

A Study of I Samuel
The Desiring for a King
David in Saul Court

Chapter 18

David's physical battle against Goliath was a monumental victory and an example of the faith in God for all generations. However, David will encounter a battle of a different sort beginning in this chapter through the end of I Samuel. It is the spiritual battle between Saul and David. This battle begins in the court of king Saul but will continue throughout the countryside of Judea encompassing the remaining chapters of I Samuel.

David and Jonathan (18:1-4): David will no longer return to tend his father's sheep, for Saul took him that day (18:2). By rights Jonathan should have inherited the crown (*see* I Sam. 20:31 cf. 23:17) but God intervened, and David in the eyes of God is the anointed king of Israel. The relationship between Jonathan and David was very special (*see* I Sam. 19:2; 20:27; 2 Sam. 1:26; 9:1-7). Jonathan knowing David shall be king, either by revelation or by intuition performs the act of taking off his royal ceremonial dress and places it on David (18:4).

The Covenants or oaths made between David and Jonathan: Jonathan and David make a covenant or oath between one another and it is confirmed several times throughout their life together. The covenants or oaths all have to do with the union between David and Jonathan as friends for life regardless of Saul and all the enemies of David. While not a lot is mentioned concerning this **first covenant** (I Sam. 18:3) it is clear by the actions of Jonathan (vs. 3) that this covenant pertains to Jonathan and David being united even when David is king. David would be bound to spare Jonathan. **The second covenant (I Sam. 20:11-17)** adds to the first covenant in that Jonathan contracts with David that not only Jonathan will be spared when David is king, but also that Jonathan's house, the lineage of Jonathan would be preserved (vss. 14-17 cf. 2 Sam. 21:7). The **third covenant** (1 Sam. 23:16-18) or oath is a final affirmation of the covenant between David and Jonathan concerning the preservation of Jonathan and his house.

The Fulfillment of the Covenant between David and Jonathan: While David would have spared Jonathan once he was established as king, he would not get a chance for Jonathan will fall in battle along side his father and two brothers (I Sam. 31:2, 6).

David, however, will have a chance to fulfill his covenant in sparing the house of Jonathan. David spares Mephibosheth (See 2 Sam. 4:4 cf. 2 Sam. Ch. 9).

Saul's Jealousy (18:5-16): The jealousy¹ of Saul will eventually make him mad! Saul's behavior will become increasingly erratic and hateful towards David. Saul will cast a Javelin at David on more than one occasion (I Sam. 18:10-11; 19:9-10) as he will do even to his own son (I Sam. 20:32-33). Saul at first will privately seek David's life but will eventually seek to kill David openly (I Sam. 19:1).

For jealousy is the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance. He will not regard any ransom; neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts. (Proverbs 6:34-35)

David throughout all the advancements of Saul to kill him behaves himself wisely (see I Sam. 18:5, 14, 15, 30).

The jealousy of Saul begins when the women of the city come out with music and song dancing and praise David for the victory over the Philistines saying, "Saul has slain his thousands and David his ten thousands" (I Sam. 18:6-7). Saul's jealousy is for the kingdom, he is fearful that David's popularity will grow to the point that he could take over the kingdom: "and what can he have more but the kingdom?" (I Sam. 18:8). Saul will eye David from this moment forward (see vs. 9).

"Jealousy is the rage of a man" and Saul's rage pours out at David. Saul cast his javelin at David (javelin was used as a holding staff or scepter). Saul understands that the LORD was with David and was departed from him (12).

Saul, in an effort to control his growing hatred for David removes David from his sight putting him over his men of war. However, this only increased David's popularity for David fought for the people (vss. 13-16).

Saul's Growing Rage (18:16-30): Saul's life is escalating out of control as he seeks to manipulate the death of David. Saul is becoming a desperate man.

¹ The difference between jealousy and envy: Jealousy describes a feeling of protectiveness or insecurity you have over a rivalry or being replaced. This typically happens in a significant relationship and requires three people (you, the significant person, and another). Jealousy takes three parties to happen, envy only takes two. [Envy](#) is internal longing you feel for something someone else has. You could be envious of anything from a personality trait to a possession.

