

The Fullness of David

Part Three

(Mishandled Responsibility)

David was the first king of Israel that was given independent responsibility, and that, therefore, was allowed to fail or succeed, in the ways of man. The prior king, who is generally accepted as being the first king of Israel, was not allowed to make independent decisions about how to proceed. We will see, in a moment, why David is the first king to be given a chance to exercise independent initiative. For now, let us consider the sort of restriction that was placed on the first generally accepted king of Israel, Saul.

Initially, it seems that Saul had free reign:

Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel, Saul chose him three thousand men of Israel; whereof two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in mount Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin: and the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent. And Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba, and the Philistines heard of it. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, Let the Hebrews hear.

(1 Samuel 13:1-3)

However, though there was an initial surge of potentiality; his adversary's preparation and his adversary's reputation powerfully quenched the kingly fire of confrontation.

And all Israel heard say that Saul had smitten a garrison of the Philistines, and that Israel also was had in abomination with the Philistines. And the people were called together after Saul to Gilgal. And the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the sea shore in multitude: and they came up, and pitched in Michmash, eastward from Bethaven.

When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait, (for the people were distressed,) then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits. And some of the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead.

As for Saul, he was yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling. And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed: but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him.

(1 Samuel 13:4-8)

Though the Philistines were a potent splash of cold water, Saul had an even more potent sedative that he needed to acknowledge: *the set time that Samuel had appointed*. Unfortunately, king Saul ignored that weight of restriction, and set out to forge his own way.

*And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings.
And he offered the burnt offering.*
(1 Samuel 13:9)

The new way of king Saul was a brief project, but it was, nonetheless, a highly damaging one. For, king Saul was not empowered to independently spread his wings: he was under a heavy weight of restriction, of the LORD, as re-represented to Saul by the LORD'S representative, Samuel.

And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him.

And Samuel said, What hast thou done?

And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash; Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the LORD: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering.

And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee.

(1 Samuel 13:10-14)

Before we proceed, we need to give some explanation about why we continue to hedge about the numbering of the kings of Israel. Now that you understand that the LORD required strict compliance with His word, in Israel; you will be able to absorb what we present now. There is a passage of Scripture that mentions another, prior king of Israel; though, because this king was not selected according to the commandments of God in the law of Moses, he is not officially recognized as a king of the chosen nation of Israel.

And Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem unto his mother's

brethren, and communed with them, and with all the family of the house of his mother's father, saying, Speak, I pray you, in the ears of all the men of Shechem, Whether is better for you, either that all the sons of Jerubbaal, which are threescore and ten persons, reign over you, or that one reign over you? remember also that I am your bone and your flesh.

And his mother's brethren spake of him in the ears of all the men of Shechem all these words: and their hearts inclined to follow Abimelech; for they said, He is our brother. And they gave him threescore and ten pieces of silver out of the house of Baalberith, wherewith Abimelech hired vain and light persons, which followed him.

And he went unto his father's house at Ophrah, and slew his brethren the sons of Jerubbaal, being threescore and ten persons, upon one stone: notwithstanding yet Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal was left; for he hid himself.

And all the men of Shechem gathered together, and all the house of Millo, and went, and made Abimelech king, by the plain of the pillar that was in Shechem.

(Judges 9:1-6)

Yes, our rejection of Abimelech as being numbered among the kings of Israel does mean that the form of obedience is crucial in establishing the legacy that the LORD will pass on to the next generations. Therefore, even though there is mention of a prior king, the latter kings, Saul and David, were the ones that bore the burden of introducing responsibility into the fabric of the culture of Israel. During the "reign" of *Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal*, all he accomplished was to reign over *vain and light persons*. Such people cannot be classified as being the nation of Israel. Therefore, though Abimelech reigned over some Israelites, he did not reign over the nation of Israel. Thus, Abimelech was not a king of the nation.

