

1 Samuel 14:47-52 -Mapping the Enemies

Before you turn to 1 Samuel, look back at Ezekiel 16 for just a moment. I want to show you something really quick. You can tuck it away, and then I'll connect the dots in a little bit. **Read Ezekiel 16:3, 45.** So tuck that away: God tells Israel that her mother was a Hittite and her father was an Amorite. **Turn 1 Samuel 14:47-52. Read**

So this morning is going to feel more like a Bible study and geography lesson than a sermon. As I was thinking about how far go in our study through 1 Samuel, it really seemed to me that this section lends itself to further explanation. It's easy to read through this section and not really have any idea what any of these names are referring to.

And I realized even as I was preparing this week that I probably should have done something like this earlier in our study. Throughout the OT we continually come across towns and cities that we're not familiar with, we come across people groups we are not familiar with, and rather than just blow by them, we should stop and investigate.

I was reading through the book of Joshua with my son several years ago and we got to the middle part where it's basically just a list of boundary lines for the different tribes in the Promised Land. I was going to blow through it but decided maybe what we could do is read the section while we look at a map of the Promised Land and trace out the tribes. See if we could figure out where everything was. Two things were pretty fascinating. First, the maps in the back of your Bible do not always accurately depict where boundary lines are. They are close, but sometimes the map people have to just guess. Second, I always thought that Jerusalem belonged to the tribe of Judah because it becomes the capital city of the nation of Judah later in Israel's history. But it's not, it's actually a city of Benjamin that Judah sort of just incorporates to itself. Now, those aren't big deals, but I would have never known that if I had just blown through the boundary cities. Background information can be very helpful in understanding the Bible.

Some of you will find this very helpful and fascinating. Others of you...well, there's coffee in the back. I also wanted to make this a tad bit interactive because whenever I see a map of Israel with a million names on it my eyes glaze over and I remember nothing. So in your hand out I included a blank map and you're welcome to fill it in however you want when we get to the geography section.

So we'll divide this up into 3 sections: Saul's enemies, Saul's family, and Saul's strategy.

1) Saul's enemies (Israel's enemies) **Read 47-48**

So who are these people? Who is Moab and Ammon and Edom and Zobah? And why are the people of Israel continually fighting them in the OT? You'll see these names all over the place.

First, **turn to Deut. 7** and we'll begin to put this together. Before we understand who these enemies are, we need to understand why they are enemies to begin with. Why is Israel always fighting against them? What we need to understand is that God gave Israel the Promised Land - the land of Canaan - and commanded them to wipe out the inhabitants. **Read 7:1-5**

So this is why Israel is in constant battle. They are driving out all of these nations. And the nations aren't just going to sit there while Israel comes in and does battle. So they fight back and want to destroy Israel.

Some of these nations we saw in **1 Sam. 14**, others we see throughout the OT elsewhere. Israel goes into the Promised Land for battle because God told them to. These other nations are wicked idolators and if Israel didn't wipe them out they would be influenced by their sinful ways.

Now why did God make Israel his people and give them the land? **Read 6-11**

So Israel wasn't the biggest and the strongest. That's not why God chose them. When God delivered Israel out of Egypt they were all a bunch of slaves who owned nothing and were brutally oppressed. God simply chose

Israel because he wanted to choose them. He set his love on them and was keeping his oath to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob to preserve them.

The fact that Israel was given this land is actually a testimony to God's faithfulness to his covenants. God will never break his promises. And he didn't. God gave Israel full possession of the land just a generation later under the leadership of Joshua. They received the Promised Land.

And, just in case they got a little self-righteous about getting the land, God cuts them down to size. **Look at 9:4-7. Read**

So God told Israel to go destroy these other nations. We might think that is harsh, but these were wicked, wicked nations. If you look at any honest history of the ancient near east the pagans in the land were over-the-top disgusting. Child sacrifice, torture, rampant immorality. You think of radical Islamic jihadists today and they look like Boy Scouts compared to these nations.

Yet, Israel was not intrinsically more righteous than the pagan nations around them. Moses, who wrote Deuteronomy, goes on to recount the whole golden calf incident where Moses is up on Mt. Sinai getting the 10 commandments and Israel is down on the plain involved in gross sexual immorality worshipping a golden calf. They were not righteous. And as we've read through Ezekiel in our Scripture reading, often times Israel was so wicked they would make these pagan nations blush.

