

Meditation #1
1 Samuel 1:8
Rev. Richard Smit

Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? am not I better to thee than ten sons?

Elkanah and his family were at Shiloh for their yearly worship visit at the tabernacle. The spiritual climate in Elkanah's family was similar to the condition in Israel at that time during the Judges which was that "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25). His spiritual weaknesses were shown by his marriage to both Hannah and Peninnah, against God's ordinance of marriage, and by his question to Hannah. Sadly, he should have known the reason for her grief.

Adding to her grief was the hatred of her adversary, Peninnah. In God's providence, Hannah had no children, but Peninnah had sons and daughters. Although Jehovah had shut up her womb, Elkanah loved Hannah greatly. That preferential love towards Hannah made Peninnah very jealous so that she "provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the LORD had shut up her womb" (1 Sam. 1:6).

However, the reason for godly Hannah's grief was far more important. Every year she witnessed the great apostasy and ungodliness of the sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, at the tabernacle. These sons of Belial were infamous for their immorality, fornication, and corruption of the sacrifices. Hannah was greatly grieved by those spiritually dark times. She wept sore for the cause of Jehovah and His promise in Israel.

Grieving Hannah was a light in a dark time. She was a light, full of God's grace, as her name indicates: "graceful." Loving Jehovah and His promise, and understanding what Israel needed in that dark time, she poured out her burdened soul before Jehovah and pleaded for a child. She did not ask just to be a mother. She asked to serve selflessly as a mother in Israel of a Nazarite son whom she could dedicate to faithful service in Israel (1 Sam. 1:11). Jehovah heard and remembered self-denying Hannah for the sake of His promise and the coming of Christ. Jehovah in His unfailing mercies gave to her and Israel what she asked: Samuel.

Does the continuing, pressing need in the true church of Jesus Christ in the last days for godly, faithful, soundly Reformed preachers weigh heavily upon you? In self-denying love unto Jehovah and His truth, make known that burden unto Jehovah. Believe that through our unselfish prayers for Zion, the Lord of the harvest will provide what we ask: faithful Samuels.

Memory Verse: Luke 10:2 Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest.

Meditation #2
1 Samuel 2:23
Rev. Richard Smit

And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people.

Eli, the high priest, spoke these words unto his sons, Hophni and Phinehas, when he was very old. He was distressed with the great wickedness of his sons, commonly observed and reported at Shiloh. They had corrupted the sacrifices at the tabernacle. Instead of being content with the priest's approved portion of meat only from the breast or right shoulder of the sacrifices, they took by force the meat that had more fat and so tasted better. They held the rules about the sacrifices in contempt and thereby despised Christ and his atonement for his people. In addition to their gluttony, they committed heinous acts of fornication at the tabernacle (1 Sam. 2:22).

Nevertheless, Eli's response to their wickedness was weak. Although his question was pointed, yet he would do no more to punish his sons. As a result, the answer to his question was a humbling one for himself.

Why were his sons so evil? Indeed, they walked willingly in the lusts of their flesh and were hardened against any admonitions or the godly example of Samuel. However, the Lord taught through a prophet that another reason was that Eli "restrained them not" from their evil deeds (1 Sam. 3:13). Eli would not restrain them because he honored his sons above God (1 Sam. 2:29). That inexcusable permissiveness resulted in the righteous consequence of his family line being cut off from the priesthood in later years.

How shall we respond to the sins of friends or family members? Shall we tolerate their corruption and never speak against it? Shall believing parents tolerate the development of their children in sin, avoiding Biblical admonitions and appropriate discipline? Shall we honor men above God and His name?

Christ, our perfect High Priest, was filled with a zeal for the name of God. In that zeal, He cleansed the temple from corruption, not once, but twice in His earthly ministry (John 2:11-12, Matt. 21:12-13). With a zeal for the Name of Jehovah, He redeemed His people from their sin and from our innate cowardliness against sin and darkness.

"Who will rise up for me against the evildoers? or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?" (Ps. 94:16) May we by the grace of God answer, "Here am I, Lord!" Then, in His courage, let us be vigilant in the battle against all wickedness with the sword of the Lord's Word.

Memory Verse: *Psalm 94:22 But the LORD is my defence; and my God is the rock of my refuge.*

Meditation #3
1 Samuel 10:24
Rev. Richard Smit

And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the LORD hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king.