In Saul's day, there was a heavy dependence on extra-king prophetic interactions; and this dependence caused significant problems, then. As the time of David dawned, the prophetic utterances were referred to more in the fashion of being the work of seers. This may not seem significant, but let us look at dictionary definitions of these two types of servants of God, with some Scripture included with them.

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Seer:

1. a person who can supposedly see into the future
2. a person who professes supernatural powers
3. a person who sees

*(Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he spake,*

*Come, and let us go to the seer: for he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer.)*

(1 Samuel 9:9)

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Prophet:

1. A person who speaks by divine inspiration or as the interpreter through whom the will of a god is expressed.
2. A person gifted with profound moral insight and exceptional powers of expression.
3. A predictor; a soothsayer.
4. The chief spokesperson of a movement or cause

The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, that was the first year of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon; The which Jeremiah the prophet spake unto all the people of Judah, and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying,

From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, even unto this day, that is the three and twentieth year, the word of the LORD hath come unto me, and I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye have not hearkened. And the LORD hath sent unto you all his servants the prophets, rising early and sending them; but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear. They said, Turn ye again now every one from his evil way, and from the evil of your doings, and dwell in the land that the LORD hath given unto you and to your fathers for ever and ever: And go not after other gods to serve them, and to worship them, and provoke me not to anger with the works of your hands; and I will do you no hurt.

Yet ye have not hearkened unto me, saith the LORD; that ye might provoke me to anger with the works of your hands to your own hurt.

(Jeremiah 25:1-7)

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Looking at the definitions that are numbered as one (1), for both the seer and the prophet; we see a much more active role for the prophet. The seer seems to be someone to whom people come to ask things. The prophet is a person who was commanded by God to go and tell. That is, the life of a prophet was much more dynamic (tenuous) than the life of a seer. The words of Jesus Christ, at the dawn of the New Age, give us an idea of the potential dynamic of being a prophet.

*And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?*

*And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my*

*name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them. But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by.*

*Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven. But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. And it shall turn to you for a testimony.*

*Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake.*

(Luke 21:7-17)

However, even though prophets were called, across all time, by God, to deliver the message of the LORD; still, in the time of the kings, it was the burden of the kings of Israel to bear the responsibility for the nurturing of the nation, in the LORD. When the king faltered, the people were subject to a heavy intervention of the LORD. Too, when the king was diligent about the things of the LORD, the people also received the blessed benefit of voluntarily being in the center of God's will. For instance, here is a time of benefit as a result of the action of a king:

*Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jedidah, the daughter of Adaiah of Boscath. And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left.*

*And it came to pass in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, that the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, the scribe, to the house of the LORD, saying, Go up to Hilkiah the high priest, that he may sum the silver which is brought into the house of the LORD, which the keepers of the door have gathered of the people: And let them deliver it into the hand of the doers of the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD: and let them give it to the doers of the work which is in the house of the LORD, to repair the breaches of the house, Unto carpenters, and builders, and masons, and to buy timber and hewn stone to repair the house.*

*Howbeit there was no reckoning made with them of the money that was delivered into their hand, because they dealt faithfully.*

(2 Kings 22:1-7)

Alternately, here is an example of a prior time, before the time of king Josiah, when a seed of devastation for the people of Israel was planted by the actions of their king.

*And the LORD spake by his servants the prophets, saying, Because Manasseh king of Judah hath done these abominations, and hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites did, which were before him, and hath made Judah also to sin with his idols: Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Behold, I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle. And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab: and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down. And I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance, and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies; Because they have done that which was evil in my sight, and have provoked me to anger, since the day their fathers came forth out of Egypt, even unto this day.*

*Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; beside his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin, in doing that which was evil in the sight of the LORD.*

*Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and all that he did, and his sin that he sinned, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?*

(2 Kings 21:10-17)

If one event could offset another, it would seem that the humble behavior of Josiah would have offset the willful and sinful actions of Manasseh.

