthless hatred of God's remnant people, will again surface and pursue David unto death. Do you think that David was naive about that? Do you think that when he went down on his face and called out, "My father," that was some kind of ingratiating attempt to win this man's favor? It was an authentic expression of a true heart that was not using that as a ploy in order to win Saul's favor. David knew in his heart what Saul was made of, and that to let him go was really for David to sign his own death warrant. Rightly did Saul say, "You are more righteous than I." Do you know why? It was because of David's willingness to lay down his life for it. Any righteousness that does not require our life is a religious sham. This was an ultimate act that David performed.

We need to know that the principalities and powers of the air that brooded over Israel were watching that incident with an intense preoccupation. The way in which David would act freely in the moment that came to him was not only to decide the perpetuation of his own life, his own survival or the coming of his own

kingdom, but was to touch profoundly a moral contest, a conflict of moralities and a pivotal thing in the heavenlies between two kinds of wisdom. If David could be sucked into acting in defense of his own life in the kind of conventional wisdom that any man would employ when his life is threatened, there would have been no Davidic kingdom. We cannot estimate the weight of what was hanging in the balance in one episode that came in a moment of time by surprise, completely unpremeditated and unsought. That is the way it will come to us. We will not have the luxury of a warning. A moment will come when a decision of a kind will be required from us where again the powers of the air will be looking down to see what we will freely do when we are freely able to choose to do what we want to do.

I am somewhat amused with saints who say, "If the Lord will only tell me what His will is for me. I am waiting for Him to tell me." I want to tell you, saints, that we are in an hour now when we can realistically not expect to hear God speak like that. That was the manna that came down from heaven when we were yet in the wilderness, but when we come into the Land, that infantile provision is no longer given. God is waiting to see what we will do when we are freely able to do what we will choose, without Him telling us.

The last day's requirements of God will be of this kind, because who will not do what God says when He says it? That is blatant disobedience. The great and final acts that will commend the church of God to the purpose of God in the last days are the things that will be freely chosen when we are free to choose and do what we will. It is interesting that even David's men said to him, "Behold, this is the day of which the Lord said to you, 'Behold, I am about to give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it seems good to you.'" That was true. God had promised that, and now it was suddenly being fulfilled when Saul came in, of all places, to take a nap in the very cave where David's men were hiding. What a golden opportunity to put to death once and for all this threatening, intimidating presence who is the issue of your survival! David was the future king of Israel. It was his ministry that was at stake, as well as his life. Should he not, therefore, take this occasion to remove the threat not only to his life, but to his ministry? Besides that, if he gets killed, how will the Messiah come as the son of David, as the offspring of David, if there is no David from whom the offspring shall come?

I cannot say enough for the magnitude of the stakes that day. David was willing to take that risk. Most of us would not. We would say, "My ministry! It is not my life, you know, but my ministry is threatened, and if my ministry is lost, well, whole nations will perish!" How many ministers have divorced intractable wives who opposed their ministries and got rid of them like a snake its dead skin, and go on to find another who happens to be more compatible? The people of God do not even blink an eyelash, but go on adoring the man for his wonderful ministry. It is amazing what men will do in the justification of their ministry.

David, however, would not extend his hand. I want to say that extending one's hand in justification, or in the promotion of one's ministry, or anything, is exactly the wisdom of this world. Just look at the Christian mass mailings! They are invariably marked 'urgent' with multicolored, last-word promotional advertising, because if the world can do it, we can do it even better. Statistically, if you mail out a million pieces and get only a two percent response, it will not only cover the cost of the mailing, but fill your coffers with good things. It is a device, a tactic and a calculated stratagem is not God. We do not need to employ expediences to promote the kingdom of God, for it is not His kingdom you are promoting, but your own. It is no longer Davidic, and it never was, for if it is Davidic, let God decide. How did David say it? "May the Lord judge between you and me, and may the Lord avenge me on you; but my hand shall not be against you (verse 12)."

It says that David's conscience bothered him just by cutting the edge of his robe. How could he even so much as touch God's anointed? He had a respect for the authority of God, even for a man who was backslidden, whose anointing had long since departed, and who would be consulting witches not long thereafter, but in David's sight he was still God's anointed. He was still a father. He was still an older man who deserved a respect even though he was the most backslidden and self-seeking carnal piece of flesh.

I think that I can say with assurance that our condition as the church today would be radically different if we looked at that fallen and apostate nation, Israel, with the same kind of respect for what their initial calling was. How many of us are condemning denominations, or, for example, saying, "We are on the cutting edge as the last day's apostolic and prophetic people, but the rest are 'Babylon.' We alone..." The whole issue of whether indeed we will be on God's last day's cutting edge is how we relate to the religious 'Babylon', to the 'Saul' kingdoms of this world. Even if they have no anointing and have lost their place or forfeited it, something is required from us by a way of respect, that David exhibited in that day with Saul. The whole of God's redemptive future was at stake in a single man's response to something that came freely to him when he could do what it seemed good to him to do. Praise God that what seemed good to him was not what seemed good to his men. His men were ruled by another wisdom: "Get rid of the threat. Take your opportunity. Get that vexation out of your life once and for all. It is a threat to your future kingdom." Anything that we rip and tear asunder to free ourselves from, anything that frees us from vexation and anything that we are not able to bear, is condescending to the way of the world.

