

1 Samuel 18 - David's Friendship with Jonathan; Saul's Jealousy; Saul Attempts to Murder David; David Marries Saul's Daughter

IV. Transition from the house of Saul to the house of David (1 Samuel 16:1—31:13)

(2) David at enmity with Saul (18:1—20:42)

(A) Jonathan's covenant with David (18:1-4)

(B) David prospers and Saul becomes jealous (18:5-16)

(C) David marries Saul's daughter Michal (18:17-30)

1 Samuel 18

(2) David at enmity with Saul (18:1—20:42)

(A) Jonathan's covenant with David (18:1-4)

1 Now it came about, when he had finished speaking to Saul, that Jonathan committed himself to David, and Jonathan **loved** him as himself.

1 Now it came about when he had finished speaking to Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as himself.

1 When David finished speaking with Saul, Jonathan became a close friend to David, and Jonathan loved him as himself.

1 And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was **knit** with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.

- "...knit" [KJV] - the same Hebrew word used in Gen 44:30 to express Jacob's love for Benjamin

— At this time of rapid change in David's life, God gave him a friend whose heart belonged to God

— David would be the next king, but by all rights, Jonathan should inherit the crown. By God's grace, Jonathan never saw his friend as a rival, but as God's man, whom God called him to support wholeheartedly.

— Jonathan found a soul brother in David, a man who committed himself to trusting and obeying God. This common purpose on the deepest level of life is what accounts for the deep love David and Jonathan shared.

- "...loved" - *ahab*, some homosexuals try to use this word as support that their lifestyle has good biblical precedent

— However, the Hebrew word *ahab* is never used to describe homosexual desire or activity

— The Hebrew word describing homosexual relations is *yada*, translated "know" in the sense of "have sex with" (Cf. Gen 19:5; Judges 19:22)

2 And Saul took him that day and did not let him return to his father's house.

2 Saul took him that day and did not let him return to his father's house.

2 Saul took David that day and did not let him return to his father's house.

2 And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house.

- Almost immediately, David's victory over Goliath propelled him from herding sheep to high rank in Israel's army

3 Then Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself.

3 Then Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself.

3 Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as he loved himself.

3 Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul.

- Jonathan's covenant with David was unilateral, in which Jonathan committed himself to David with complete disregard for self

— Jonathan's example of humility for the glory of God and the welfare of His people is one of the greatest in all of Scripture (Cf. Phil 2:5-8)

— This is all the more remarkable considering chronological references in Samuel seem to indicate that Jonathan was about 30 years older than David

4 Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his military gear, including his sword, his bow, and his belt.

4 Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his armor, including his sword and his bow and his belt.

4 Jonathan took off the robe that he had on and gave it to David, along with his coat, his sword, his bow, and his belt.

4 And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.

- So close did this friendship become that Jonathan, though heir apparent to the throne of Israel (Cf. 20:31), stripped himself of his own royal regalia and placed it on David in recognition of David's divine election to be king (18:4; Cf. 23:17)

— This gift to David served to ratify the covenant Jonathan made to David (v3)

— It also reflects Jonathan's submission to Samuel's prophecy that Saul would not have a continuing dynasty (13:13-14)

— Rather than trying to perpetuate Saul's dynasty against God's will, as Abner later tried to do (2 Sam 2:8-9), godly Jonathan turned over the symbols of the crown prince to David

(B) David prospers and Saul becomes jealous (18:5-16)

5 And David went *into battle* wherever Saul sent him, *and always* achieved success; so Saul put him in charge of the men of war. And it was pleasing in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants.

5 So David went out wherever Saul sent him, *and prospered*; and Saul set him over the men of war. And it was pleasing in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul's servants.

5 David went out and was successful everywhere Saul sent him, and Saul put him in charge of the troops. This pleased the entire army, as well as Saul's officials.

5 And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, and behaved himself wisely: and Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants.

