20Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto Thee.

Psalm of David

Psalm 51:10-13

First Love Ministries, Inc., of Perry, Georgia USA

Prayer Study #533

A Look at the Life of David

(In preparing this study, I have borrowed from Herbert Lockyer and his *All the Men of the Bible* and from John S. Torell, among other sources.)

David was the second and the greatest king of Israel and was chosen by God Himself. His name means *Beloved*. He was the youngest of eight sons of Jesse, from the tribe of Judah. He lived in Bethlehem. Apparently Jesse was a good but common man, although some believe he was on the Sanhedrin, the Jewish supreme court, which would make him a local leader. The Bethlehem of that time was considered an insignificant "podunk" settlement near Jerusalem. David was a man who made many mistakes, but hopefully the thing that we remember most about him is he was called a man after God's own heart:

"But now your [Saul's] *kingdom shall not continue. The LORD has sought for Himself a man after his own heart, and the LORD has*

commanded him [David] *to be commander over His people, because you* [Saul] *have not kept what the LORD commanded you."* 1 Samuel 13:14)

"And when He had removed him [Saul*], He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, 'I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.'"* Acts 13:22

<u>SAUL</u>

To fully understand David's life, we will briefly look at his predecessor, King Saul, from the tribe of Benjamin, and Saul's son, Jonathan. Saul started out humbly serving as the first king of Israel. Things went well for his first two years. Then a major crisis came. The Philistines assembled a great army to go against Israel. They had 30,000 chariots, 6000 cavalry, and infantry like the sand of the sea (1st Samuel 13:5). On the other hand, Israel had only 3000 soldiers-a group of 2000 soldiers whom Saul commanded and a 1000 army whom his son Jonathan commanded,- and few of them had swords or spears (1st Samuel 13:1-2 & 13:22). Saul sent out a decree calling for all the able-bodied Israeli men to come fight the Philistines, but although thousands came, they and most of the regular army fled when they saw the size of the Philistine army. This left Saul with only 600 men (1st Samuel 13:3-7). Saul had called for Samuel to come at a certain time and to a certain place to make a sacrifice before the Israelites went into battle. When Samuel did not show up, Saul himself wrongly decided that he would lead the people in a sacrifice to God, even though he was not a priest and was not

sanctioned by God to make a sacrifice. This angered the Lord. (1st Samuel 13:8-14). Samuel said this was rebellion and like witchcraft. The Israelis were crushed, and the Philistines sent out three groups to plunder the people of Israel.

Years later Saul was ordered by God to attack the Amalekites, which represent the flesh nature, and leave nothing alive behind. He disobeyed the Lord and kept King Agag and the best of the livestock alive. Since he had disobeyed the Lord, God sent Samuel to tell him that he was finished as king of Israel. The Holy Spirit left Saul and was replaced by an evil spirit, but the Holy Spirit came upon David when he was anointed to be the next king (1st Samuel 15).

This was a time for David to grow into manhood and to learn how to be a king. Saul often had deep depression, and his attendants sent for David to play his harp because this music soothed Saul's soul. Thus, David was often in the palace. Saul, however, became very jealous of David and very angry, especially after Saul heard the people say, "*Saul has slain his thousands*, *and David his ten thousands*" (1st Samuel 18:7). From that day forward Saul wanted to kill David because he knew that David was to take his place as king. For 20 years he spent much time trying unsuccessfully to kill David.

Since Saul no longer had the Holy Spirit, he could no longer hear the Lord. He turned to a witch in desperation to conjure up the dead prophet Samuel. He was told that he would be dead within 24 hours. The next day both Saul and his two sons entered into a battle with the Philistines. His sons were killed, and he committed suicide by falling on his own sword. The

Philistines cut off his head and showed it from city to city and nailed his headless body to a wall (1st Samuel 31).

J0NATHAN

Some try to say that David and Jonathan's relationship with each other was inappropriate. There is absolutely no scripture to back this up. Jonathan's deep friendship with David, his lack of jealousy of David in sharp contrast to Saul's insane jealousy, and his courage in battle make him a special person to me.

Others see Jonathan in rebellion to his father, and yet despite all the feuds between Saul and Jonathan, (Saul tried to kill Jonathan twice), Jonathan did not desert his father in the final battle on Mount Gilboa, against the Philistines, where he went and fought and died with his father and brother.

Earlier to stop the Philistines, the Lord moved on Jonathan and his armor bearer to attack a Philistine garrison. Once Jonathan made his move, holy angels sent an earthquake, and in the confusion the Philistines began to kill themselves. Saul had lost the fight in him, but he rallied his small army and defeated the invaders.