The unspoken premise by which all the world lives its life is that you have every justification for self-interest that is itself rooted in self-survival. It is also the principle and premise of the gods of this world, to which many of us subscribe, day by day. What we do even in our bedrooms, in manipulation, in devices and the little ways of working to obtain our end, is the very principle of self-seeking that is antithetical to the Davidic kingdom.

We need to see why it is that God cannot approve, applaud or favor anything that emanates from man, even those things that purport to be in God's interests, that come out of his own self-will, his own effort and his own flesh. That is why Paul says, "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen (Romans 11:36)." God will receive nothing that has its origin in man. He knows what is in man and we need not think that because we sanctify it 'in the name of the Lord', that we are thereby promoting His interests.

The attempt at self-help rests on an error of man concerning himself, namely, that we have a right and a necessity to affirm ourselves to be the active subject of our existence, and as such, to think and act in autonomous responsibility in fulfillment of the determinations of our creaturely nature (Karl Barth).

I guess the world would say, "Take care of number one. It is the law of life. If you don't, who will? Come on, don't be a fool. Doesn't everyone live by it, and from it and for it? I mean, I've got to take care of me!" It is so assumed. Nobody even raises a question whether this is right or not, nor are we too scrupulous about what means we will employ to see that 'me' is well-taken care of. We cut little corners, little dishonesties and little manipulations we extend our hand. It is the uncontested mindset of the world. Praise God it was not David's and it ought not to be ours if we are the Davidic people of God. There is no place where we are more tested in this than in the things that we purport to do for God. It is in the building of His church, in the building of His kingdom and in the expansion of our ministries, that we do the thing that is expedient, and will not allow God to avenge, to judge, to determine, to requite and to justify. "Let God," David said, "judge between you and me. But I? I will not assert myself." God, in fact, did judge. Saul

was killed on the battlefield together with his sons, and his carcass was pinned to a Philistine wall, who did it as a mock to all Israel. He came to his end, but David did not have to lift his hand.

We must not miss the statement that David makes: "After whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom are you pursuing? A dead dog, a single flea? (verse 14)" Do you think that David is playing on words here? The fact that he is a man of war, and still refuses to stretch forth his hand to kill when he has someone defenseless at his beck, is all the more a profound statement of the revelation of God and of His kingdom. I do not think David demonstrated a self-effacing, false humility. This is a man who really thinks that he is a dead dog and a flea. Only if you think that will you be willing to let your life out, that if God does not preserve it, so let it be. There is nothing that important about me that I should hold my life as dear unto myself. It is not for myself, but for Him. If He is more glorified by my death than by my living, so be it. For what am I, after all, without Him, but a dead dog and a flea. A piece of dust. Our basic error is our error concerning ourselves, that we have a right to preserve the creaturely thing that we are. We are dead men who have been brought back from the dead through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, no longer to live for ourselves, but unto Him. That is what it says in Romans 6, but that is not what is said by our living. By our living we are more like Saul than like David. We do the thing that is expedient. We pursue our own interests. We will rise against the thing that threatens us.

Which kingdom are we reflecting? What are the basic premises of our life? We have never questioned the logic by which the world lives its life, namely, that we have a right to affirm ourselves, to preserve our creaturely existence, to 'take care of number one.' We come to services on Sunday, we give into the collection plate, but the basic root of our being is the preservation of our own self-interest and our own survival. To that degree, it is not of the wisdom of God. Can you understand why God loves David and calls him His beloved? Yes, I know that he was an adulterer and a murderer. There was, however, a moment that came, one moment when David showed himself in such a way that affected all subsequent history and will reverberate unto the day of eternity.

Whether we know it or not, we are coming to a 'one moment'. We are being groomed, prepared and being brought to a moment of confrontation, when something will be before us where we can freely do what we choose to do, and in that, reveal what we in fact are and always have been. We need consciously to live in preparation for that moment, that when it comes, it will not be our life that we will jealously preserve, but to so move and act in such a way as to eternally honor Him who gave His Own life for us in the most horrible and defaming and ignoble way at the Cross. What David did in 1 Samuel 24 is what Jesus did at the Cross of Calvary. He did not clutch His life. He did not preserve it. He could have commanded legions of angels, but His kingdom is not of this world and there was therefore a glorious resurrection of which we have been the recipients because Jesus did not preserve His life.

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