- Not only did Jonathan love David, but all the people, even Saul's servants, those most loyal to the king, did too

— God blesses those who relate to Him properly. They also become channels of blessing to others (Cf. 2:30; Gen 12:2).

6 Now it happened as they were coming, when David returned from killing the Philistine, that the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with joy and with *other* musical instruments.

6 It happened as they were coming, when David returned from killing the Philistine, that the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with joy and with musical instruments.

6 When David returned from defeating the Philistine, as they were entering the city, women from all the towns of Israel came out to meet King Saul, singing and dancing as they joyously played tambourines and lyres.

6 And it came to pass as they came, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of music.

7 The women sang as they played, and said, "Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands."

7 The women sang as they played, and said, "Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands."

7 As the women sang and played, they said, "Saul has struck down his thousands but David his ten thousands."

7 And the women answered one another as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.

- God used the women's simple song to reveal Saul's deep rebellion against Him
- Almost instantly, Saul's jealous anger became a fear of being overthrown
- When Saul first became king, the Holy Spirit took him from hiding fearfully among the supplies to fighting His people's battles (10:21-22). When Saul rejected God and His will (13:13-14; 15:26), Saul's natural insecurity returned.

8 Then Saul became very angry, for this lyric **displeased him**; and he said, "They have given David *credit for* ten thousands, but to me they have given *credit for only* thousands! Now *what* more can he have but the kingdom?"

8 Then Saul became very angry, for this saying displeased him; and he said, "They have ascribed to David ten thousands, but to me they have ascribed thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom?"

8 Saul was very angry and he did not like what the women sang. He told himself, "They have attributed tens of thousands to David, but to me they have attributed thousands. What else can he have but the kingdom?"

8 And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands: and what can he have more but the kingdom?

- Saul suspected that the popular David may attempt to overthrow his government
- However, it was personal jealousy that took root in Saul's heart and led to his downfall
- "...displeased him" - "was evil in his eyes"; Saul's heart filled with envy when he heard that David had more praise than he did
- Praise is like a hot furnace: it reveals what a person is really made of: "As the fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold; so is a man to his praise" (Prov 27:21)
- The praise that made David humble only brought the dross to the top in Saul's heart and revealed his pride and desire for glory

9 And Saul eyed David with suspicion from that day on.

9 Saul looked at David with suspicion from that day on.

9 From then on Saul kept his eye on David.

9 And Saul eyed David from that day and forward.

- All Israel saw that the Lord was with David (v16), but Saul never thought to thank God for such a faithful servant

Saul's First Attempt to Kill David

God's mercy restrains sin (Gen 20:6; 1 Sam 25:26,34; 2 Thess 2:7), but Saul spurned God's kindness which calls people to repent (Rom 2:4; 10:20-21). How, along with the jealousy, an evil spirit from God returned. Twice anger took control and Saul threw his spear at David. Mental illness has physical or other roots of which the sufferer has no control, but Saul's problem was spiritual. Saul's hatred controlled him because he preferred his own way to God and His way (Ex 4:21; Ps 81:11-12; Is 63:17; Rom 1:18-32; 6:15-23).

10 Now it came about on the next day that an evil spirit from God rushed upon Saul, and he raved in the midst of the house while David was playing *the harp* with his hand, as usual; and a spear *was* in Saul's hand.

10 Now it came about on the next day that an evil spirit from God came mightily upon Saul, and he raved in the midst of the house, while David was playing *the harp* with his hand, as usual; and a spear *was* in Saul's hand.

10 The next day, while David was playing the lyre as he had before, the evil spirit from the LORD attacked Saul, and he began to rave inside the house with a spear in his hand.

10 And it came to pass on the morrow, that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house: and David played with his hand, as at other times: and there was a javelin in Saul's hand.

- David had a harp in his hand, with which he sought to help Saul by playing soothing music; Saul had a spear in his hand, with which he sought to harm his helper

— The contrasting picture illustrates the roles and character of these two men

11 Then Saul hurled the spear, for he thought, "I will pin David to the wall." But David escaped from his presence, twice.

