

Anointed Shield of Faith

Bible Glossary: People & Places

Saul

Sermon Reference

Saul is referenced as the 'shield of Saul' in the mountains of Gilboa, where he and Jonathan were killed in battle, illustrating the loss of anointing and protection when the shield was no longer rubbed with oil.

Background Context

Saul was the first king of Israel, anointed by the prophet Samuel as recorded in 1 Samuel chapters 9 and 10. His reign marked the transition from the period of judges to a centralized monarchy, bringing together the twelve tribes under one ruler in response to the people's desire to be like other nations. Saul's initial humility and military successes earned him favor, but as his reign progressed, he demonstrated a series of failures in obedience to God, which ultimately led to his rejection by God.

The definitive moment in Saul's kingship was his failure to fully carry out God's command regarding the Amalekites, an act that cost him the continued favor of God and Samuel's prophetic support (1 Samuel 15). His incapacities were further exposed by his irrational jealousy toward David, his eventual successor, which led him into a tragic and violent pursuit to destroy David. Saul's death occurs during a battle against the Philistines on Mount Gilboa (1 Samuel 31), where both he and his son Jonathan, a beloved warrior and close friend of David, are killed. David laments their deaths in 2 Samuel 1 with poignant grief, referring to Saul's shield, which metaphorically symbolizes his protection and strength that was lost once his anointing ended.

Historically, Saul's kingship embodies the complexities of Israel's early monarchy—especially the tension between divine command and human leadership—and his tragic downfall underscores the vital necessity of remaining anointed and obedient to God for continued divine favor and protection.

Importance in the Bible

Saul's life and reign introduce the establishment of monarchy in Israel and exemplify the consequences of disobedience to God. His rise and fall set the stage for David's anointed kingship, which is integral to messianic lineage and biblical history. The reference to Saul's shield in the sermon serves as a vivid metaphor for the necessity of maintaining God's anointing and protection to withstand spiritual battles, making Saul a powerful lesson in how the loss of divine favor results in vulnerability to the enemy.

David

Sermon Reference

David is mentioned in relation to the battle on the mountains of Gilboa where he mourns Saul and Jonathan's death, and also in Psalms where he refers to the Lord as his shield and refuge.

Background Context

David, the youngest son of Jesse from Bethlehem, rose from humble beginnings as a shepherd boy to become the second king of Israel. Anointed by Samuel, David's ascendancy begins with his famed victory over Goliath, symbolizing faith-driven triumph over formidable foes (1 Samuel 17). His reign over Israel is marked by military victories, the unification of the tribes of Israel, and the establishment of Jerusalem as the nation's political and spiritual capital.

Despite his strengths, David's life was not without sin and personal failure, notably his transgressions involving Bathsheba and Uriah (2 Samuel 11–12). However, his sincere repentance and reliance on God's mercy made him a pivotal figure in biblical history, portrayed as 'a man after God's own heart' (1 Samuel 13:14). Many of the Psalms are attributed to David, revealing his intimate relationship with God as protector, shield, and refuge amid trials.

David's legacy extends beyond his lifetime through his lineage which culminates in the birth of Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah, fulfilling God's covenant with him (2 Samuel 7). His life illustrates the complexities of faith, leadership, and the necessity of God's anointing for effective stewardship and victory over enemies. In the sermon, David's laments and praises serve to reinforce the theme of the shield as a symbol of God's protection and the spiritual necessity to keep faith anointed and active to repel the enemy's attacks.

Importance in the Bible

David is central to biblical history and theology. As Israel's exemplified king and psalmist, his life chronicles the ideals and challenges of God's chosen ruler. His psalms have shaped Israel's worship and offer believers profound insights into God's protective power and faithfulness. The sermon's emphasis on David's references to God as shield underscores how David embodied a faith that was not merely passive but active and reliant on God's anointing, a model for believers in spiritual warfare and daily living.

Isaiah (Book of Isaiah, Chapter 21:5)

Sermon Reference

Isaiah chapter 21 verse 5 is the primary text for the sermon, focusing on the command to anoint the shield or oil the shield as preparation for spiritual battle.

Background Context

The Book of Isaiah is one of the major prophetic books of the Old Testament, written by the prophet Isaiah, who ministered primarily in Jerusalem during the 8th century BC. The book conveys God's messages regarding judgment and redemption, covering themes of repentance, God's sovereignty, the coming Messiah, and the future restoration of Israel.