Who would not have seen Saul, the son of Kish, that day? Saul possessed physical traits and gifts that impressed the people (1 Sam. 9:2) and satisfied their wishes for a king, to be like the other nations. In spite of the fact that the tribe of Benjamin had almost been exterminated by Israel in the days of the Judges for their wickedness (Judges 20), Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin, and his father, Kish, was a mighty man of power in the tribe. Indeed, Israel beheld what they desired.

However, what they also saw was a king after their own heart. They had rejected Jehovah from being king over them and wanted a king, to be like the other nations (1 Sam. 8:5-7). In His righteousness, God gave to Israel their wish, and gave them a king like the kings of the other nations. Saul's wickedness became apparent very early in his reign. When children of Belial refused to honor Saul as the new, God-ordained king, Saul refused to punish their insubordination and rebellion (1 Sam. 10:27). Saul did not honour the Lord and the office to which the Lord had appointed him. For 40 years, Israel watched their king develop in his wickedness against the Lord.

At the outset of Saul's reign, Samuel's question implied a direct command to Israel. The people must not only behold their new king, but they must then also honour and obey him. The reason for their submission to King Saul was not their desire for such a king, but the fact that God ordained Saul to be king. Even though Saul would develop in wickedness and selfishness, Israel must still continue in submission to him as the Lord's anointed.

See ye them whom God has set over you? See ye the kings, queens, prime ministers, presidents, governors, and others in civil government that the Lord has set over you? Honour and submit to them all for the Lord's sake, even though they may be wicked. Do this because it is the will of God concerning you as heavenly strangers and pilgrims in a world full of rebellion against God-ordained authority.

Godly submission is also necessary towards our ruling elders in our churches. See ye the elders whom the Lord has chosen and placed over you? "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you" (Heb. 13:17).

Memory Verse: Romans 13:1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

Meditation #4
1 Samuel 12:17
Rev. Richard Smit

Is it not wheat harvest to day? I will call unto the LORD, and he shall send thunder and rain; that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness is great, which ye have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking you a king.

Wheat harvest took place in the land of Canaan normally between the middle of May and the middle of June, towards the end of the dry season in the land of Canaan. In light of this time of the year, Samuel's question was a rhetorical question. It was obvious to Israel that it was harvest time, and, as implied by the question, that the harvest was bountiful.

Nevertheless, as the people beheld the good harvest, Samuel was led to use that reality as a means to rebuke Israel for its great sin. Their sin was the request for a king in order to be like all the other nations. By that request, Israel had rejected Jehovah as their king. Israel needed to see its terrible sin against Jehovah, to repent of that sin, and to receive their new king, Saul, not for carnal reasons or motives, but as an anointed king-servant under Jehovah for his glory and his theocracy in Israel. For that purpose, Samuel spoke a word of rebuke and judgment and gave Israel a shocking sign thereof.

Samuel prayed to Jehovah. Suddenly, Jehovah sent a very untimely thunder and rain, which certainly damaged part of the crops and reduced the harvest yields that Israel had expected. With that shocking miracle of the flashing lightning, the earth-shaking thunder, and the sudden downpours, Israel greatly feared the LORD and Samuel. They had seen a sign of God's righteous and omnipotent judgments upon their wickedness. In response, all the people by God's almighty grace repented of their sin, and cried out to Samuel for deliverance. Samuel spoke to them the word of forgiveness, which was only for the sake of the coming Christ, and the exhortation that they "only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you. But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king" (1 Sam. 12:24-25).

May we never need to be shaken by the Lord in a shocking way to our spiritual senses, as Israel was that day, in order to repent from our sin and believe in Christ alone for forgiveness, obedience, and everlasting life with Jehovah. Rather, let us walk in daily conversion and the fear of Jehovah, serving him in truth with all our heart as we see by faith the great things that Jehovah has done for us in our eternal King, Jesus our Lord.

Memory Verse: *Proverbs 23:17 Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the LORD all the day long.*

Meditation #5
1 Samuel 14:37
Rev. Richard Smit

And Saul asked counsel of God, Shall I go down after the Philistines? wilt thou deliver them into the hand of Israel? But He answered him not that day.

Worse than sudden sickness or a tragic loss of personal property is a question to God in prayer which is unanswered. That was the miserable situation for King Saul and Israel, who asked God for guidance in the battle with the Philistines. Even though Saul had presented his request to God by the proper way of the Urim and the Thummim of the high priest, yet God in His righteousness answered not.