11 Saul hurled the spear for he thought, "I will pin David to the wall." But David escaped from his presence twice.

11 Saul hurled it, thinking, "I'll pin David to the wall." But David escaped from him twice.

11 And Saul cast the javelin; for he said, I will smite David even to the wall with it. And David avoided out of his presence twice.

- Like Goliath and Israel's other enemies, Israel's king now desired to destroy a man who loved God and fought for God's people

12 Now Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him but had left Saul.

12 Now Saul was afraid of David, for the Lord was with him but had departed from Saul.

12 Now Saul was afraid of David because the LORD was with him and had departed from Saul.

12 And Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, and was departed from Saul.

- This verse gives the reason Saul threw the spear at David

— Saul's unchecked jealousy bred symptoms of paranoia as he began to think his most loyal subject was his mortal enemy

- Saul was a living civil war...he was miserable, possessed by an evil spirit, mentally breaking down, suspicious, angry, jealous

— Contrast Saul's mental instability with Jonathan's implicit confidence in David: Saul saw David as a threat, Jonathan saw him as a savior of God's people

13 So Saul removed him from his presence and appointed him as his commander of a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people.

13 Therefore Saul removed him from his presence and appointed him as his commander of a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people.

13 Saul removed David from his presence and made him an officer over a division of soldiers. So David led the troops in battle.

13 Therefore Saul removed him from him, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people.

- v5 suggests that David was the head of Saul's personal bodyguard, but now he is demoted to being merely the captain over 1,000 men

14 David was successful in all his ways, for the LORD was with him.

14 David was prospering in all his ways for the Lord was with him.

14 David was successful in all that he did, for the LORD was with him.

14 And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and the LORD was with him.

15 When Saul saw that he was very successful, he was afraid of him.

15 When Saul saw that he was prospering greatly, he dreaded him.

15 When Saul saw that David was highly successful, he feared him.

15 Wherefore when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely, he was afraid of him.

- God was causing the wrath of Saul to praise Him and contribute toward the fulfillment of His plans

16 But all **Israel and Judah** loved David, for he would go out *to battle* and return before them.

16 But all Israel and Judah loved David, and he went out and came in before them.

16 But all Israel and Judah loved David because he led them in battle.

16 But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them.

- God used David's "demotion" to give David more exposure to the people, increasing his popularity with them. This only increased Saul's dread and hatred of him even more.
- "...Israel and Judah" - the Land was not yet divided into north and south, however these terms denote that 1 Samuel was written after the division of the kingdom, thus the correct names were used for the north (Israel) and south (Judah) during this later time

(C) David marries Saul's daughter Michal (18:17-30)

17 Then Saul said to David, "Here is my older daughter Merab; I will give her to you as a wife, only be a valiant man for me and fight the LORD'S battles." For Saul thought, "My hand shall not be against him, but let the hand of the Philistines be against him."

17 Then Saul said to David, "Here is my older daughter Merab; I will give her to you as a wife, only be a valiant man for me and fight the Lord's battles." For Saul thought, "My hand shall not be against him, but let the hand of the Philistines be against him."

17 Saul told David, "Here is my older daughter Merab. I'll give her to you as a wife. Just be an excellent soldier for me and fight the LORD's battles." Now Saul told himself, "I won't harm him myself. Instead, I'll let the Philistines harm him."

17 And Saul said to David, Behold my elder daughter Merab, her will I give thee to wife: only be thou valiant for me, and fight the LORD'S battles. For Saul said, Let not mine hand be upon him, but let the hand of the Philistines be upon him.

- Saul had promised one of his daughters to the man who defeated Goliath (17:25), but had not kept his commitment

— Saul now added the condition that David fight more battles for Saul, but Saul never really intended to give his daughter a godly husband and honor a faithful servant

— David, on the other hand, did not want to marry the king's daughter, even though the marriage would have advanced his career. David evidently passed on the possibility because he could not afford the bride price (v23).