*And Hilkiyah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD.*

*And Hilkiyah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it.*

*And Shaphan the scribe came to the king, and brought the king word again, and said, Thy servants have gathered the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of them that do the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD.*

*And Shaphan the scribe showed the king, saying, Hilkiyah the priest hath delivered me a book.*

*And Shaphan read it before the king.*

*And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the*

*law, that he rent his clothes. And the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Michaiah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asahiah a servant of the king's, saying, Go ye, inquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found: for great is the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us.*

(2 Kings 22:8-13)

Even though his submission to the LORD is noble; still, Josiah's behavior had a limited reach in the Kingdom of God; for, in the way of the LORD, habits and their associated deep-seated patterns are clearly seen. Even in nations, the vision of the LORD is active, and things are clearly seen to be as they are. In the way of the LORD, it is as the LORD said to Samuel.

*And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the Lord's anointed is before him. But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.*

(1 Samuel 16:6-7)

Now, lest you become depressed, or succumb to a fire and brimstone type mentality; you can rest in the assurance that the vision of the LORD is not just sent forth to detect evil and to punish error. The vision of the LORD also goes forth to highlight points of enhancement for the kingdom of man.

*And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said unto him, Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria, and not relied on the LORD thy God, therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thine hand. Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubims a huge host, with very many chariots and horsemen? yet, because thou didst rely on the LORD, he delivered them into thine hand.*

*For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him.*

*Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars.*

(2 Chronicles 16:7-9)

Indeed, there is a structure that God has placed in reality for the elevation of the excellence of righteous behavior in the kingdom of man: *the seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.*

*And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.*

*And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.*

*And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.*

*And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.*

(Revelation 5:1-6)

In the Old Testament time, the LORD announced the existence, in reality, of a model that exemplified the completed work of these Spirits. It is a model that was, then, and still is, now, the representation of humanity's highest potential; as the Son of man.

*And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And*

*the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him,  
the spirit of wisdom and  
understanding,  
the spirit of counsel and  
might,  
the spirit of knowledge and of  
the fear of the LORD;*

*And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.*

(Isaiah 11:1-5)



However, in the day of Josiah, in the entire nation of Israel, as a result of their habitual clinging to both self-righteousness and self-centered disregard for the LORD; the pattern that was still there, flowing still from the days of Manasseh, was that of a people that needed radical correction. Wherefore radical correction is the overriding prescription that the LORD set before the people, without recourse; as per the seed that was planted by Manasseh. As a result of the strength of this seed of devastation; even the good behavior of Josiah, and the blessing that he worked to achieve for the nation of Israel, could not kill the malevolence of that prior iniquitous seed.

*So Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asahiah, went unto Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college;) and they communed with her.*

*And she said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Tell the man that sent you to me, Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read: Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched.*

*But to the king of Judah which sent you to inquire of the LORD, thus shall ye say to him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, As touching the words which thou hast heard; Because thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the LORD, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have heard thee, saith the LORD. Behold therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place.*

*And they brought the king word again.*

(2 Kings 22:14-20)

The implication in the words, *hath made Judah also to sin*, is that the kings had the ability to sway the society to go whichever way they, the kings, were traveling. In that sense, by the abuse of their authority, the kings of that day mishandled responsibility. But, O congregation, do not be too quick to transfer all blame to the kings; the people could not be held to be blameless--except in that case where they had no knowledge of good and evil, and, too, no knowledge of the requirements of the law of Moses. Thus, the individual did have a weight of responsibility, but it was neither definite nor was it automatic; because, in that day especially, the action of the king could easily overrule the

weight of responsibility of the individual.

Because the action of the king could easily overrule the weight of responsibility of the individual, there were, and still are, times when the consequence of correction and recompense for error are reserved for the king, or other captains of a group, organization, or, even, nation. In the matter of overruling individual responsibility, an action of king David's illustrates how this operates. In a certain event, one of the servants of king David was told to perform an action that was contrary to the law of Moses: the servant's name is Joab. In that situation, king David placed a significant stumbling block in the path of Joab.