God did not answer because there was a sin that an Israelite soldier had committed, the guilt of which hung over the whole army. The sin was a violation of Saul's earlier oath that the army may not eat anything that day until the Philistines were conquered completely in battle (1 Sam. 14:24). To the surprise of many, Jonathan had broken his father's oath and so took God's name in vain. (cf. *Heidelberg Catechism*, Lord's Day 37)

Indeed, Jonathan had eaten some honey that day, but he violated the oath ignorantly. He did not hear the foolish oath that his father had placed over the army. Even so, righteous Jonathan submitted to the king's oath and was willing to suffer death for his sin and for the honour of God's name in Israel. In this matter, Jonathan behaved more righteously than his father, who behaved selfishly and only in the interests of his name and reputation rather than God's. That was a deeper reason for God's silence to Saul that day.

When our heavenly Father does not answer a request, then we should, first of all, examine our prayers carefully in the light of His Word. We should investigate whether or not we asked for something sinful, for something contrary to the will of God, for something with very little understanding, conviction, and sincerity, or for something while doubting the Lord. We need to learn that perhaps we asked for something either sinful or in a sinful way.

If it is true that we have brought sin into our prayers, even ignorantly, then we must repent before our righteous God through the cleansing blood and Spirit of Christ. Then, let us approach unto him and make known unto him our godly requests, truly believing that he will hear and answer us, according to his wise and good will, only for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us also live in daily repentance and true faith in Christ before our God and with one another, lest our prayers be hindered (1 Pet. 3:7).

Memory Verse: 1 Peter 3:12 For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

Meditation #6
1 Samuel 15:22
Rev. Richard Smit

And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

By his behavior and confession, King Saul thought foolishly that the LORD did have a greater delight in formal sacrifice than in obedience to Him. The Lord had commanded Saul, "Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass" (1 Sam. 15:3). In spite of the clear commandment, he disobeyed the voice of the LORD by preserving the life of King Agag of Amalek and many animals. Then, he proudly justified his gross disobedience by an excuse that the animals could be used for sacrifices unto the Lord.

Sadly, the child of God learns by the righteous convicting work of the Spirit of Christ that he is prone to the same foolishness. Have we not minimized or justified our disobedience by an appeal to a good goal which our disobedience served? But, can our disobedience ever be justified before God? Can our disobedience, such as lying, stealing, sabbath breaking, or any other such thing, be justified in the sight of our righteous God by a good goal that we might think our sins serve? That is not a delight unto Jehovah, but an abomination from which we must repent with a broken and contrite heart and turn, if we have fallen into that sin.

Gladly, the righteous listen to our righteous King of Israel, our Lord Jesus, who declared that obedience is better than sacrifice. Our King declared through the Psalmist, "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart" (Ps. 40:8). Christ obeyed the Father perfectly and fully at the cost of his life through his atoning death of the cross for the full redemption of his people. In that perfect obedience of Christ, Jehovah is eternally delighted. Look to that obedience of Christ alone for all of your salvation and forgiveness, instead of wicked attempts to justify your disobedience before God.

By Christ's Word and Spirit, his blessed citizens learn in the way of repentance and humility that willing obedience is better than formal sacrifice. Indeed, thoughtful obedience is a delight unto Jehovah, even though our obedience to him may result in suffering, persecution, and even death.

Have you learned the blessed sacrifice of obedience of and unto our eternal king?

Memory Verse: Psalm 51:16-17 For Thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

Meditation #7
1 Samuel 16:1
Rev. Richard Smit

And the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons.

Samuel struggled greatly to understand the rejection of King Saul and his sons from the throne of Israel. Samuel's expectations had been dashed by Saul's rebellion against God and God's irreversible rejection of Saul. He struggled to reconcile in his own mind how this disappointing way of Jehovah would serve his cause and the welfare of Israel.

Jehovah asked Samuel a question of rebuke. Samuel must not continue to look back and mourn over dashed expectations. He must not continue to mourn beyond what was necessary. Samuel must also look forward and must embrace Jehovah's will and choice of a future king from among the sons of Jesse in Bethlehem. He must see that Jehovah's severe judgment against Saul did not mean the end of the throne of Israel and Jehovah's promise. Rather, this history would serve the coming of Christ and prepare Israel for God's choice of a king after his own heart.

