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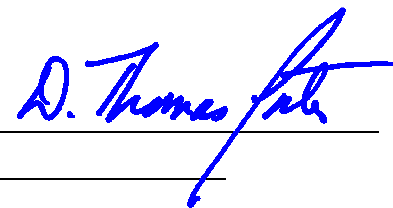
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LESSON NOTES (EXPLORE THE BIBLE)

GOD HAS HEARD—FRIENDSHIP WITHIN THE KINGDOM, JONATHAN & DAVID
 (1 Samuel 18) Lord's Day, July 31, 2016

OVERVIEW

"Session 9" for this week in the *Explore the Bible Series*



Choices kill. Friendship. Security. Family. Churches. Relationships. Choices must be made, and choices kill.

So it was with Jonathan. He had to choose between his love for David,¹ the love for his father Saul, and the loyalty to the King, his father. The choice had horrifying consequences. Even though he was embarrassed by his father, he chose David. Even though his father called his mother the ancient equivalent of "bitch,"² he chose David. Even though he knew he would never inherit the kingship of Israel, he chose David. Regardless of cost, he fulfilled the commitment he made. He chose David, the subsequent beloved king of believers.

**A QUESTION TO GET YOU THINKING:
 WHY WAS IT NECESSARY FOR JONATHAN AND DAVID TO FORMALIZE THEIR FRIENDSHIP WITH RITUAL?**

Several hundred years later another beloved king would ascend to the throne. People would choose between the love for their family and their love for the new beloved one. Their choice had horrifying consequences. If beloved were not chosen, they would never taste the joy of the new kingdom. If beloved were chosen, they faced a lifetime of angst—family rejection, political isolation, and outright starvation. Beloved's mother was thought to be the victim of a rape. Beloved was accused of blasphemy—the greatest sin against the Lord God Yahweh of Israel. Beloved would be tried. He would be convicted. He would be executed. He would be buried.

But Beloved arose from the grave. He came back to counsel the followers of the new King, this descendant of beloved, became the King of kings, and Lord of lords. All because of choice.

Choose today who you will serve, but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

¹"David" is Hebrew for "beloved."

²1 Samuel 20:30, quoting Saul talking to his son Jonathan, reads "You son of a perverse and rebellious woman! Don't I know that you have sided with the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of the mother who bore you?"

1 SAMUEL

CONTEXT³

Chemists learn very quickly to record in precise detail their amalgamations, manipulations, and combinations of molecules. Not all experiments succeed, and the true measure of success is more often determined by what “failed,” not what “succeeds.”

And so it is with our experiment with facism in the promised land. We wanted the comfort of a sovereign king—as long as he didn’t press us too hard. We wanted the fealty heirarchy of a kingdom—as long as it didn’t get in the way of building our herds and families. We wanted the security of a king—as long as our deployment on the lines was limited. And so it is with Holy Spirit’s record recorded in what we call “1 Samuel.” An experiment. A failed experiment, yes, but one which is detailed, down to the molecule. Let us learn from the great Chemist.

We see a great example of the “tall man” thesis—tall men think everything should be given to them; after all, it’s always been that way. Saul, the tall one thought he could disobey the Lord God and stay king. Nuts.

We also see a great example of the “short man” thesis—short men are always starting something to prove something. David learned to slay, and slay well. And, he died in the arms of a girl brought to him just to keep him warm.

Listen carefully to 1 Samuel. As the rise and fall of Saul with the rise of David, we see in politics what would become the true contest between people and the Lord God Jehovah. Better to obey than sacrifice? Better than burnt offerings? You betcha!



Humans are not all that smart. Nonetheless, we think we are. Such was the case with our first few generations in the land promised to Abraham, and his descendants—us.⁴ The Lord God gave us clear direction through a variety of judges—from Yeshua (*Yahweh saves*), son of Nun, to Samuel (*God hears*), son of Elkhanah—we decided we knew best. Sure some of the judges were great—Deborah created 40 years of peace. Some were lousy with short hair—Samson loved Delilah more than the Lord God.

In the midst of all this disobedient chaos, the presumably wise among us said we need a king. We had one, of course, but did not recognize Him. We thought His judges were the authority, rather than regents for the real King. Nonetheless, we persisted. We want a king! We want a king! We want a king! We want a king! We want a king! We want a king! We want a king!