Yet God chose Israel to wipe out these nations simply because he had chosen to use a single nation to bring judgment on all the other nations. And he chose Israel, the smallest of the nations, so that it would be clear God was acting through them. And as much as God is a holy God, he loved with unwavering devotion, his little sinful nation.

So this is why they are always doing battle. These wicked pagan nations are in the land that God gave to Israel.

Okay, who are these nations? We saw Moab, the Ammonites, the kings of Zobah, the Philistines, the Amalakites. Who are they?

Who was Moab? And who were the Ammonites? **Turn over to Gen. 19.** Most of us think about Genesis as being simply a history of the beginning of the world. And it very much is. But it's not just that. It's also a history of Israel and how they are related to the people within the Promised Land.

Think about this: when Israel was brought out of Egypt they had no idea who their ancestors were. They were about to go into the Promised Land and take possession but they didn't know who these people were they were supposed to destroy. So just before they go into the Land, Moses writes the book of Genesis to help Israel understand who these people are and where they came from. He helps connect the historical dots for Israel.

So who are the Moabites? Well they go all the way back to Lot and his daughters. You remember Lot, Abraham's nephew? Lot who lived in Sodom? Well, he happens to be the father of the Moabites and the Ammonites. **Read 30-38**

So this is pretty revolting and disgusting on a number of different levels. But it is through the wickedness of Lot's daughters that we get the Moabites and the Ammonites. What Moses is making clear to us is that they are children of sexual immorality.

Side: We need to be careful with those who might have been conceived in a sinful situation. The sins of someone's parents are not transferred to the children. All children are a blessing from God, created to bring him glory no matter how they were conceived. If you were conceived through sinful means, that has no bearing on your being made in the image of God or your legitimacy in the body of Christ. Really, if you're a believer in Jesus Christ it doesn't really matter how you were conceived, you're God's child now, that's your entire identity and that's all that matters for all of eternity.

I say all of that because what I'm about to say is historical in nature, I'm not saying we should do this. So stick with me.

Even just 40 or 50 years ago here in America if a child was conceived by sinful means, they and their parents were often shunned by society. The children were looked upon as damaged goods and "upstanding parents" would never let their legitimate children near these illegitimate children. That was America 40 years ago. Those in ancient times had that attitude on an order of magnitude greater than America.

It wasn't just that Lot and his daughters and their children were damaged goods. Their entire family line was damaged goods from here on out. Their nations were born of sexual immorality and that defined them forever. That's why Moses makes this little commentary in **Vs. 37** and **38**: "This is where these nations came from." That's not an accident.

So they were born out of sexual immorality. They were also not part of the Abrahamic covenant. The Abrahamic covenant was the promise God gave to Abraham in **Gen. 12** and **15** to bless all the nations through his offspring. Lot was not Abraham's offspring and therefore cannot be part of the covenant God gave.

Map 1, 2, 3: That's their history, and this is geographically where they ended up living. They are on the east side of the Jordan River. Initially God had only given the west side of the Jordan to Israel, but 3 of the tribes of Israel liked the east side so God gave that to them as well. The 3 tribes were Manasseh, Gad and Reuben. If you want any easy way to remember that, the east side is closer to Australia where they have Kangaroos. But instead of Kangaroo, remember Mangaru - Manasseh, Gad and Reuben. In any case, this is who they are.

We also read about the Amalekites and the Philistines. Who are they? Well, their history begins a little earlier. **Turn to Genesis 9.** This is just after the Flood. The world had become so corrupt that God drowned the entire world in a massive, cataclysmic flood. He spared only 8 people. Noah, Noah's wife, their 3 sons and their wives. Noah's 3 sons were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Israel descends from Shem - that's why Jewish people are called Semites and why if a person hates the Jews they are called anti-Semitic. And we have this little incident shortly after the flood. **Read 9:18-29**

So we don't really know what Ham did to his father Noah. Commentators speculate on all manner of possibilities from Ham simply making fun of his drunken, naked father to much, much worse. Also, it seems as though Canaan, Ham's son, is somehow involved because Noah curses Canaan. And we have to understand when a father blessed or cursed their children in the OT, it really set the course for their entire life. It wasn't a wish like you read on a greeting card. It was almost a prophetic declaration of what would happen in their life.

