

Episode 4: Road to Atonement

Everyone is headed to the Tabernacle in the city of Nob. The Tabernacle is a holy place where the spirit of God dwells. It was first created by Moses. It is a portable tent-like sanctuary that served as the central place of worship before the construction of the permanent temple in Jerusalem. The day of atonement is also called Yom Kippur. It was the day the high priest could enter the holy of holies which is where the ark of the covenant dwelled which held the presence of God.

On the Day of Atonement there was a 25 hour fast prohibiting eating/drinking, washing, and sexual relations. This is known as self-denial.

How the times have changed with David not being accepted at the Tabernacle with his mother, to being honored as a great champion of the king. Although there is nothing in scripture to evidence that David was not allowed at the Tabernacle when he was younger, it is a great feeling to be able to go to the tabernacle now. Have you ever been denied something at one point in your life, to then gain access when you were older? How did you feel at that moment?

Merab and Michal go on the journey to the Tabernacle and they still are not happy with each other. Merab gets some one-on-one time with David and tells him that she is sending 100 sheep to his family and Jesse's name is restored so next year he can go to the Tabernacle. Merab talks about how she has felt overlooked and forgotten, much the same as he was before Goliath. She wants to find a path and future like David. She doesn't think Saul will change his mind about the marriage and she asks David not to embarrass her. It's easy to sympathize with Merab. She just wants to be seen, loved and to find her purpose. This is the same for many of us. Have you ever felt this way? Maybe you feel this way now. How are you comforted when you feel overlooked, forgotten and lost in your purpose?

Joab calls Eliab his cousin. David and Eliab do have a relative named Joab, but he is their nephew (a son of David's sister, Zeruiah) and is the commander of David's army. See 1 Chronicles 2:13-17 for the family tree.

While on the way to the tabernacle, they are in Machaneh on the road to the tabernacle and David hears of the Philistine's attacking a local village. They quickly assemble the troops to attack the Philistines led by David. We don't get to see the battle, but a dozen of David's men died because David acted too hastily. Everyone is upset and blaming David for his leadership. David does not take this lightly. He gathers a piece of armor from the dead soldier and keeps it. He feels responsible for the deaths of his soldiers. He cries in Merab's arms. None of this is in scripture, but it shows that David makes a mistake. We all make mistakes. What do you notice about David's reaction to his mistake that is a good example for all of us?

Joab and Eliab were sent on a mission to kill the anointed one and his bloodline. Eliab was unaware of the mission until they reached a family's home in Judah. Adriel, the Judah leader, told Saul that the anointed one was in this family. They not only had to kill the man in the family, but the entire bloodline. Eliab felt enormous regret after he assisted Joab with the murder of these innocent people. He was even ready to end his own life.

Jonathan and Samuel have a brief moment alone before the day of atonement ceremony. Jonathan tells him that he knows David is the anointed one. That he has become a friend to David and is teaching him how to fight and lead an army. Samuel says he should become David's greatest ally, that is what David will need. In befriending, teaching and training David, Jonathan is going against his father, his king, even his own right to be the next king. But he trusts in God and God's decision in the anointed one. Have you ever had to do something really hard because it was the right thing to do, even when it could have hurt other people, even maybe people you loved?

Bible Reference

Jonathan talks to Sara about his feelings for her, but she rejects him. Sara's brother was killed in battle with Jonathan. Her brother joined Jonathan's army because of Jonathan's bravery at the battle of Michmash. Learn more about the battle below:

1 Samuel 14:6, 14-15 (ESV) – 6

Jonathan said to the young man who carried his armor, "Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised. It may be that the Lord will work for us, for nothing can hinder the Lord from saving by many or by few."...¹⁴And that first strike which Jonathan and his armor-bearer made, killed about twenty men within as it were half a furrow's length in an acre of land.

¹⁵And there was a panic in the camp, in the field, and among all the people. The garrison and even the raiders trembled, the earth quaked, and it became a very great panic.

Jonathan initiated a surprise attack with only his armor-bearer, it caused a panic and led to a major victory for the Israelites.

DID YOU KNOW??

It was Jonathan's faith (verse 6) that led him to attack and God's divine intervention that created confusion among the Philistines followed by an earthquake (verse 15).

The day of atonement has come, and Samuel sacrifices the goats on the altar in front of everyone. After he has done this, Saul goes up to hug Samuel, but really he threatens him as he wants Samuel to re-anoint him in front of everyone. Samuel refuses. Meanwhile David approaches the altar and puts the dead soldier's armor on it and starts to sing. He does this in front of everyone and then starts to sob. Jonathan comforts him, but his vulnerability and grief is evident to all the other soldiers and people at the Tabernacle. David isn't afraid to be authentic and vulnerable in front of others. Do you struggle to be authentic? Do you struggle with authenticity around certain people? How authentic are you in your interactions?

The show ends with the soldiers singing as they leave the Tabernacle. They sing like David, signifying their acceptance of him as their leader. David wasn't afraid to be vulnerable in front of his soldiers and it paid off. What other qualities do you find important in a leader? Do you see any of these in David so far?

Did you notice that Ishvi and Dinah are married now? They didn't want a big wedding, but they are married in this episode when Dinah says the time of self-denial is in effect before the Day of Atonement.