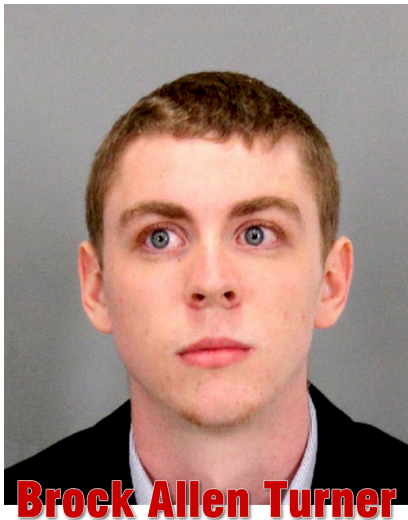
I’m sure the Lord God smiled. Wryly. You know how your father smiled when you told him you were going to climb that elm tree, the tree which had no

³See <http://DThomasPorter.com/BibleStudies>

⁴Galatians 3:28-29 reads... “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

stepping or holding limbs... And, so the Lord God prepared us for a king. Of course, none of us knew then, we were being prepared for the King.

1 Samuel tells the tale of two of our first kings—Saul from the tribe of Benjamin, the very tribe who had just stolen wives from Shiloh, and David from the tribe of Judah. Even his heritage wasn't pure—his great grandmother wasn't even Hebrew. Yes, the great woman Ruth revered by all as noble was a Moabite. Saul would pretend not to hear sheep bleating. David would murder, tolerate idols in his house, and commit a heinous act of adultery and cover up. And, these were just the first of our two "kings."



What gave rise to the patience of the Lord God with us? He had a long, tedious lesson to teach. May we learn it well. The writer of Judges summed it up well lesson to be learned...

Everyone did as he saw fit.

And so do we, when we allow the powerful to ravage the weak.

CONTEXTUAL ISSUES

After Samuel warned the people about the nature of a king "like all our neighbors have," the second king of Israel should have been out hunting jackasses who had wandered away; instead he was searching for donkeys (see 1 Samuel 10).

Intriguingly, the Lord God told Samuel to appoint the Benjamite Saul as king; even though a head taller and not of the tribe of Judah, Saul was indeed anointed king of Israel.



Samuel did his job ... But even at first, it did not bode well. For example, here's the record of Saul's initial time as king:

Samuel explained to the people the regulations of the kingship. He wrote them down on a scroll and deposited it before the Lord God Yahweh. Then Samuel dismissed the people, each to his own home. Saul also went to his home in Gibeah, accompanied by valiant men whose hearts God had touched. But some troublemakers said, "How can this fellow save us?" They despised him and brought him no gifts. But Saul kept silent. -1 Samuel 10:25-27

What a great way to begin as king.

All during Samuel's time as judge, the Ammonites had been peaceful. But now, Saul was king. And guess who was making demands on Israel. At first the folks were freaked, and Saul was angry. Saul sent pieces of ox throughout Israel reminding them of their fate if they did not follow Saul and Samuel. And, now we were freaked for a better reason. Well, the Ammonites were virtually destroyed, except for a few who we wanted to execute. Saul reminded the people that *Yahweh* rescued Israel. After that, Saul's kingship was reaffirmed at Gilgal, and they partied for a long time.

It was there that Samuel gave his swan song. Reminding them that he had never cheated them nor oppressed them, you now have a king. Remember it is the Lord who is in charge—He has been from the times of Egypt and it is still today! But, why are you freaked about today? The Ammonites? Seriously?

CONTEXTUAL ISSUES – CHAPTER 17

1 Samuel 17:32-41 *David answers the call for battle, and plunder.* After answering the king's summons, David tells the king—don't lose heart because of this knucklehead Philistine. I, your servant, will take him out.

Saul grimaced—you're not able; you're just a boy, and Goliath has been a fighter since he was a adolescent.

David countered—I've been keeping my father's sheep for years. When a lion or bear took a sheep, I went after it—striking it, and rescuing the sheep from its mouth. I've killed both bear and lion—this pagan, uncircumcised Philistine? He will have the same fate. He has defied the armies of the *living* God. The Lord God *Yahweh* who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.

Saul replied, you go and may the Lord God *Yahweh* be with you. So Saul dressed David in his own clothing, and put on a coat of armor and helmet. David took his sword and tried it out, but not being used to them, said—I can't use this equipment. I'm not used to them.

After taking them off, he took his shepherd's staff and picked up five smooth stones from the stream. With his shepherd's bag filled with the stones, and his sling in hand, he approached the Philistine. And, the Philistine accompanied by his shield bearer, also approached, coming closer to David.