- Saul had been unsuccessful in murdering David himself, so he tried to get others to kill him (Cf. 2 Sam 11:15)

18 But David said to Saul, "Who am I, and who is my family, or my father's family in Israel, that I should be the king's son-in-law?"

18 But David said to Saul, "Who am I, and what is my life or my father's family in Israel, that I should be the king's son-in-law?"

18 David told Saul, "Who am I and what is my life or my father's family in Israel that I should be the king's son-in-law?"

18 And David said unto Saul, Who am I? and what is my life, or my father's family in Israel, that I should be son in law to the king?

19 So it came about at the time that Merab, Saul's daughter, was to be given to David, that she was given *instead* to Adriel the Meholathite as a wife.

19 So it came about at the time when Merab, Saul's daughter, should have been given to David, that she was given to Adriel the Meholathite for a wife.

19 And when the time came to give Saul's daughter Merab to David, she was given as a wife to Adriel of Meholah.

19 But it came to pass at the time when Merab Saul's daughter should have been given to David, that she was given unto Adriel the Meholathite to wife.

- When David said he was not worthy of being the king's son-in-law, Merab married another man

20 Now Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David. When they informed Saul, the thing was pleasing to him.

20 Now Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David. When they told Saul, the thing was agreeable to him.

20 Saul's daughter Michal loved David. Saul was informed of this and he liked the idea.

20 And Michal Saul's daughter loved David: and they told Saul, and the thing pleased him.

- Saul was pleased when he learned his younger daughter Michal loved David

— Once again, Saul planned to exchange his daughter's happiness for David's death at the hands of Israel's enemies

— It is a testimony to God's choice of David that two of Saul's children protected David while their father was trying to kill him

21 For Saul thought, "I will give her to him so that she may become a trap for him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him." Therefore Saul said to David, "For a second time you may become my son-in-law, today."

21 Saul thought, "I will give her to him that she may become a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him." Therefore Saul said to David, "For a second time you may be my son-in-law today."

21 Saul told himself, "I'll give her to him and she can be a snare to him and the Philistines will harm him." So Saul told David, "For a second time you can be my son-in-law today."

21 And Saul said, I will give him her, that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him. Wherefore Saul said to David, Thou shalt this day be my son in law in the one of the twain.

- Saul tried to use his daughter Michal as a tool to slay David. His reasoning was that as the son-in-law of the king, David would have been in line for the throne and thus an even more important target for the Philistines in battle.

22 Then Saul commanded his servants, "Speak to David in secret, saying, 'Behold, the king delights in you, and all his servants love you; now then, become the king's son-in-law.'"

22 Then Saul commanded his servants, "Speak to David secretly, saying, 'Behold, the king delights in you, and all his servants love you; now therefore, become the king's son-in-law.'"

22 Saul commanded his officials, "Speak with David privately and say, 'Look, the king delights in you, and all his officials love you. Now become the king's son-in-law.'"

22 And Saul commanded his servants, saying, Commune with David secretly, and say, Behold, the king hath delight in thee, and all his servants love thee: now therefore be the king's son in law.

- Saul tried to break down David's humble resistance to becoming his son-in-law by sending servants to persuade him

23 So Saul's servants spoke these words to David. But David said, "Is it trivial in your sight to become the king's son-in-law, since I am *only* a poor man and insignificant?"

23 So Saul's servants spoke these words to David. But David said, "Is it trivial in your sight to become the king's son-in-law, since I am a poor man and lightly esteemed?"

23 Saul's officials delivered this message to David, and he asked, "Is becoming the king's son-in-law an unimportant thing to you? I'm a poor and unimportant man."

23 And Saul's servants spake those words in the ears of David. And David said, Seemeth it to you a light thing to be a king's son in law, seeing that I am a poor man, and lightly esteemed?

