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## **Saul's Branch**

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The Father has often spoken prophetically through the events of our family's life, and He continues to do so. Recently the term of the lease on the townhouse we rent was completed and I had a sense that the Father would be moving us to a new location. I began to pray about this move and it was much upon my mind. One night while my college students were taking an exam I was thinking much on the upcoming move and I determined that I was going to take my wife out to dinner the next day and talk to her about our forthcoming change of residence.

When I arrived home that night my wife met me and began to tell me about the events of her day and she was visibly excited. She told me about a visit with an old friend and how this friend asked if we were renting our townhouse, or whether we owned it. Tony told her that we rented and that our lease was just completed, and at this news her friend lit up.

This lady proceeded to tell my wife that her husband was purchasing and preparing some properties for rent and that he had been praying and asking the Father to reveal to whom he should rent the current property on which he was working, when our family came to mind. This man did not know if we were even in the market for a place to live and his wife thought we owned our current residence.

My wife was excited about this news and she went with her friend to go and view the property. My wife loved it and when I arrived home that night, with the intent to take her out the next night and discuss moving, she had news that I had not expected. The home is larger than our current residence, it is in a nice neighborhood that has the aura of being out in the woods, it is convenient to my place of employment, and it is less money per month. But it was what I found out about the property the next day that got my attention.

The next morning my wife and I drove out to meet the brother who owns the property. As we entered the neighborhood we had to turn onto a road that bore the unusual name of "Saul's Branch", and from this road we turned onto another road that the property is on called "Branch View". The property actually sits on a corner

junction of two roads, and the home is angled in such a way that it is facing both of them. Both roads have the name “Branch View”, with one being “Branch View Trail” and the other being “Branch View Drive”.

Now, in our neck of the woods, a branch often refers to a stream or creek, and this is evidently what Saul’s Branch is a reference to. The home that the Father led us to look at is situated between two roads that both reference a view to this same branch. This is the meaning in the natural, but what got my attention is the spiritual symbolism in these names.

The people of God are depicted as a branch as we see in the following scripture.

**Romans 11:16-24**

16 If the first piece of dough is holy, the lump is also; and if the root is holy, the branches are too.

17 But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree,

18 do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you.

19 You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in."

20 Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear;

21 for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either.

22 Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off.

23 And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.

24 For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?

Paul was not the only one to make this correlation, even Yahshua illustrated

Kingdom truth as He said, "I am the vine and you are the branches..." (John 15:5). It should be evident from Paul's writing that there are different types of branches. The unbelieving Jews are portrayed as a branch that was broken off, while the Gentile believers are depicted as a wild olive branch that was grafted into the cultivated olive tree. But the symbolism that came to mind as I considered this road named Saul's Branch was that of David and Saul.

David and Saul represent two distinct groups in the Kingdom of God, and they also represent two distinct groups in the church. We can call them Saul's Branch and David's Branch. Both groups, like their namesakes, began with a true anointing and election from Yahweh, but one branch was rejected due to disobedience and unbelief while the other has their throne established forever.

Just last night as I was reading on the Internet I came across a recent article that speaks to this very issue. In this way the Father continues to confirm what He is speaking to my heart. The article was by Art Katz, and entitled "The Davidic Kingdom". I will quote it here.

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

What was there that was so offensive in David, who was a stripling and had no significance in himself, that Saul could not bear for him to live? We need to know that, because that is exactly a picture of the last day's pursuit and relentless persecution of a 'Saul' people against a 'Davidic' people of God. I tend to look at things in polarities. There is no neutral ground. It is either this or that. It is either David or Saul. They are two symbolic alternatives both purporting to be, so to speak, 'Christian' or 'of Israel,' and yet one is in deadly pursuit of the other and cannot abide

that the Davidic thing should live.

Do you remember when a band of Jews said that they would fast and not eat again until Paul was killed, for they could not abide Paul's life? They found Paul so offensive. He was not fit to live. What is it about a David and a Paul that even religious people cannot tolerate them and want to root them out of existence? If this is all academic to us, it is because we have not been sufficiently Davidic as to arouse those 'Saul-like' forces that are everywhere about and waiting to come against us. This is a classic and eternal contest. Saul looked every bit the king. He had all of the externalities and the outward credentials, and he was an expediency that God allowed Israel because they wanted a human king to rule over them, though God Himself was their King. We all know what kind of misrule came through Saul and how he failed to be obedient to God.

When God told him to destroy the Amalekites and spare not, and utterly destroy the infants, the suckling, the camel, sheep, oxen, etc., he did not do it. He was partial in his obedience and saved the best of the sheep and oxen for a sacrifice unto the Lord. He could not bring himself to slay the Amalekite, King Agag. It was Samuel, who wept all through the night at Saul's disobedience, for partial obedience is disobedience, and who himself took a sword and hacked Agag to pieces. We need to further note that the same Saul, who could not bring himself to a complete obedience to God to slay the historic enemies of God, in only a chapter or two later, destroys the whole city of Nob, a priestly community of men, women, infants and suckling, camel, sheep, oxen and ass. There was not a living thing that breathed when Saul exterminated an entire priestly community because they had helped David in his flight.