Q Why was David ready to take on Goliath? To what extent was he foolhardy? Mercenary?

Q What happens to us when we don't attribute our successes to the Lord God we serve?

1 Samuel 17:42-51. *Goliath underestimates his enemy, and David relies on his Redeemer.* Goliath was stupid—he knew not that he was facing the Lord God *Yahweh*. He was distracted by the size of this boy, this ruddy, cute kid, coming down from the hill into the valley.

Am I so dissed that you would come at me with sticks?

Then Goliath called out:

Baal damn you! El damn you! Dagon damn you! Come here kid, and I'll feed your flesh to vultures and other carrion eaters.

To prove to believers in a very substantive way that the Lord God Yahweh means business, Samuel proclaimed the Lord God's existential lesson...

David was undaunted—*You've got swords, spears, and javelins. I've come against you with the authority of the Lord God Jehovah Himself! All who watch will see that it is not by sword or spear the Lord God Yahweh saves. The battle is Yahweh's, and He will give you all into our hands.*

Goliath moved even closer, and David actually ran toward him. Reaching into his bag, he took out a stone and placed it into his sling. Round and round the sling went—the stone hits its mark and Goliath goes down. David ran over, and taking Goliath's sword, cut off his head. The Philistines freaked, turned and ran away. They apparently ignored Goliath's offer for them to become the slaves of Israel.

Q To whom did David declare the cause of victory, in advance, of same? So what?

Q What causes us to rely upon swords & armor rather than stones & slings?

Q Why do we not tell the full story of what David did to Goliath during this battle (and the aftermath—his head being brought to Jerusalem and Goliath's weapons being confiscated).

EPILOGUE

The Israeli army chased and killed retreating Philistines all the way back to Gath and Ekron. But, David brought the head of Goliath back to Jerusalem, and put his weapons in his own tent. Saul called upon General Abner to report—just who was this boy? Yes, it was David, the youngest son of Jesse of Bethlehem. And the angst continued to brew.

1 Samuel 18:1-7. *David does well, militarily; politically, not so much.* Still holding Goliath's head and returning after killing Philistines, General Abner had brought David before Saul. Who's son are you, son? David reported he was the son of Jesse of Bethlehem. After this conversation, Jonathan became fast friends with David—they were of one spirit. Jonathan loved David as he loved himself.

From that day on, Saul kept David to himself, not letting David return home. Jonathan covenanted with David because of his love for him; he took off his robe, giving it to David, along with his tunic, sword, bow and belt. Their friendship was more than political association.

Whatever Saul assigned David to do, he did it successfully, and wisely; Saul rewarded him with a high rank in the army. The people were pleased, as well as other officers in Saul's army. Then it hit the fan...

When the men were returning home, the women from all over came to greet the victorious King Saul. Singing and dancing, their songs and tambourines and lutes accompanied a lyric which was to have significant ramifications...

♪♪ **Saul has slain his thousands; David his tens of thousands.** ♪♪

- Q What are some clear signs that the friendship between Jonathan and David was more than political association?
- Q Why was it useful for the Lord God Jehovah that David would be so successful as a soldier?
- Q Why was David praised publicly more than King Saul?

1 SAMUEL 18:1-7

After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself. ²From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return to his father's house. ³And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. ⁴Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt.

⁵Whatever Saul sent him to do, David did it so successfully that Saul gave him a high rank in the army. This pleased all the people, and Saul's officers as well.

⁶When the men were returning home after David had killed the Philistine, the women came out from all the towns of Israel to meet King Saul with singing and dancing, with joyful songs and with tambourines and lutes. ⁷As they danced, they sang: "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands."



1 Samuel 18:8-18. *The angst grows—Saul gives, David takes*. Naturally, the public praise for this ruddy upstart from Bethlehem rankled Saul. Saul mused, “What’s next, my kingdom?” From then on, a jealous eye was the only one through which Saul could see David.

On the very next day, Saul was especially enthusiastic in his praise, but the Lord God had punished him with an injuriously evil spirit. And, there was David, as usual, playing the harp. Saul hurled a spear toward to David—“I’ll pin him to the wall.” Twice it happened, and twice David eluded being a spear cushion.

Saul was afraid of David: Yahweh was with him, and had left Saul. So, he sent David away, giving him command over 10 companies; David led these 1,000 troops in campaigns. As per God’s plan, he was continually successful. The jealousy ramped up; fear ensued, but all of Israel, and especially Judah loved David.