- David lacked wealth worthy of a king's son-in-law, and worried about his ability to pay the dowry (bride price)

24 Then Saul's servants reported to him, saying, "These are the words David spoke."

24 The servants of Saul reported to him according to these words *which* David spoke.

24 Saul's officials reported to him: "This is what David said."

24 And the servants of Saul told him, saying, On this manner spake David.

25 Saul then said, "This is what you shall say to David: 'The king does not desire any dowry except a hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to take vengeance on the king's enemies.'" But Saul plotted to have David fall by the hand of the Philistines.

25 Saul then said, "Thus you shall say to David, 'The king does not desire any dowry except a hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to take vengeance on the king's enemies.'" Now Saul planned to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines.

25 Saul said, "This is what you are to tell David, 'The king desires no bride price except 100 Philistine foreskins to take vengeance on the king's enemies.'" Now Saul thought he would cause David to die at the hand of the Philistines.

25 And Saul said, Thus shall ye say to David, The king desireth not any dowry, but an hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged of the king's enemies.

- Saul overcame David's meager means by lowering his bride price to 100 Philistine foreskins

— Saul intended for David to die in battle but God used Saul's plot for David's good

26 When his servants told David these words, it pleased David to become the king's son-in-law. So before the time had **expired**,

26 When his servants told David these words, it pleased David to become the king's son-in-law. Before the days had expired

26 When his officials delivered this message to David, David decided it would be a good thing to become the king's son-in-law. Before the time was up,

26 And when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to be the king's son in law: and the days were not expired.

- "...expired" - "fulfilled"

27 David set out and went, he and his men, and fatally struck two hundred men among the Philistines. Then David brought their foreskins, and they presented all *two hundred* of them to the king, so that he might become the king's son-in-law. And Saul gave him his daughter Michal as a wife.

27 David rose up and went, he and his men, and struck down two hundred men among the Philistines. Then David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full number to the king, that he might become the king's son-in-law. So Saul gave him Michal his daughter for a wife.

27 David got up, went out with his men, and struck down 200 Philistine men. David brought their foreskins and gave them all to the king so he could become the king's son-in-law. So Saul gave him his daughter Michal as a wife.

27 Wherefore David arose and went, he and his men, and slew of the Philistines two hundred men; and David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full tale to the king, that he might be the king's son in law. And Saul gave him Michal his daughter to wife.

- God protected David, and he was able to provide the king with twice as many foreskins as Saul had required

28 When Saul saw and realized that the LORD was with David, and *that* Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him,

28 When Saul saw and knew that the Lord was with David, and *that* Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him,

28 As Saul continued to observe, he realized that the LORD was with David and that Saul's daughter Michal loved him.

28 And Saul saw and knew that the LORD was with David, and that Michal Saul's daughter loved him.

29 then Saul was even more afraid of David. So Saul was David's enemy continually.

29 then Saul was even more afraid of David. Thus Saul was David's enemy continually.

29 Then Saul was even more afraid of David, and Saul was David's enemy from that time on.

29 And Saul was yet the more afraid of David; and Saul became David's enemy continually.

- These events led Saul to see that God's blessing was upon David, but instead of supporting him, Saul feared and hated David even more

— Even though David became his son-in-law, was his faithful commander-in-chief, and an effective field general, he became Saul's enemy continually

30 Then the commanders of the Philistines went *to battle*, and it happened as often as they went out, that David was more successful than all the servants of Saul. So his name was held in high esteem.

30 Then the commanders of the Philistines went out *to battle*, and it happened as often as they went out, that David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul. So his name was highly esteemed.

30 The Philistine commanders would go out to fight and whenever they did, David was more successful than any of Saul's other leaders. His name was held in high esteem.

30 Then the princes of the Philistines went forth: and it came to pass, after they went forth, that David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul; so that his name was much set by.

- David's behavior and wisdom in battle, guided by God's Spirit, made him increasingly effective and appreciated in Israel

— David regarded himself as "lightly esteemed" (v23), but God made him highly esteemed (v30)