Isaiah 21 is a prophetic oracle concerning the fall of Babylon and Edom, and verse 5 occurs within a call to vigilance and preparation for impending conflict. The imagery of 'anointing the shield' or 'oiling the shield' reflects ancient combat readiness — emphasizing the need for strength, resilience, and divine empowerment when facing enemies. Shields had to be properly maintained, moistened, and oiled to withstand fiery darts and piercing blows in battle, symbolizing how faith must be continually empowered by the Holy Spirit to stand firm.

The verse's subtle military metaphor transcends its immediate historical context to offer believers imagery pertinent to spiritual warfare: faith is a shield that must be regularly anointed (empowered and maintained) to resist and extinguish the attacks of the enemy. Isaiah situates this call to action within the broader context of God's control over nations and His ultimate victory over evil. This passage exemplifies the prophet's role in both warning and encouraging God's people to remain vigilant and properly prepared, spiritually sharpened and anointed, to confront challenges and to advance God's kingdom, themes beautifully expounded in the sermon.

Importance in the Bible

Isaiah's message of anointing the shield serves as a critical metaphor that has resonated through biblical teachings on faith and spiritual warfare. This prophetic counsel articulates the necessity for God's people to maintain their spiritual defenses through faith and reliance on the Holy Spirit. The book overall serves as a bridge between judgment and hope, with Isaiah's stirring prophetic imagery calling believers across generations to trust in God's power as their ultimate shield and strength.

Duncan Campbell

Sermon Reference

Duncan Campbell was the evangelist invited by two elderly women in the Hebrides to host prayer meetings leading to a significant 20th-century revival there.

Background Context

Duncan Campbell (1898–1972) was a Scottish evangelist, known for his dynamic preaching and role in significant revival movements of the 20th century. He emerged as a key figure within Pentecostal and charismatic circles and was instrumental in the Hebrides revival on the Isle of Lewis, a part of the Outer Hebrides of Scotland. His ministry was marked by both fervent prayer and powerful preaching, which led to a broad awakening across Scotland and beyond.

The 1949–1952 Hebrides Revival was characterized by a profound outpouring of the Holy Spirit that transformed communities. It resulted in numerous conversions, healings, and a renewed focus on prayer and holiness, profoundly affecting schools, public places, and even prisons. This revival is regarded as one of the most impactful in Scottish history and has been widely recorded as a powerful demonstration of God’s moving in the contemporary era.

Campbell’s leadership was pivotal as he responded to the faith and persistent prayers of Peggy and Christine Smith, two elderly believers who sensed the coming revival through prayer and vision despite physical limitations. His arrival energized and united the community, knocking the enemy off balance through concerted, faith-driven endeavor.

Hebrides

Sermon Reference

The Hebrides are described as the location of a mighty 20th-century revival initiated by the faith and prayers of two elderly women and where Duncan Campbell ministered.

Background Context

The Hebrides is an archipelago off the west coast of mainland Scotland, divided into two main groups: the Inner Hebrides and the Outer Hebrides. The region is historically significant for its rugged landscape, sparse population, and deeply rooted Gaelic culture and Christian heritage. The Hebrides have a long Christian history dating back to early Celtic Christianity with notable figures such as St. Columba.

In the 20th century, the Hebrides became globally known for a remarkable Christian revival beginning in 1949 that lasted several years. This revival profoundly influenced the spiritual landscape of Scotland and had ripple effects throughout the UK and beyond. The revival was characterized by an intense outpouring of the Holy Spirit that led to widespread conversions, healings, and a renewal of Christian commitment. It began with local prayer meetings and grew into a movement that touched nearly every aspect of community life. The Hebrides revival offered a striking example of how faithfulness, prayer, and openness to the Spirit can catalyze extraordinary spiritual renewal regardless of the size, remoteness, or socioeconomic status of a community. This revival emphasized the power of persistence in prayer and the importance of local leadership alongside visiting ministers like Duncan Campbell who brought further inspiration and empowerment.

The Hebrides thus stand as a modern-day counterpart to biblical revivals and a testament to God’s ability to manifest His power in all generations and places. Its story aligns with biblical themes of anointed and resilient faith prevailing over spiritual opposition.

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