Saul tried to give David his oldest daughter Merab to solidify David’s loyalty. Saul thought to himself—“I’ll not touch him; I’ll let the Philistines take care of that problem.” David, however, was not quite so enthralled with Merab (Michal was the promised daughter as reward for killing Goliath; see 1 Samuel 17:23). So he declared who am I to be the king’s son-in-law? As it turned out, Merab was given not to David, but to one Adriel of Meholah.

- Q To what extent was Saul justified in his fear/jealousy of David?
- Q Why did the Lord God send an injuriously evil spirit⁵ to Saul?
- Q Who else would try to use battle action to kill/solve a problematic competitor? Is this where David got the idea?

1 SAMUEL 18:8-18

Saul was very angry; this refrain galled him. "They have credited David with tens of thousands," he thought, "but me with only thousands. What more can he get but the kingdom?"

⁹And from that time on Saul kept a jealous eye on David.

¹⁰The next day an evil [injurious] spirit from God came forcefully upon Saul. He was prophesying in his house, while David was playing the harp, as he usually did. Saul had a spear in his hand ¹¹and he hurled it, saying to himself, "I'll pin David to the wall." But David eluded him twice.

¹²Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with David but had left Saul. ¹³So he sent David away from him and gave him command over a thousand men, and David led the troops in their campaigns. ¹⁴In everything he did he had great success; i.e., he was very wise because the LORD was with him. ¹⁵When Saul saw how successful he was, he was afraid of him. ¹⁶But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he led them in their campaigns.

¹⁷Saul said to David, "Here is my older daughter Merab. I will give her to you in marriage; only serve me bravely and fight the battles of the LORD." For Saul said to himself, "I will not raise a hand against him. Let the Philistines do that!"

¹⁸But David said to Saul, "Who am I, and what is my family or my father's clan in Israel, that I should become the king's son-in-law?" ¹⁹When the time came for Merab, however, Saul's daughter, to be given to David, was given in marriage to Adriel of Meholah.

⁵This statement and similar ones in Scripture indicate evil spirits are subject to God's control and operate only within divinely determined boundaries (see Judges 9:23; 1Kings 22:19-23; Job 1:12; 2:6; compare 2Samuel 24:1 with 1Chronicles 21:1). Saul's disobedience continued to be punished by the assaults of an injuriously evil spirit (1 Samuel 18:15-16, 23; 18:10; 19:9).

1 Samuel 18:20-30. *Saul sought solutions; David sought relief—neither found either.* With David's humble reaction to Merab, Saul proposed Michal to David—after all, she was in love with David anyhow. Saul reasoned she would be a snare to him so that the Philistines would be against him. Okay, David, you've now got a second chance to be my son-in-law.

Saul ordered his staff to tell David that he is pleased with him; the staff like him, and he should become a son-in-law.

Again David questioned his status and worthiness—I'm poor and little known he responded. The staff reported David's response, so Saul thought of another way to give David incentive and status, and get the Philistines to do his dirty work.

Tell David the new price: 100 Philistine foreskins—take revenge on my enemies. (Of course, Saul's plan was to have David killed by the Philistines.)

This appealed to David and so he set off and before the deadline elapsed, he and his men had killed two hundred Philistines. Bringing their foreskins to the king so he could become the king's son-in-law, Saul did indeed give Michal in marriage to David.

Then it got worse—Saul again realized the Lord God Yahweh was with David, and to top it all off, Michal was in love with David. Saul became more afraid, and remained David's enemy until Saul died.

The Philistines continued to fight, and David continued to achieve more success than the rest of Saul's officers—his fame grew until David, son of Jesse, from Bethlehem was a household name.

- Q To what extent was David being humble about being the king's son-in-law versus wanting the reward he was promised in the first place, Michal?
- Q What was the point of bringing back Philistine foreskins? Wouldn't severed heads been a more accurate metric for battle success?
- Q What made Saul so afraid of David? To what extent was his fear justified? Just what made David so successful?

1 SAMUEL 18:20-30

Now Saul's daughter Michal was in love with David, and when they told Saul about it, he was pleased. ²¹"I will give her to him," he thought, "so that she may be a snare to him and so that the hand of the Philistines may be against him." So Saul said to David, "Now you have a second opportunity to become my son-in-law."