Jehovah sometimes asks us the same question when we struggle in sadness with his sovereign and righteous way for us in life. Understandably, the sudden death of an infant, a parent, a fellow saint, or a faithful church leader in his prime can bring great pain and disappointment upon us. We are greatly saddened by the departure of friends from the Reformed faith because of discontent or other reasons. The effects of doctrinal controversy in a church or denomination can result in separation that cuts very painfully through friendship and family ties. In such situations, we struggle in sadness with the way of Jehovah for ourselves or for his church militant.

"How long will you mourn?" Our Lord is not forbidding godly tears in the hard ways in which he may be pleased to lead us. However, he cautions us that our sadness not resist his sovereign and righteous way for us in this life. We must believe that howsoever he leads us, his dear little children, it is good, without mistake, and has always a good purpose for us for the sake of the merits of Christ alone.

We look forward in hope to the blessed day when Christ shall wipe away all our tears of sadness. Then we shall see with great joy the glorious purpose to which the lofty ways and thoughts of Jehovah have always worked wondrously for the glory of his name in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Memory Verse: *Psalm 97:12 Rejoice in the LORD, ye righteous: and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.*

Meditation #8
1 Samuel 17:43
Rev. Richard Smit

And the Philistine said to David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods.

The giant Goliath was offended by what he saw across the brook, descending the hillside from the camp of Israel into the valley of Elah. The young shepherd lad, named David, was the best champion that Israel could muster in the duel that the seasoned warrior had proposed. With the anger and mockery of a pride that far surpassed his towering stature, Goliath hurled an insult at David and mockingly questioned his armour of some shepherd's equipment and a slingshot. Goliath predicted with great self-confidence that David would surely become food for the birds of the air and beasts of the field.

David did not deny that he was himself powerless against Goliath. What man in Israel could match the might of Goliath with his own strength? However, David had not come to the fight in his own strength nor merely with his seemingly useless shepherd's staff, rod, and slingshot. He had come with an armour that the unbelief of Goliath in pride had defied, blasphemed, and refused to see. David came to the fight in the name of Jehovah. In the name of Jehovah, he prophesied with certainty that Jehovah would give him the victory over that evil enemy of Jehovah.

We also have very powerful enemies. Satan, the world, the false prophets, and our own sinful flesh are enemies against which we cannot even stand a moment in our own strength and wisdom. When we come to the battle, the enemy laughs us also to shame. They do so because the Lord sends us to the battle with a weapon which the world regards as laughable: the Word and truth of our Lord Jesus Christ. Yet, clothed with the name of Jehovah, trusting in his truth, and entering the battle by faith alone in his Word, we may be confident that we will overcome the enemy. We will overcome in the victory which Christ has already established for us at the cross of Calvary, and which victory he works in and through us by his victorious Holy Spirit in the battles against the darkness of unbelief, heresy, false doctrine, ungodliness, and all wickedness against Jehovah.

Although the enemy is powerful, we shall not fear, but will overcome the wicked and the wicked one because Jehovah Almighty, who is with us, is our light and salvation. Thanks be to him who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ! (1 Cor. 15:57)

Memory Verse: *Psalm 27:1 The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?*

Meditation #9
1 Samuel 18:8
Rev. Richard Smit

And Saul was very wrath, and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands: and what can he have more but the kingdom?

Saul realized who the next king of Israel would be when the army of Israel returned from a victorious battle against the enemies of Jehovah. When the army returned, the women of Israel rejoiced in the success of Saul and David over the Philistines. However, they ascribed to David the slaughter of ten thousands, but to Saul only thousands. In great jealousy, he cried out, "What more can he have but the kingdom?" Indeed, besides the love, respect, honour, and devotion of the people, there was only one thing that remained for David to receive: the throne. From that day forward, because selfish Saul knew that David should be the next king, he treated David with suspicion, hatred, and plans of murder. In spite of Satan's attempt to use wicked Saul to kill David and so prevent the coming of Christ, God preserved David for the sake of the coming of Christ.

We must fight against jealousy among ourselves in the church. Does God give greater honour and success in life or in the work of the church to another member than what God gave to you? In response to the greater success of others, we are prone to be jealous. We sinfully forget that our wise and righteous Lord distributes gifts, positions, labours, and honour among his stewards according to his will. We sinfully forget that he bestows the gifts and success of faithful labour for the glory of his name. We are so easily selfish and jealous for our own name and glory. Such jealousy is an evil from which we must repent, and for deliverance from it we must flee to Christ for refuge.