Once Saul realized he was back in control and found out that his son Jonathan had disobeyed Saul's order not to eat anything that day (Jonathan disobeyed the order because he never was told the order), he decided to kill his son. However, the Israelis rose up and demanded that Saul not do this, and Saul, humiliated by this, returned home.

Another time Saul threw a spear to kill Jonathan because Saul was angry with Jonathan because of his relationship with David. Fortunately the spear missed.

DAVID'S CHILDHOOD YEARS

David came from a great lineage. His great grandparents were Boaz and Ruth. Boaz and Ruth raised David's grandfather Obed to know the Lord. These is no doubt that David learned early how to worship the Lord, and he was a gifted harp player and singer. He was also trained to be a shepherd.

Much can be made of the fact that Jesse did not initially even bring David to the house when Samuel came to visit. Samuel prayed over his seven brothers, and the Lord kept telling Samuel this is not the one. David had to be called in at Samuel's request to be prayed over, because he knew the next king was to be one of Jesse's son.

We know nothing, from the Bible, about David's mother nor why Jesse did not call David in to be prayed over by the prophet. There are indications in scripture that David's older brothers despised him, much like Joseph's brothers in Genesis. However, it was not because David was a favorite son of Jesse. In fact, it is said that David was not permitted to eat with the rest of the family and had to sit at a separate table in the corner. He was supposedly given the task of shepherd because the family hoped a wild beast would come and kill him while he was shepherding. Thus he was sent to dangerous areas where there were lions and bears, which he had to fight.

From ancient Jewish writings, we are told that David's mother was Nitzevet. She was the only person who loved David unconditionally. Nitzevet was a full Israeli.

David's father was a grandson of Boaz and Ruth and the son of a godly man, Obed. Jesse, late in his life and after having seven

sons with Nitzevet, begin to doubt his own ancestry. Why? Because his grandmother Ruth was a convert from the nation of Moab. The Torah specifically forbids Jews from marrying a Moabite since this is the nation that cruelly refused to allow the Jewish people to pass through their land or give them food and water when they wandered in the wilderness after leaving Egypt. Boaz, however, understood this law as forbidding intermarriage with converted *male* Moabites, since the male Moabites were the ones who were responsible for the cruel conduct, not the Moabite women. They believed the law exempted female Moabites. With his marriage to Ruth, Boaz hoped to clarify this Torah Law, which was unknown to most of the Israelites. Boaz died the night after his marriage to Ruth, but she conceived his child Obed, the father of Jesse, the father of David. Some people believed that Boaz's death was God's punishment because he had married a Moabite. Of course, we know this is totally untrue, since Jesus was born through this ancestry of Obed, the son of Ruth and Boaz. Obed was a very righteous and well-respected man and proved the legitimacy of his ancestry. The Jews felt that, because of his character and standing, it would have been impossible for a man of his caliber to have descended from a forbidden union.

Because Jesse was a man of integrity, he began to think that he was not permitted to remain married to Nitzevet because she was a pure Jew, and he had Moabite blood in him. He decided to no longer engage in marital relations with her and separated from her. Their seven children, of course, were aware of this separation.

In his mixed-up thinking, Jesse decided to engage in sex with his Canaanite maidservant. He reasoned that this woman was not a Jew and because he had the legal status of a Moabite convert forbidden to marry an Israelite, fathering a child with her would be acceptable. This honorable maidservant, however, was aware of Nitzevet's pain of being separated from her husband for years, and Nitzevet's longing for more children. The maidservant secretly approached Nitzevet and told her of Jesse's plan. She told Nitzevet to exchange places with her just like Leah did with Rachel. That night Nitzevet slept with Jesse, and she conceived, but Jesse was unaware of the switch.

When Nitzevet's pregnancy became obvious, her sons wanted to kill her since they thought she was an adulterer. Nitzevet vowed a vow of silence because she did not want to embarrass her husband. Jesse ordered his sons not to touch her. He told them to let the child that would be born be treated as a lowly and despised servant. The brothers treated Nitzevet as an outcast and the rest of the community assumed that this young man was an abominable sinner born out of an adulterous relationship. They said that all the positive qualities of Boaz became manifest in Jesse and his seven sons, but the negative character traits from Ruth, the Moabite, were in this despised son.

When Samuel came to anoint a king for Israel, the town's people thought that Samuel had come to rebuke them because of the sins of Jesse's despised son. Instead Samuel anointed David as the new king of Israel.