²²Then Saul ordered his attendants: "Speak to David privately and say, 'Look, the king is pleased with you, and his attendants all like you; now become his son-in-law.'"

²³They repeated these words to David. But David said, "Do you think it is a small matter to become the king's son-in-law? I'm only a poor man and little known."

²⁴When Saul's servants told him what David had said, ²⁵Saul replied, "Say to David, 'The king wants no other price for the bride than a hundred Philistine foreskins, to take revenge on his enemies.'"

"Saul's plan was to have David fall by the hands of the Philistines."

²⁶When the attendants told David these things, he was pleased to become the king's son-in-law. So before the allotted time elapsed,

²⁷David and his men went out and killed two hundred Philistines. He brought their foreskins and presented the full number to the king so that he might become the king's son-in-law. Then Saul gave him his daughter Michal in marriage.

²⁸When Saul realized that the LORD was with David and that his daughter Michal loved David, ²⁹Saul became still more afraid of him, and he remained his enemy the rest of his days.

³⁰The Philistine commanders continued to go out to battle, and as often as they did, David met with more success than the rest of Saul's officers, and his name became well known.

Since the Philistines were unsuccessful killing David, Saul ordered his son Jonathan to do the deed. Jonathan was David's friend and warned David of the king's desires to kill.

Jonathan tried to convince his father that David was a benefit to him and should not be killed; you were pleased by his victories over the Philistines—why would you want, then, to kill an innocent man? Saul was convinced, for the moment—he swore to his son that David will not be put to death.

The fear continued; again, Saul tried to pin David to the wall with a spear. David escaped. Sending men to capture him at home, Michal warned David—if you don't leave, you'll be

killed. So David left out a window, and Michal put an idol (Hebrew = "teraphim") in his bed, covering it with blankets and goat hair to look like David was in bed.



When Saul's men came, she lied and said he's ill. The men were sent back again—bring him to me, so that I may kill him, Saul declared. They discovered the goat-haired toupee on the teraphim and realized they'd been duped.

Saul was not happy—"Why did you deceive me?" he yelled at Michal. "Da-

vid wanted to escape; he didn't want to kill me."

David escaped to Ramah, Samuel's hometown, and told him what Saul had done. They decided to go to Naioth and stay there, but the word got out. Saul then sent men to capture David, but when they got there, they were affected by the Lord God and prophesied. More men were sent, and they too were taken over by the Lord God. Saul, finally, went himself, and he too was taken over by the Lord God and prophesied. That's why to this day Saul is listed among the prophets.

Q When have you had to choose between loyalty to family and loyalty to a higher cause? How were you able to choose? With retrospect, how often were you wrong in your choice as to who or what to be loyal?

1 Samuel 20:1-17. *Friendship tested; friendship confirmed*. Now, it was time for David to freak—he left Naioth and went to his friend, Jonathan. What is my crime? What have I done to your father that he would be justified in killing me?

You're not going to die—my father doesn't do anything without consulting me. Why would he hide this from me? It just can't be!

David swore—your father knows very well that I've found favor in your eyes. He's kept this from you so you won't grieve. Yet, he swore, as sure as Yahweh lives, and as sure as you live, there is only one step between me and death.

Whatever you want, I'll do, Jonathan responded.

Look, tomorrow is the New Moon festival and I'm supposed to dine with the king, but let me go & hide until the evening after tomorrow. If your father misses me, simply tell him that I've asked to go home to Bethlehem where an annual sacrifice is being made for the whole Jesse clan. If says, okay, then I'm safe, but if he freaks, you know he's going to hurt me. Please show me this kindness. Simply hand me over to him if I've been disloyal to you or him.

Jonathan wouldn't hear of it; if there was the slightest sign my father would hurt you, I would tell you. So, David asked, how do I know whether your father answers you harshly? They went out into a field, and a covenant was made—Jonathan called upon the Lord God to punish him if he failed to warn David, and he called upon David to show unfailing kindness, just like Yahweh, as long as he lives. Furthermore, this kindness was to be extended to his family, even if or when the Lord God Yahweh has eliminated all of David's enemies.

Q Why was David so sure of his friend Jonathan?

Q To what extent was Jonathan's pledge an example of following, or not following, the 3rd commandment?

1 SAMUEL 20:1-17

Then David fled from Naioth at Ramah and went to Jonathan and asked, "What have I done? What is my crime? How have I wronged your father, that he is trying to take my life?"