Saul in his desire to rid himself of David seeks to put David in the heat of the battle so that David would perish by the hands of the Philistines. Saul thinking David would be desirous to be the king's son in law offers him first Merab one of Saul's daughters to be David's wife however when this did not work out Saul knowing that Michal loved David offers her to David (20-21). David however is very humble knowing that he is poor and is unable to pay the dowery refuses. Saul however gives David the price for the hand of Michal in marriage, 100 foreskins of the Philistines. However, Saul's plan in hoping the Philistines would kill David fails for David wins in battle and pays the price for the hand of Michal (22-27).

Saul's plot to have David killed not only failed but it backfired, for now David was part of the king's very own family and Saul's very daughter loved David (28). Therefore, Saul was the more afraid of David and Saul became David's enemy continually (29-30).

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Saul Seeks to Kill David (1-17): Saul makes known his desire to kill David to Jonathan and all his servants (1). Jonathan tells David of his father's desire to kill him. Jonathan tells David to hide while he tries and talk with his father (2-3). Jonathan's words pacified Saul for a time, for Saul harkened on to the words of Jonathan and he brought David to Saul as he was before (4-7).

However, once David wins another battle against the Philistines Saul's anger is rekindled and Saul tried to kill David once again (8-10). Saul will not be stopped, David having escaped from Saul to his own house is told by his wife, Michal that if David does not flee tonight, he will be dead in the morning (11). So, Michal helped David escape through a window and David flees to Samuel in Ramah (12-18).

Samuel and the Prophets Help David (18-24): The events that unfold here are very strange. David upon telling Samuel all that Saul had done to him left Ramah with Samuel to Naioth (18).

Saul upon hearing of Samuel and David residing at Naioth (19) send messengers to Naioth to take David, however upon approaching Samuel and his prophets prophesying the spirit of God was upon Saul's messengers so that they also prophesied also (20-21). Then Saul himself on his way to Naioth of Ramah has the spirit of God overtake him so that he prophesied until he came to Naioth where he continued to prophesy before Samuel all day and night (22-23). The main thing to understand about these events is that God overtook Saul and his messengers by placing them in a trance of sorts so that David could escape.

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Chapter 20

David and Jonathan's Plans (1-10): David fled to Jonathan out of desperation seeking answers and help (1). Jonathan assures David that if Saul sought David's life Saul would have told him so (2). David, however, emphatically tells Jonathan that Saul is keeping it secret from Jonathan (3). Jonathan tells David what ever you need I will help with (4). So David devises a plan to be absent from the new moon feast held on the first day of every month (*David as part of the royal household was expected to be a part of the new moon sacrificial meal*) (5). If Saul upon the absence of David says thy servant go in peace, then all is fine but if Saul is wroth then evil is determined against David (6-7). David underscores his innocence to Jonathan even to the point of telling Jonathan that regardless of our covenant if I am found guilty slay me thyself (8).

It is at this point that Jonathan brings David outside in a field and reaffirms and adds to the covenant between them before God (11-17). Jonathan is confessing before God that he will remain loyal to David and tell of the matter whether Saul is for David or against him and if Jonathan fails to keep this oath may all the evil planned for David fall upon Jonathan (11-13). Jonathan in so doing also asks David for a promise, that when David is king that David would not cut off kindness from his house forever (14-17).

Jonathan adds to David's plans by letting David know that when the 3 days are expired David is to go out unto the stone of Ezel. And Jonathan will shoot three arrow and ask a servant to go get them. If Jonathan tells the servant boy, the arrows are on the side then peace is determined, no hurt shall come to David. However, if Jonathan says unto the young man the arrows are beyond you, Saul means thy hurt and David is to flee (18-23).

The Unfolding of the Plans of Jonathan and David (24-34): The unfolding of the plans went as expected, Saul was enraged at the absence of David to the point of Saul casting a javelin at his own son, Jonathan. Jonathan arose from the dinner in fierce anger and did not eat the second day of the month.

The Departing of David from the House of Saul (35-42): Jonathan fulfills his end of the covenant and shoots an arrow past the lad making the announcement for David to hear, “is not the arrow beyond thee” (35-38). After sending the lad away David comes out of hiding and Jonathan and David embraced, kissed, and wept together. They confirmed their loyalty to one another once last time. From this moment on David will be an outcast in the wilderness of Judea (39-42).