What is there about this David that Saul, in his antagonism, flung his spear at him, and pursued him relentlessly unto death?... It is only a matter of time before what is intrinsically in Saul, that inescapable, ruthless hatred of God's remnant people, will again surface and pursue David unto death. Do you think that David was naive about that?... David knew in his heart what Saul was made of, and that to let him go was really for David to sign his own death warrant. Rightly did Saul say, "You are more righteous than I." Do you know why? It was because of

David's willingness to lay down his life for it. Any righteousness that does not require our life is a religious sham. This was an ultimate act that David performed.

We need to know that the principalities and powers of the air that brooded over Israel were watching that incident [in which David spared Saul's life when it was in his power to slay him] with an intense preoccupation. The way in which David would act freely in the moment that came to him was not only to decide the perpetuation of his own life, his own survival or the coming of his own kingdom, but was to touch profoundly a moral contest, a conflict of moralities and a pivotal thing in the heavenlies between two kinds of wisdom. If David could be sucked into acting in defense of his own life in the kind of conventional wisdom that any man would employ when his life is threatened, there would have been no Davidic kingdom. We cannot estimate the weight of what was hanging in the balance in one episode that came in a moment of time by surprise, completely unpremeditated and unsought. That is the way it will come to us. We will not have the luxury of a warning. A moment will come when a decision of a kind will be required from us where again the powers of the air will be looking down to see what we will freely do when we are freely able to choose to do what we want to do.

Mr. Katz goes on to speak of the distinctions between David and Saul. David chooses obedience to Yahweh even when such obedience may cost him his life, while Saul fails in obedience when his life and position is threatened. David will not lift a finger to try to "help God out", while Saul is always striving to bring about the things that his soul desires. How the Sauls hate the Davids, for the Davids convict the Sauls of their own unbelief and cowardice. The Davids stand as a reproach to the external righteousness of the Sauls of the kingdom, a righteousness that is a sham for at its core it seeks to preserve and elevate self rather than to honor God.

I have written previously of the typology of Saul's life as it relates to the branch of Christianity that has become leavened with error and sin. The Spirit clearly intended King Saul to stand as a type of a leavened kingdom, and it has been evident during the last 2,000 years that there has always been a portion of the church clearly identified with King Saul. It is a church that started with a true anointing and then became corrupted because it refused to crucify the flesh and despise its own life, but

instead it sought to protect both its life and its position.

**Matthew 16:24-25**

**24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.**

**25 "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it."**

There has always been a segment of the church that did not want to go the way of the cross. They desired to be forgiven of their sins and to be assured of heaven when they died, but they have scorned the path of discipleship, the way of the cross. This Saul Branch prefers sacrifice over obedience, self-protection over martyrdom, self-fulfillment over denying oneself, and self-direction over being led of the Spirit.

In truth, all saints struggle with these issues. Even Yahshua sweat drops of blood as He wrestled with the will of the Father for His life, but He triumphed as He declared, "Nevertheless, not My will, but Thy will be done."

Those who see the cross before them and refuse to go down this path because of fear and unbelief often react with great violence and anger toward those who are willing. Those who will not entrust their lives to the hands of God when it looks like God may lead them to a place of death will always lash out at those who, by their words and example, declare that this path must be followed. It seems easier for these to despise and kill a brother than to follow the path God has chosen for them.

I have thought much lately of what truly distinguishes the Saul church from the Davidic church, a Babylonian people from the people of Zion. I have concluded that the main distinction is that those who would walk as Overcomers have "loved not their lives unto death" (Revelation 12:11). The Overcomers have enough faith in God that they will surrender their physical lives if it is asked of them, and they will die to the desires of their soul in order to pursue obedience to God. The Saul church, however, will seek another path. The Saul church preaches a godliness without power for there is no actual faith present. The Saul church walks by sight and it cannot abide those who would urge them to step out into realms of faith where risk is present and where one must cast themselves upon the care of a loving Father who has not promised them that they would not have to suffer.

The Davidic Branch of the church will continue to entrust itself to God even when

forced outside the camp and dwelling in foreign lands. The Davidic Branch will not seek to protect its own life through acts of unbelief and disobedience, for these saints have decided that life in which they cannot entrust their lives to a loving Heavenly Father is a life that is not worth living.

Returning to the sign that the Father has placed before us in this house, I am mindful that the front of the house directly faces the corner where there are two Branch Views. Now is a time of decision in the church at large. Multitudes are in the valley of decision. There is a way that seems right unto man, but it ends in death. There is another way that brings all who choose it to a crucifixion and a certain death, but it ends in Life. In this hour the Spirit is bringing multitudes to this valley of decision.

Many have already found themselves outside the camp, rejected, scorned, and falsely accused by brothers and sisters. The opportunity may come to take matters into your own hands and to strike back at those who have treated you falsely, and to reclaim the place of ministry that was taken from you by force, but the Father would have us all to forgive and to resist such temptation. A personal deliverance that is purchased by an act of disobedience is no deliverance at all. Stand fast in your confidence in the One who orders your steps. Humble yourselves under His mighty hand and in due time He will exalt you.

We live in awesome days.

Selah