2"Never!" Jonathan replied. "You are not going to die! Look, my father doesn't do anything, great or small, without confiding in me. Why would he hide this from me? It's not so!"

3But David took an oath and said, "Your father knows very well that I have found favor in your eyes, and he has said to himself, 'Jonathan must not know this or he will be grieved.' Yet as surely as the LORD lives and as you live, there is only a step between me and death."

4Jonathan said to David, "Whatever you want me to do, I'll do for you."

5So David said, "Look, tomorrow is the New Moon festival, and I am supposed to dine with the king; but let me go and hide in the field until the evening of the day after tomorrow. 6If your father misses me at all, tell him, 'David earnestly asked my permission to hurry to Bethlehem, his hometown, because an annual sacrifice is being made there for his whole clan.' 7If he says, 'Very well,' then your servant is safe. But if he loses his temper, you can be sure that he is determined to harm me. 8As for you, show kindness to your servant, for you have brought him into a covenant with you before the LORD. If I am guilty, then kill me yourself! Why hand me over to your father?"

9"Never!" Jonathan said. "If I had the least inkling that my father was determined to harm you, wouldn't I tell you?"

10David asked, "Who will tell me if your father answers you harshly?"

11"Come," Jonathan said, "let's go out into the field." So they went there together.

12Then Jonathan said to David: "By the LORD, the God of Israel, I will surely sound out my father by this time the day after tomorrow! If he is favorably disposed toward you, will I not send you word and let you know?"

13But if my father is inclined to harm you, may the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if I do not let you know and send you away safely. May the LORD be with you as he has been with my father. 14But show me unfailing kindness like that of the LORD as long as I live, so that I may not be killed, 15and do not ever cut off your kindness from my family--not even when the LORD has cut off every one of David's enemies from the face of the earth."

16So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, "May the LORD call David's enemies to account." 17And Jonathan had David reaffirm his oath out of love for him, because he loved him as he loved himself.

Q Why were David & Jonathan “best buds?”

1 Samuel 20:18-42. *Friends depart.*

Here’s how we’re going to handle it—day after tomorrow evening go to the hiding place and wait by the stone Ezel. I’ll shoot three arrows to the side of it as if I were target shooting. I’ll then send a boy to retrieve the arrows. If the arrows are on one side, you’ll know you’re safe; on the other, you’re not. The Lord God Yahweh is my witness that I will not betray you.

David hid in the field instead of going to the banquet with the king. Saul mused that David had become ceremonially unclean, but then David was absent the next day as well.

Jonathan explained—David’s got an obligation at home; that’s why he has not come to the king’s table.

Saul was furious and accused Jonathan: you’ve sided with the son of Jesse to your own shame, you son of a bitch. As long as the son of Jesse lives, neither you nor your kingdom will be established. Now go get him, for he’s got to die!

Jonathan defended David’s innocence, and Saul sent a spear hurtling toward Jonathan. The die was cast—David was to be killed and Jonathan was grieved by his father’s unjust treatment of David.

The arrow system worked, and David graciously bowed down before Jonathan three times, prostrate. And then they kissed each other goodbye, and wept. David wept the most.

Go in peace David; we have a covenanted friendship in the name of the Lord God Almighty; for He is my witness for now and forever. David left

1 SAMUEL 20:18-42

Then Jonathan said to David: "Tomorrow is the New Moon festival. You will be missed, because your seat will be empty. ¹⁹The day after tomorrow, toward evening, go to the place where you hid when this trouble began, and wait by the stone Ezel. ²⁰I will shoot three arrows to the side of it, as though I were shooting at a target. ²¹Then I will send a boy and say, 'Go, find the arrows.' If I say to him, 'Look, the arrows are on this side of you; bring them here,' then come, because, as surely as the LORD lives, you are safe; there is no danger. ²²But if I say to the boy, 'Look, the arrows are beyond you,' then you must go, because the LORD has sent you away. ²³And about the matter you and I discussed--remember, the LORD is witness between you and me forever."

²⁴So David hid in the field, and when the New Moon festival came, the king sat down to eat. ²⁵He sat in his customary place by the wall, opposite Jonathan, and Abner sat next to Saul, but David's place was empty. ²⁶Saul said nothing that day, for he thought, "Something must have happened to David to make him ceremonially unclean--surely he is unclean." ²⁷But the next day, the second day of the month, David's place was empty again. Then Saul said to his son Jonathan, "Why hasn't the son of Jesse come to the meal, either yesterday or today?"