Our Lord Jesus Christ was not jealous that the Father received all the glory while he suffered under God's infinite wrath for us on the cross. He was not jealous that he was forsaken by God for our sins of jealousy against others, including fellow believers in the church. That selfless love of Christ for the Father and us is our full redemption from the guilt and the power of our jealousy. Anointed with the Spirit of Christ, we possess by faith alone in Christ, his righteousness and his life of contentment and love of the name of God. In that life by the grace of God alone, let us humbly rejoice in the success of fellow saints whereby the name of Jehovah is honored and his heavenly kingdom and truth advanced.

Memory Verse: *Philippians 2:3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.*

Meditation #10
1 Samuel 18:23
Rev. Richard Smit

And David said, Seemeth it to you a light thing to be a king's son in law, seeing that I am a poor man, and lightly esteemed?

David understood the problem well. He had slain Goliath and thereby obtained the right to marry the king's daughter, Merab (1 Sam. 17:25). However, David had not the wealth to fulfil the customary dowry to King Saul for her hand in marriage. As a result of David's inability, eventually Merab was given to another man in marriage (1 Sam. 18:19). Understandably then, when the servants of Saul privately suggested to David that he should seek marriage to Michal, the second daughter of Saul, David rebuked the servants. Why did they treat the matter of marriage to the king's daughter seemingly so thoughtlessly? Why did they not understand that David was a man of lowly wealth, from a Bethlehem family of lowly wealth and esteem, and a warrior not worthy of marriage to a princess?

David showed high respect and honor for the king by his conscientiousness to the custom of a dowry for marriage to the king's daughter. David did not covet earthly glory and prestige, often associated with marriage to a princess. Even though he was anointed to be the next king, he refused to connive with the servants of Saul for marriage with a princess in order to establish himself as the next king of Israel as soon as possible.

Unlike wicked and conniving Saul, who was plotting the death of David, David was humble and without guile. Unlike wicked Saul, David loved Jehovah and was patient with his ways. David faithfully trusted in Jehovah in regards to marriage and the promised kingship over Israel. He was content with his current position as general in the army of Israel and thankful to be a son of lowly Jesse. At that time, he was waiting patiently for Jehovah to open before him the lawful way into marriage and onto the throne of Israel.

Are you content to wait upon Jehovah for his guidance in life into lawful marriage, blessed parenthood, a new employment opportunity, a worthy career, or a special office in the church? Let us pray to our heavenly Father in the name of Christ for his Holy Spirit that he may lead us, as he led David, to trust with all our heart that the Lord will open before us the way into our future kingdom callings and labors according to his will and in his good time. Let us trust in him for this blessing for Jesus' sake alone.

Memory Verse: *Psalm 37:5 Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.*

Meditation #11
1 Samuel 19:5
Rev. Richard Smit

For he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine, and the LORD wrought a great salvation for all Israel: thou sawest it, and didst rejoice: wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause?

When King Saul observed that David had gained honor and respect before all of his servants, he became wickedly suspicious of David's motives. Out of growing jealousy, Saul commanded his servants to assassinate David.

In selfless love for David and the Lord, Jonathan objected to the king's command and pleaded for David's life, thereby risking his very own life. Jonathan reminded Saul of David's bold battle against Goliath, his exemplary trust in Jehovah, and the great victory for Israel over Goliath and the Philistines. Jonathan pointed out that the king himself had rejoiced in what David did for Israel. Thereby Jonathan concluded and convinced the king that his command was without cause and clearly unrighteous.

There are times in our lives when we observe decisions of someone in authority which are without cause, potentially hurtful, and contrary to the Word of God. When this happens, it is our duty for the welfare of our neighbor that we do our utmost to correct the wrong according to the Holy Scriptures in an orderly and decent manner. When we present our objections to our parents, elders, employers, or magistrates, we should do so with proper submission, respect, and humility, as Jonathan did. The goal of such appeals for others is, in obedience to the sixth commandment, to prevent, as much as we are able, the hurt of our neighbor because of a decision which is without just cause. Further, our goal for the one who erred is that he repents and seeks forgiveness and peace in the Lord Jesus Christ alone whose righteousness is ours by faith alone.