*And again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah. For the king said to Joab the captain of the host, which was with him, Go now through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba, and number ye the people, that I may know the number of the people.*

(2 Samuel 24:1-2)

Joab did indeed have the mind to resist, but it was to no avail.

*And Joab said unto the king, Now the LORD thy God add unto the people, how many soever they be, an hundredfold, and that the eyes of my lord the king may see it: but why doth my lord the king delight in this thing?*

*Notwithstanding the king's word prevailed against Joab, and against the captains of the host. And Joab and the captains of the host went out from the presence of the king, to number the people of Israel.*

(2 Samuel 24:3-4)

This is not the only time that king David illustrated the dynamic of a king being charged with the responsibility for an offense to the LORD. Let us look at another of king David's involvements of others in his offenses; one that was surely directly chargeable to his account.

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As a precursor to understanding the weight that was chargeable solely to the king, even though others are involved; consider this lesson of the pre-history of king David. In the beginning, with Noah, the LORD laid down some rules about our behavior toward one another: chief among these rules is the one that tells us not to be arbitrary about killing someone.

And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea;

into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.

But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat. And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.

(Genesis 9:1-6)

The Law of God that pertains to David's responsibility, in the matter of the offense of David toward the LORD God, in the situation with Bathsheba, is this: *Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed*. Moreover, in the matter of the offense of David toward the LORD God, in the situation with Bathsheba, there was a following set of events that were, too, violations of the Law of God, as it is contained in the law of Moses, as follows.

In an attempt to transfer responsibility for the visitation of the Law of God away from himself, in a somewhat indirect fashion; David eventually sent an edict to Joab to kill someone, as a diversion for his guilt. However, prior to taking the bold step of ordering an execution, David tried a less lethal, but still definitely sinful, way of hiding the action that had been done with Bathsheba, in violation of God's Law. This is the initial violation, and the associated consequence that needed, in David's mind, to be hidden.

And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house.

And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, I am with child.

(2 Samuel 11:4-5)

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This is the first attempt at cover-up; an attempt that practiced deception.

*And David sent to Joab, saying, Send me Uriah the Hittite.  
And Joab sent Uriah to David.*

*And when Uriah was come unto him, David demanded of him how Joab did, and how the people did, and how the war prospered. And David said to Uriah, Go down to thy house, and wash thy feet.  
And Uriah departed out of the king's house, and there followed him a*

*mess of meat from the king. But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and went not down to his house.*

*And when they had told David, saying, Uriah went not down unto his house, David said unto Uriah, Camest thou not from thy journey? why then didst thou not go down unto thine house?*

*And Uriah said unto David, The ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents; and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields; shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? as thou livest, and as thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing. And David said to Uriah, Tarry here to day also, and to morrow I will let thee depart.*

*So Uriah abode in Jerusalem that day, and the morrow.*

*And when David had called him, he did eat and drink before him; and he made him drunk: and at even he went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord, but went not down to his house.*

(2 Samuel 11:6-13)

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This is the next attempt at cover-up; an attempt that sanctioned murder. This was another attempt of David's to conceal his sin; an attempt at substituting the hand of Joab for his own.

And it came to pass in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah. And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die.

And it came to pass, when Joab observed the city, that he assigned Uriah unto a place where he knew that valiant men were. And the men of the city went out, and fought with Joab: and there fell some of the people of the servants of David; and Uriah the Hittite died also.

(2 Samuel 11:14-17)

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Yes, in an absolute sense, in both substitutions, Joab had a choice in the matter. In fact, Joab had demonstrated that he could exercise a, almost, violation of the king's command, in the matter of the census. In that matter, even though Joab did most of what the king commanded, he did not do all of it.