²⁸Jonathan answered, "David earnestly asked me for permission to go to Bethlehem. ²⁹He said, 'Let me go, because our family is observing a sacrifice in the town and my brother has ordered me to be there. If I have found favor in your eyes, let me get away to see my brothers.' That is why he has not come to the king's table."

³⁰Saul's anger flared up at Jonathan and he said to him, "You son of a perverse and rebellious woman! Don't I know that you have sided with the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of the mother who bore you?"

³¹As long as the son of Jesse lives on this earth, neither you nor your kingdom will be established. Now send and bring him to me, for he must die!"

³²"Why should he be put to death? What has he done?" Jonathan asked his father. ³³But Saul hurled his spear at him to kill him. Then Jonathan knew that his father intended to kill David.

³⁴Jonathan got up from the table in fierce anger; on that second day of the month he did not eat, because he was grieved at his father's shameful treatment of David.

³⁵In the morning Jonathan went out to the field for his meeting with David. He had a small boy with him, ³⁶and he said to the boy, "Run and find the arrows I shoot." As the boy ran, he shot an arrow beyond him. ³⁷When the boy came to the place where Jonathan's arrow had fallen, Jonathan called out after him, "Isn't the arrow beyond you?" ³⁸Then he shouted, "Hurry! Go quickly! Don't stop!" The boy picked up the arrow and returned to his master. ³⁹(The boy knew nothing of all this; only Jonathan and David knew.) ⁴⁰Then Jonathan gave his weapons to the boy and said, "Go, carry them back to town."

⁴¹After the boy had gone, David got up from the south side of the stone and bowed down before Jonathan three times, with his face to the ground. Then they kissed each other and wept together--but David wept the most.

⁴²Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, for we have sworn friendship with each other in the name of the LORD, saying, 'The LORD is witness between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants forever.' " Then David left, and Jonathan went back to the town.

the field, and Jonathan went home. Both were profoundly sad.

- Q What elements of true friendship do you see in the relationship between David and Jonathan?
- Q What parallels are there in the mechanisms of their covenant to ours within the church to be loyal friends within the body of Christ?
- Q Do you think either of them were aware of the full consequences of their choice to depart from each other?

ADVANCED BIBLE COMMENTARY FOR 1 SAMUEL 18-20⁶

18:1 It appears that David spoke with Saul at length, and he may have explained his actions as an expression of his faith in the Lord, thus attracting the love and loyalty of Jonathan (see v. 3; 14:6; 19:5). Their friendship endured even when it became clear that David was to replace him as the successor to his father's throne.

18:3 *Jonathan made a covenant with David.* The initiative comes from Jonathan. The terms of the agreement are not here specified (see further 19:1; 20:8,13-16,41-42; 23:18) but would appear to involve a pledge of mutual loyalty and friendship. *At the very least, Jonathan accepts David as his equal.*

18:4 *took off the robe . . . and gave it to David.* Jonathan ratifies the covenant in an act that symbolizes giving himself to David. His act may even signify his recognition that David was to assume his place as successor to Saul (see 20:14-15,31; 23:17)--a possibility that seems the more likely in that he also gave David "even his sword, his bow and his belt" (cf. 13:22).

18:7 *David his tens of thousands.* In accordance with the normal conventions of Hebrew poetry, this was the women's way of saying "Saul and David have slain thousands" (10,000 was normally used as the parallel of 1,000--see Dt 32:30; Ps 91:7; Mic 6:7; also in Canaanite poetry found at Ugarit). It is a measure of Saul's insecurity and jealousy that he read their intentions incorrectly and took offense. His resentment may have been initially triggered by the mention of David's name alongside his own. See note on 21:11 for how the Philistines interpreted the song.

18:10 *prophesying.* The Hebrew for this word is sometimes used to indicate uncontrolled ecstatic behavior (see Ki 18:29) and is best understood in that sense in this context (see also 10:5).

18:12 *the LORD was with David but had left Saul.* See 16:14.

18:13 *he sent David away.* His apparent motive was the hope that David would be killed in battle (see vv. 17, 21, 25; 19:1), but the result was even greater acclaim for David (see vv. 14,16,30).

18:25 *no other price.* Normally a bride-price was paid by the bridegroom to the father of the bride (see Ge 34:12; Ex 22:16) as compensation for the loss of his daughter and insurance for her support if widowed. Saul requires David instead to pass a test appropriate for a great warrior, hoping that he will "fall" (see vv. 17,21).