Whether our attempt to correct an injustice achieves our desired outcome, we leave in our Lord's hand who directs and judges the hearts of men in his righteousness and who directs our lives. In the case of Jonathan, his godly intercession for David and his appeal for righteousness in the kingdom of God in Israel resulted in the sparing of David's life and, unknown to him yet, the preservation of David for the coming of Christ as David's offspring. Regardless of what the outcome may be of our appeals, such upright conduct out of a true faith in our righteous King is honorable and pleasing unto him.

Memory Verse: *Psalm 64:10 The righteous shall be glad in the LORD, and shall trust in him; and all the upright in heart shall glory.*

Meditation #12
1 Samuel 19:17
Rev. Richard Smit

And Saul said unto Michal, Why hast thou deceived me so, and sent away mine enemy, that he is escaped? And Michal answered Saul, He said unto me, Let me go; why should I kill thee?

Learning that he could be killed by King Saul in the morning, David escaped with the help of Michal, his wife. She let him out of a window in their house secretly at night, but then she also arranged a statue and a pillow of goats' hair in their bed to make it appear that David was sick. When Saul discovered Michal's ruse, he angrily asked his daughter, "Why hast thou deceived me so, and sent away mine enemy, that he is escaped?" (1 Sam. 19:17)

In response, she alleged that David had threatened to kill her if she did not let him go. However, in actual fact, she not only helped him, but also had encouraged David to escape: "If thou save not thy life tonight, to morrow thou shalt be slain" (1 Sam. 19:11). Nevertheless, for her own protection she lied to the king. This the Word of God condemns: "Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD: but they that deal truly are his delight" (Prov. 12:22).

However, is not the believer justified in a lie in an extraordinary situation to protect his or another's life? The Word of God condemns all lying in Ephesians 4:25, 29, "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.... Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers." Being truthful is necessary, even when the believer must suffer for honesty, according to 1 Peter 2:12, "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." Let us remember that we were redeemed by Christ unto honesty and truthfulness when he was crucified for his speaking the truth that he is the Son of God. (Luke 22:70) Let us by faith in him so walk, even as he walked (1 John 2:3-6), being willing to suffer for honesty and truthfulness in the confidence of God's approval and security. "Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator." (1 Pet. 4:19)

Memory Verse: *Psalm 15:1-2, Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.*

Meditation #13
1 Samuel 20:9
Rev. Richard Smit

And Jonathan said, Far be it from thee: for if I knew certainly that evil were determined by my father to come upon thee, then would not I tell it thee?

Jonathan and David had a close friendship. David reminded Jonathan of that when he said, "...for thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of the LORD with thee:" (1 Sam. 20:8a) Their friendship was not a mere earthly acquaintance, but being a covenant of Jehovah, their friendship was very spiritual and set upon the foundation of the word and promises of Jehovah. Their friendship was a very godly friendship in Jehovah by true faith, and one that is a good example for us to follow with respect to our friendships in life.

The Lord put their blessed friendship to a severe test by the wickedness of Jonathan's father, King Saul. Although David was innocent of any transgression against the king or against Israel, David was being hunted by Saul as a great criminal, worthy of immediate execution. In the face of that unjust treatment, David pleaded his innocence, even challenging Jonathan to kill him if there was any unrighteousness in him. David challenged Jonathan to prove their friendship and mutual trust as he wrestled with the very difficult plight of having "but a step between me and death." (1 Sam. 20:3b)

To that challenge of his dear friend, Jonathan responded with humble transparency. If there was anything that would threaten David, and so threaten their godly friendship in Jehovah, would not he tell David? Would Jonathan hide anything from David that would threaten their dear friendship in Jehovah? David did not need to be told the obvious answer of Jonathan's unwavering and unselfish faithfulness.

We need that gracious blessing of holy friendships in which we are firstly friends of Jehovah in true faith, who walk with him in His truth and godliness. Then, just as Jehovah shares his secrets with us in his covenant of grace for the sake of Jesus Christ and by his Spirit, so we should seek and develop believing friendships in which we may enjoy together the secrets of Jehovah's promises and grace in Christ according to his word and the Reformed faith. These are friendships in which there are no undermining secrets, but open, faithful and honest communication about the word of God and his truth and how it applies to our daily struggles in our earthly sojourns.

May the Lord provide us with godly friends for spiritual fellowship and encouragement, especially in times when we are led by the Lord into severe trials.