So why does Moses record this? For the same reason he recorded the incident about Lot. It's not just gee-whiz information. It's to help Israel understand who they are going in to destroy. Canaan specifically, but Ham also, are cursed people. In fact, it's almost like Noah disowns Ham because he doesn't even acknowledge him anymore. Both are cursed. Just like Moab and Ammon, they were complicit in sexual immorality and they have cursed by Noah.

Map 4: The Canaanites lived throughout the land of Israel. Which is why the Promised Land is often also called the land of Canaan.

Now, Genesis 10 is often called the table of nations because it is from these 3 men that all the nations of the world were made. You're either a Shemite, a Hamite, or a Japhethite. But look down at **Gen. 10:6-14** - this is the line of Ham. The cursed line. **Read 6-14**

So you probably noticed a few names that were familiar. Babel - as in Babylon - is part of the cursed line. Nineveh, as in Assyria, was cursed. Egypt is cursed. And the Philistines were cursed. These are all enemies of Israel, all had at one time or another subjected them to slavery and atrocities. And they were all cursed.

Map 5: So there is a reason that Moses gives us this history.

Now, remember what son was Israel from? Shem. Now remember Ezekiel 16? Where God says to Israel your father was an Amorite, your mother was a Hittite? **Read 15-16**

Heth is the father of the Hittites. So when God says to Israel your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite, he's not giving us an actual genealogy. This is a slam. Forgive the crassness, but God is literally making "your mama" jokes. Your mama was a filthy, cursed Hittite and your father was a filthy, cursed Amorite. Burn! You're children of immorality. That's what God's getting at.

Map 6: Now, the Amorites lived up in the north east, but there were also tribes that roamed around the west of the Promised Land as well. In fact, a lot of times it's hard to know exactly where some of these tribes lived because they were nomads. They moved around. To some extent when we read "The Jebusites, the Hivites, the Hittites, the Amorites, so on" what we're meant to understand is just all the non-Israelites in the land of Canaan, the Promised Land.

We have a few more. Next is Edom. Who is that? **Turn to Gen. 36:6-8.** Edom are the descendants of Esau. Who was Esau? Who is Esau?

Well if you remember Abraham had 2 sons: Ishmael the cursed son, and Isaac the blessed son. Side: Muslims reinterpret history to claim that Ishmael was actually the blessed line and Isaac was the cursed line. But Isaac was blessed. And then Isaac had 2 sons: Esau the cursed son, and Jacob the blessed son.

So the line of blessing is Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. All the other sons are cursed. **Read 6-8**

So Esau is Edom. Amalek, one of the other groups back in 1 Samuel is one of Esau's offspring. **Read 9-12**

So the Amalakites are offspring of Esau. They are cursed as well.

Map 7: Both the Edomites and the Amalakites live to the south of the Dead Sea. The Amalakites, interestingly, were brutal to the Israelites. On their way out of Egypt the Amalakites attacked the women and children toward the back of the group and as a result God made it part of Mosaic Law that Amalakites would be utterly wiped out. That's important to keep in mind, because the next episode in 1 Samuel - what we'll see next week - is a battle against the Amalakites. Just real quick, well turn

So that's a whirlwind tour of Saul's enemies, which are the enemies of Israel. **Turn back to 1 Sam 14** and let's put this together. **Read 47-48**

So, as much as we've seen the bad side of Saul throughout this book, we have to be fair and acknowledge that he is presented in a good light here. In large part he is now doing what God has called him to do.

And look at that map: where is Saul fighting? He's fighting everywhere! He is fighting enemies inside the Promised Land and outside of the Promised Land. Israel was never called to nation build; it was never to expand its borders. But she did have to defend herself from those who would come in and attack her and raid her. So he's fighting defensive battles and offensive battles.

I want to make 2 more observations before we move on. First, when we look at Saul specifically - but really anybody - we need to remember that the Bible teaches total depravity, not utter depravity. Total depravity means that sin has infected every aspect of who we are. Spurgeon once said: sin infiltrates us like salt infiltrates every drop of the Atlantic. It affects all of life.

But no one is utterly depraved. No one is 100% sinful in all that they do. To push Spurgeon's analogy: there is salt in every drop of the Atlantic, but the ocean never turns completely to salt. In the same way, by God's common grace, no one except Satan and demons is purely evil. A lot of times we can get into the trap of painting people as all bad or all good. But that's a false dichotomy.