David was very wounded by his treatment of his family and the town's people. In Psalm 69 are such phrases as *"Those who hate*

me without a cause are more than the hairs of my head," "I have become a stranger to my brothers and an alien to my mother's brothers," "Those who sit at the gate speak against me," "I looked for someone to take pity, but there was none," and "Reproach has broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness."

We see in David someone who had much rejection, depression, loneliness, isolation, and an orphan spirit. He was falsely accused, gossiped about constantly, and look down on. It is amazing that when others saw a despised shepherd boy, God saw a king!

On the day of David's anointing to be king, Samuel saw a man of "ruddy complexion, with red hair, beautiful eyes, and handsome to look at. Chana Weisberg writes, "David's physical appearance alludes to the differing aspects of his personality. His ruddiness suggests a warlike nature, while his eyes and general appearance indicate kindness and gentility."

Weisberg describes the scene with Nitzevet weeping and telling her sons that "the stone which was reviled by the builders has now become the cornerstone!" (Psalms 118:22.). The sons humbly responded, admitting that this act of anointing David had come from God, and those in the hall cried out in unison, "Long live the king!"

As a warrior, David was very bold and courageous. Although he had no training as a soldier, was a mere child, dressed like a poor country shepherd lad, and had no weapons except a sling shot, he defeated the giant Goliath and cut off his head. Nevertheless, he did not boast and gave God all the glory. But David became a man of war, and because of that, he was not allowed, by God, to build the temple.

As a musician he was very skilled at playing the harp and called to the palace to play for King Saul, who was suffering from severe depression and could only be calmed by David's music. As a poet, he wrote many of the Psalms and is the most quoted poet of the ages.

As a saint, David was "all in" for the Lord and was known as previously stated, "a man after God's own heart." He was not chosen for his goodness but for the special purposes of God. Perhaps few people, however, have spent as much time in praise, worship and meditation of the Holy One of Israel.

As a sinner, David committed gross sin. He stained his character by impregnating Uriah's wife Bathsheba, while Uriah was fighting on the battlefield for Israel. Then he had Uriah put in a position on the battlefield where he most likely would be killed, and he was. Thus David was an adulterer and a murderer. Yet after he was confronted by Nathan the prophet, he humbled himself before God and cried out for pardon and restoration as Psalms 32 and 51 prove. God forgave but He also allowed death and murder to be a constant threat to his family. The child that was conceived by David's adulterous relationship with Bathsheba died seven days after birth. David's son Absalom killed his half-brother Amnon because Amnon had raped Absalom's sister Tamar. Absalom revolted against David and with the help of the Benjamites, who wanted to avenge Saul's family and the elders whose status was undermined by some of David's policies, tried to take over the throne but was killed by Joab Another son, Adonijah, was killed soon after David died.

As a prophet, David had a gift given to few. He wrote prophetic words in the Psalms related to the coming Messiah. In fact,

Psalms is the most quoted book in the New Testament, mainly because of David's Psalms.

Although David was a sinner, he also was a type of Christ. Jesus and David had many similarities. They both were born in Bethlehem. They both came from families of little means. They both were shepherds-one of sheep and the other of souls. They both were persecuted but did not open their mouths to defend themselves. They both were kings, one with a temporal kingdom and the other with an eternal kingdom.

David was king for about 40 years. He had many sons and daughters and died at an old age, and his son Solomon became the next king. He had several wives and eight are mentioned by name. Michal, Abigail, Bathsheba, Ahinoam, Maacah, Haggith, Abital, and Eglah. David had a sinful weakness for women.

David initiated a cultural and literary revival which was continued by Solomon. He undertook far-reaching reforms in national institutions and administration. He was not allowed to build the first Temple in Jerusalem, but he did raise the money and make preparation for this and chose the site so that Solomon could then build the structure. The worship of the one true God became the religion of all Israel under David. He organized the priesthood under the chief priests and reorganized the army.

David's strong point was his zeal or passion. As a shepherd boy this zeal caused him to fight off a lion and a bear and challenge Goliath. Later his passion caused him to become the champion of Saul's army. As a Psalmist his passion is so evident in some of the most beautiful words ever written.

Other than David's 23rd Psalm, my favorite words of David and perhaps some of his better-known words are found in Psalm

51:10-13: *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and uphold me by Your generous Spirit. Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners shall be converted to You.*

Volumes have been written about David, who other than Moses, was probably the biggest character of the Old Testament. I have covered his life, just highlighting the high points of his life. There is so much more about David in scripture. Details of David's life can be found in 1st and 2nd Samuel, 1st and 2nd Kings, and 1st Chronicles. His influence and prominence can be clearly seen in the New Testament where Jesus Himself is referred to as *the Son of David*.