Memory Verse: *Psalm 25:14 The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant.*

Meditation #14
1 Samuel 24:19
Rev. Richard Smit

For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away?

According to King Saul's question, it is normally expected that when a man finds his enemy, he will not let him go well away. Usually, a man will inflict upon his enemy injury, imprisonment, or death. Surely this was what Saul would have inflicted upon David if he had actually captured David.

However, in contrast, David did not behave as Saul expected, even though David had the opportunity to kill the king. Yes, Saul was David's enemy. However, David also confessed that Saul, as king of Israel, was the Lord's anointed, whom he may not assassinate. David would not avenge himself of his enemy, Saul. Instead, David simply trusted that Jehovah in righteousness would deal with Saul. He trusted that Jehovah would thereby keep David safe and open the way for David to become king in Israel at the divinely determined time. So impressed was Saul by David's godly and humble behavior that he stopped hunting David for a time.

David showed that he was indeed a man after God's own heart, in whom the grace of God was working mightily. In his godly behavior toward Saul, David demonstrated the kind of undeserved, redemptive goodness that Christ has revealed unto his elect alone. Ought not Christ, having found you and me in the enmity of our sin against him, to have destroyed us? Should not we, when we fall into temptation and sin against him, be destroyed by him unto everlasting hell? Instead, we learn in Romans 5:10 that even when we by nature in our sin were the enemies of Christ, Christ died for us and made reconciliation unto God for our sins by his death on the cross. In addition to that, we learn in 1 John 2:1-2 that although we sin daily, we have at the Father's right hand our advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous. There Christ intercedes for us daily for the grace and mercy that we need for forgiveness, repentance, true faith, and preservation.

Rejoice that Christ being punished on the cross in your place as God's enemy rescues you from your sin and enmity against God unto everlasting righteousness, peace, and covenant friendship with the Father forevermore. In thanksgiving for that mercy of God unto you, love your enemies as David did.

Memory Verse: *Romans 5:10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*

Meditation #15
1 Samuel 25:10
Rev. Richard Smit

And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? there be many servants now a days that break away every man from his master.

Nabal's question was shot as an arrow of humiliation at David's soul. Nabal accounted David and his cause as nothing significant. However, by such a foolish conclusion, Nabal ignored David's victory over Goliath, as well as David's wisdom and faithfulness as one of the best generals of King Saul. Nabal ignored the fact that David had not forsaken the king for any wicked reason. Nabal overlooked the fact that David was hunted by King Saul for no good reason. Finally, Nabal completely rebuffed David's kindness and the risk to David's own life for protecting Nabal and his shepherds from marauding, nomadic bands, a common threat in southern Canaan at that time. Thus, Nabal was a churlish, wicked unbeliever in Israel.

By his refusal to acknowledge David as righteous and faithful, Nabal refused to acknowledge the God of David, Jehovah. Nabal's wickedness was not so much that he refused to befriend David for his kindness and to give David and his men food, but Nabal's wickedness was his refusal to honor the cause of David, which was shown to be the cause of Jehovah. For his refusal to stand with David for the cause of Jehovah, Nabal was punished by God with sudden death after his great feast (1 Samuel 25:37-38). Thereby God gave him a complete reward of judgment for being what his scriptural name meant: a fool.

Who are we? We must answer before our enemies that, indeed, of ourselves we are nothing. However, our gracious Jehovah is with us, and in us, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ alone and by his Word and Spirit. Hence, we may also expect to be hated and reproached for the sake of Jehovah by the wicked, even when we may do good to them, as David experienced. Let us, when necessary, be willing to suffer reproach and shame for the cause of God's truth and heavenly kingdom, and leave the punishment of our persecutors in our righteous Lord's hands. Like Nabal, the reprobate wicked surely will be cursed and destroyed by our Lord. However, there may be some unbelieving enemies in our lives whom Christ, by our humble and faithful confession, may draw eventually to himself in humble repentance and true faith so that they, with us, are made willing to serve him faithfully in his church and to suffer for the sake of his blessed name.

Memory Verse: *Psalm 71:10-12 For mine enemies speak against me; and they that lay wait for my soul take counsel together, Saying, God hath forsaken him: persecute and take him; for there is none to deliver him. O God, be not far from me: O my God, make haste for my help.*

Meditation #16
1 Samuel 26:9
Rev. Richard Smit

And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the LORD's anointed, and be guiltless?