*And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel. And David said to Joab and to the rulers of the people, Go, number Israel from Beersheba even to Dan; and bring the number of them to me, that I may know it.*

*And Joab answered, The LORD make his people an hundred times so many more as they be: but, my lord the king, are they not all my lord's servants? why then doth my lord require this thing? why will he be a cause of trespass to Israel?*

*Nevertheless the king's word prevailed against Joab.*

*Wherefore Joab departed, and went throughout all Israel, and came to Jerusalem. And Joab gave the sum of the number of the people unto David. And all they of Israel were a thousand thousand and an hundred thousand men that drew sword: and Judah was four hundred threescore and ten thousand men that drew sword.*

*But Levi and Benjamin counted he not among them: for the king's word was abominable to Joab.*

(1 Chronicles 21:1-6)

In the case of Uriah, king David was enlisting Joab's complicity with him in his offenses toward the LORD. In each case, Joab complied with the directive. A similar dynamic is active when a married man has been adulterous or a whoremonger and requests of his wife that she let him to continue as if nothing had occurred. Yes, this does happen sometimes. The time that it is seen most clearly is when the husband returns to his wife, and looks for her support of his continuation in a public forum; for instance, when a politician, or other minister of the procedures of the LORD, requests of his wife that she not require a pause in public activities, so that the marriage can be strengthened by a measure of isolation.

The benefits of isolation--as in, a time out of the limelight--are seen in much of Scripture. One of the notable and beneficial times in which isolation was invoked by the LORD is when the zealot Saul had been exposed to the damage that he had done to the people of the LORD, in Israel. The man, Saul--who was transformed into the true servant of God of the New Age, the apostle Paul--indicated the reason for the need for some separation between his former actions, and his forward mission, as he was preparing for his new election.

*Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you. (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,) I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day. And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons*

*both men and women. As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.*

(Acts 22:1-5)

Since there was a need for some separation between events; by the will of the Father, Saul was sent away, for a time. Speaking as the apostle Paul, Saul described this period of separation.

*As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.*

*But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

*For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.*

*But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.*

*Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.*

(Galatians 1:9-19)

Additionally, the apostle Paul preached of the blessed aftermath.

*Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not. Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia; And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ: But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.*

*And they glorified God in me.*

(Galatians 1:20-24)

The record of Scripture tells us that Saul, the zealot, was in a locked-down relationship with the LORD. The things that he was doing, in that prior time, were, in his mind, for the benefit of the LORD. In fact, though; what Paul did was actually pressing a seed of destruction into the church. The seed was put there not just to accomplish physical destruction, but also to sew bitterness and a sense of futility into the fabric of Christian worship. Jesus Christ had described these types of individuals, and he gave us a brief glimpse of some of their attempted implants.

*These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.*

(John 16:1-2)

The apostle Paul moved from a position of ignorance, to the point of understanding that his actions were a direct weight on his ability to serve God. In the time of preparation to become the apostle Paul, Saul submitted himself to the instruction of the LORD. There were others, though, who decided that they would follow after other gods. These others tried to convince the true, so to speak, spouse of their righteousness, in the body of the principles and practices of the Law--sometimes referred to as, the new Jerusalem-- that they should be allowed to stray, with impunity, from the straight path of the LORD.

*Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.*

(2 Thessalonians 2:1-4)

We, the ones who are faithfully seeking the LORD, know the true way.

*Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.*

(2 Thessalonians 2:5-7)

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Contrary to the expectation of impunity, by those who mishandle responsibility; the life of the apostle Paul tells us that when we have mishandled responsibility--especially

when it is done willfully--we need to expect, and be willing to submit to, an attitude adjustment, of some sort. The exploration of the attitude adjustment is next: until then, consider the following relevant passages of Scripture.

He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.

(Proverbs 13:24)

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*My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.*

(Proverbs 3:11-12)

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Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the LORD thy God chasteneth thee. Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him.

For the LORD thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey; A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass.

When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the LORD thy God for the good land which he hath given thee.

(Deuteronomy 8:5-10)

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## -- Next, in The Fullness of David --

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