⁶Adapted, corrected, and revised by D. Thomas Porter from Compton's Interactive NIV © 1996.

18:28 *Michal loved David.* God's favor on David is revealed not only in his military accomplishments, but also in Michal's love for him—now added to that of Jonathan. Everything Saul seeks to use against David turns to David's advantage.

18:29 *Saul became still more afraid of him.* Saul's perception that God's hand was on David did not lead him to repentance and acceptance of his own lot (see 15:26) but into greater fear and jealousy toward David.

19:1 *Saul told his son . . . to kill David.* Saul now abandons his indirect attempts on David's life (see 18:13,17,25) and adopts a more direct approach, leading to David's departure from the court and from service to Saul (see vv. 12,18; 20:42).

19:6 *Saul listened to Jonathan and took this oath.* See 14:24,44 for previous oaths that Saul did not keep (see 14:39).

19:12 *through a window.* For similar escapes see Jos 2:15; Ac 9:25.

19:13 *idol.* It took centuries for us to get rid of our idols. In Genesis 31:19 we find a mention of small portable idols, which Rachel probably stole because she thought they would bring her protection and blessing. Or perhaps she wanted to have something tangible to worship on the long journey ahead, a practice referred to much later in the writings of Josephus, a first-century Jewish historian. In any case, Rachel was not yet free of her pagan background (see Genesis 35:2; Joshua 24:2).

19:18 *Ramah.* Samuel's hometown. *Naioth.* Means "habitations" or "dwellings." The term appears to designate a complex of houses in a certain section of Ramah where a company of prophets resided (see vv. 19-20,22-23).

19:24 *He lay that way all that day and night.* Saul was so overwhelmed by the power of the Spirit of God that he was prevented from carrying out his intention to take David's life. His frustrated attempts to kill David--his own inability to harm David and the thwarting of his plans by Jonathan's loyalty, by Michal's deception and by David's own cleverness--all reach their climax here.

Is Saul also among the prophets? This second occasion reinforced the first (see 10:11). Its repetition underscores how alien Saul's spirit was from that of these zealous servants of the Lord.

20:5 *New Moon festival.* Each month of the year was consecrated to the Lord by the bringing of special sacrifices (Nu 28:11-15) and the blowing of trumpets (Nu 10:10; Ps 81:3). This observance also involved cessation from normal work, especially at the beginning of the seventh month (Lev 23:24-25; Nu 29:1-6; 2Ki 4:23; Isa 1:13; Am 8:5).

20:6 *annual sacrifice.* David's statement indicates that it was customary for families to observe the New Moon festival together once in the year. There is no other reference in the Hebrew Scriptures to this practice.

20:11 *let's go out into the field.* Jonathan acted to save David. Cain had said the same to Abel, but in order to kill him (Ge 4:8; but see NIV text note there).

20:13 *may the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely.* A common curse formula (see note on 3:17). *May the LORD be with you as he has been with my father.* A clear indication that Jonathan expects David to become king.

20:14 *that I may not be killed.* It was quite common in the ancient world for the first ruler of a new dynasty to secure his position by murdering all potential claimants to the throne from the preceding dynasty (see 1Ki 15:29; 16:11; 2Ki 10:7; 11:1).

20:15 *your kindness from my family.* This request was based on the covenant previously concluded between Jonathan and David (see note on 18:3) and was subsequently honored in David's dealings with Jonathan's son Mephibosheth (see 2Sa 9:3,7; 21:7).

20:16 *May the LORD call David's enemies to account.* Jonathan aligns himself completely with David, calling for destruction of his enemies, even if that should include his father, Saul.

20:23 *the matter you and I discussed.* See vv. 15-17. *the LORD is witness.* The invoking of God to act as witness and judge between them ensures that their agreement will be kept.

20:25 *Abner.* Saul's cousin and the commander of his army (see 14:50).

20:30 *son of a perverse and rebellious woman.* The Hebrew idiom intends to characterize Jonathan, not his mother.

20:31 *neither you nor your kingdom will be established.* Saul is now convinced that David will succeed him if David is not killed (see 18:13,17,29; 19:1), and he is incapable of understanding Jonathan's lack of concern for his own succession to the throne.

20:41 *bowed . . . three times.* A sign of submission and respect (see Ge 33:3; 42:6).

20:42 *sworn friendship.* See vv. 14-15,23; 18:3. *the town.* Gibeah (see 10:26).