Second, some people really object to God giving Israel the Promised Land. "What's so great about Israel?" Well, as we've seen, nothing. But what we need to remember is that ultimately every square inch of the planet

is God's. And God gets to do whatever God wants to do with his own land. If God wants to give it to the people of Israel, the offspring of Abraham through Isaac through Jacob then that's his business. It's his land and he gave it to Israel.

Acts 17:24 says that God made the world and everything in it, he's the Lord of heaven and earth.

Everything is God's - even the property we live on. It's not ours, it's God's. We're just kind of squatters on God's planet and we need to respect his authority to delegate the way he wants.

2) Let's look at Saul's family. **Read 49-51**

If you've read 1 and 2 Samuel in the past, one of the things you start to realize is that it starts reading a little bit like a soap opera or the mafia. So and so is married to someone else. People's atrocious actions are excused because they are family. And it's helpful to have some idea who these folks are.

Jonathan, of course, we've met. He's Saul's son, a valiant warrior who will become the best friend of David. Spoiler alert: He will also die a tragic death at the end of 1 Samuel. We don't know much about Ishvi and Mali-Shua. There's a chance they go by other names as other places in the Bible list other sons of Saul. Malachi-Shua also dies at the end of the book.

Saul also has 2 daughters: Merab and Michal. Here's where the soap opera begins. **Look** over at **18:17-21**. This is after David has proven he is a valiant warrior. He's killed Goliath, he been promoted to command over 1000 soldiers. And rather than being excited to have such a great warrior, Saul is jealous and tries to kill David. But he doesn't want David to turn on him so he offers Merab, his older daughter, to marry David. **Read 17-21**

Pretty crazy. Merab eventually does marry Adriel and they have kids. But once Saul is killed, all of his grandchildren through Merab are killed as well. So her line is cut off.

David and Michal end up having a very complicated relationship. On the one hand David is not nobility. His family is a family of commoners and actually his great grandmother was an outsider, a Moabite. We know her as Ruth the godly woman whom Boaz married. But technically to be a full Israelite you had to have 10 generations of separation from an outsider. David didn't meet that requirement, but Saul waived it and gave Michal to him in marriage anyway.

David and Michal's relationship was on again off again to say the least. She is his first wife, but will not be his only wife. David will have multiple wives including Abigail, Bathsheba, and Ahinoam - a different Ahinoam than Saul's wife. Michal is barren and her family line is eventually cut off.

We also read about Saul's wife and her father, Ahimaaz, and Saul's father, Kish. But we know very little about them. **Read 14:50**

We do know a fair amount about Abner. Abner is Saul's cousin and is his general. He is literally Saul's right hand man. Once Saul is killed in battle, however, Abner doesn't throw his support behind David to be king. There is a small time when Saul's son Ish-Bosheth becomes king. Ish-bosheth was probably Saul's son through a concubine and therefore not mentioned here. But Abner supported the wrong guy and never really recovers. David's general Joab killed Abner in cold blood because Abner killed Joab's brother.

Again, welcome to the mafia soap opera that is Israel's history.

3) Saul's strategy. **Read 52**

If you remember back in Chapter 8, Saul has done exactly what Samuel warned Israel he would do. He took all the young men for himself and put them in his military.

As the old saying goes, this wasn't a threat, this was a promise. This is what kings do. So Saul, as king, did this very thing. The sad part was that Saul never had peace. He never conquered the Philistines. We saw last week

that because he was unreasonable in forbidding his troops from eating food, they didn't win as great a victory as they could have. As a result, Saul's life is defined by constant battle. And he never really subdues the Philistines. Saul never experienced rest like David did (**2 Samuel 7:1**)

I want to leave us with a devotional point before we end. It was a point touched on by one of the commentaries I was looking at this week that I want to expand on.

And that's this: You can be very successful in life at all the wrong things. You can be successful in all the things that don't matter. And you can be an utter failure in all the things that matter most to God.

That is exactly who Saul was. This little section at the end is a positive section. Saul was a great warrior. He has manly man - head and shoulders above everyone else. And he was skilled in battle and knew how to find men who were also skilled in battle. He was rich and good looking. But spiritually he was dead. He had no true devotion to God.

What legacy are we leaving? What are we successful in? We can be successful in finances, in business, maybe you have a perfect house, your an A student, gifted musician, great athlete. And people might judge you to be a great person.

But what really matters is how God judges us. How he views our lives.