If ever there were an opportunity to end his suffering, this was it for David. He watched sleeping Saul, completely unguarded in the midst of his sleeping soldiers on the hill of Hachilah. Significantly, Hachilah means "gloomy." According to Abishai's exuberant advice, the prospect of a decisive escape from his gloomy suffering under wicked Saul was temptingly attractive. After all, did not proud Saul deserve to be punished with death for his evil? Could not David kill Saul in self-defense? Did not he deserve deliverance and a time of peace?

However, David, a man after God's own heart by God's grace, did not reason according to his flesh as he observed vulnerable Saul. By true faith he refused to kill Jehovah's anointed king, in spite of Saul's wickedness. He was convinced that Jehovah somehow would punish wicked Saul according to Jehovah's righteousness, and he was determined not to slay Jehovah's anointed (1 Sam. 26:10-11). Thereby David affirmed that, although he was also Jehovah's anointed, yet he did not have the authority nor a divine directive to punish Saul with death. On that outwardly gloomy hill, David simply trusted in the light of Jehovah's righteousness regarding Saul and in Jehovah's goodness towards himself. He shined on Hachilah as a reflection of Christ, our King of Righteousness, because of whose death on Golgotha we are guiltless and by whose Spirit we are made obedient.

Should not we then do likewise in similar circumstances? Who can be guiltless if he argues that because of poverty his taking of food without purchase is not theft, but good? Who can be justified if he stirs up revolution or retaliation against someone in authority who is sinful and cruel? Who can claim innocence if he seeks escape from death by lies? God forbid that we selfishly commit unrighteousness for deliverance from our gloom in this life. Rather, let us by faith reason according to Jehovah's wisdom, follow his Word and commandments by faith, and love him faithfully, regardless of the gloom through which he providentially may lead us. Let us on every Hachilah trust in the light of Jehovah, who will lead us out of all our tribulation (1 Sam. 26:24). He for the sake of Christ and by his Spirit and grace will provide that divinely-approved escape from our dark suffering in the blessed light of repentance and faith in Christ alone. Thereby he will lead us from the gloom of Hachilah unto the glory of Zion.

Memory Verse: *Psalm 5:8 Lead me, O LORD, in thy righteousness because of mine enemies; make thy way straight before my face.*

Meditation #17
1 Samuel 28:16
Rev. Richard Smit

Then said Samuel, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the LORD is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy?

King Saul, under disguise, went on a secret, 16-km journey from the battlefield at Mt. Gilboa to the city of Endor. There he consulted a witch in order to obtain from Samuel, who had been dead for some time, instructions about the upcoming battle with the Philistines at Mt. Gilboa. In a unique event in God's providence, Samuel spoke to Saul.

Saul tried piously to justify his use of witchcraft by his complaint about Jehovah. Saul wanted to do what was outwardly right and consult God about the upcoming battle. However, God had refused to answer Saul by prophets or special dreams. What else could he do, except use witchcraft in order to speak to Samuel for advice?

To this brazen folly of impenitent Saul, Samuel spoke the condemning question: "wherefore?" Why did Saul whose rebellion was condemned earlier in his reign as wicked as witchcraft, then in persistent rebellion turn to witchcraft (1 Sam. 15:23)? Why had Saul not seen that if Jehovah had nothing new to reveal to him, then Jehovah's prophet, Samuel, also had nothing new to say? Why had Saul refused to see that Jehovah was his enemy?

In order to condemn unbelieving Saul in his folly, God answered Saul according to his folly (Prov. 26:5). Through Samuel, God repeated the reasons that he took the kingdom away and was giving it to David. Then God in his righteousness gave the desolate Saul his coveted revelation: he would perish in his guilt in the battle with the Philistines the next day.

What can we learn from this inspired story of divinely rejected Saul? Besides learning about Jehovah's condemnation upon witchcraft and his righteous judgment upon spiritually hardened Saul, we learn that those who walk in impenitence must turn from their wicked ways *now, without delay*. Moreover, the Lord shows, by contrast to Saul, what those who know their sin and unbelief should do.

What must you, sinner, do? Unlike Saul, who hardened himself in unbelief and continuing impenitence, seek early the almighty grace of God that you may receive the ears of faith with which you may heed quickly the all-sufficient word of Jehovah:

Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon (Isa. 55:6-7).

Memory Verse: *Psalm 34:18 The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.*