

Session 7 Jonathan and David's Covenant and Plan (1 Sam. 20)

I. DAVID MET WITH JONATHAN (1 SAM. 20:1-3)

- A. David fled from Ramah to meet Jonathan in Gibeah (20:1-3). Instead of staying at Ramah with Samuel, even after the Lord released supernatural tokens of His favor, David returned to Gibeah to talk to Jonathan to determine if Saul's recent encounter with the Spirit changed his view of David.

¹Then David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and went and said to Jonathan, "What have I done? What is my iniquity, and what is my sin before your father, that he seeks my life?" ²So Jonathan said to him, "By no means! You shall not die! Indeed, my father will do nothing either great or small without first telling me. And why should my father hide this thing from me? It is not so!" ³Then David took an oath again, and said, "Your father certainly knows that I have found favor in your eyes, and he has said, 'Do not let Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved.' But truly, as the LORD lives and as your soul lives, there is but a step between me and death." (1 Sam. 20:1-3)

- B. ***You shall not die***: Jonathan and Saul both knew David would be king (20:15; 23:17; 24:20).

¹⁷"...you shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you. Even my father Saul knows that." (1 Sam. 23:17)

- C. ***A step between me and death***: David did not agree with Jonathan's naïve view of Saul. This is the first time we see David struggling with strong fears.

II. JONATHAN'S PROMISE TO HELP DAVID (1 SAM. 20:4-9)

- A. Jonathan's full commitment to help David (20:4-9)

⁴Jonathan said to David, "Whatever you yourself desire, I will do it for you." ⁵And David said to Jonathan, "Indeed tomorrow is the New Moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king to eat. But let me go, that I may hide in the field until the third day at evening. ⁶If your father misses me at all, then say, 'David earnestly asked permission of me that he might run over to Bethlehem, his city, for there is a yearly sacrifice there for all the family.' ⁷If he says thus: 'It is well,' your servant will be safe. But if he is very angry, be sure that evil is determined by him. ⁸Therefore you shall deal kindly with your servant, for you have brought your servant into a covenant of the LORD with you. Nevertheless, if there is iniquity in me, kill me yourself..." ⁹Jonathan said, "Far be it from you! For if I knew certainly that evil was determined by my father to come upon you, then would I not tell you?" (1 Sam. 20:4-9)

- B. ***David's plan***: David's plan was designed to expose Saul's true intentions. The plan safeguarded David and avoided any use of force, though it required that Jonathan lie to his father (20:5-7).

- C. ***Deal kindly with your servant***: David reminded Jonathan that he had made a covenant with David and asked him be faithful to him in executing their plan (20:8). Perhaps David had doubts about his loyalty. However, Jonathan, next in line to be king, promised to protect David in this plan.

- D. ***Kill me***: If David was guilty of treason against the king, then the covenant should be cancelled.

III. JONATHAN’S PROMISE TO GIVE DAVID INFORMATION ABOUT SAUL (1 SAM. 20:10-17)

- A. Jonathan with David shared his plan to give him information about Saul (20:10-13).
*¹⁰Then David said to Jonathan, “Who will tell me, or what if your father answers you roughly?”
¹¹Jonathan said to David, “Come, let us go out into the field.” So both of them went out into the field. ¹²Jonathan said to David: “The LORD God of Israel is witness! When I have sounded out my father sometime tomorrow, or the third day...if it pleases my father to do you evil, then I will report it to you and send you away, that you may go in safety. (1 Sam. 20:11-12)*
- B. *If Saul is planning evil:* Jonathan promised to report any negative plans that Saul revealed to him. If Saul had planned evil, the risks for executing this plan would be high for Jonathan and David.
- C. Jonathan reaffirmed his covenant with David, asking David to protect his family (20:14-17).
*¹⁴And you shall not only show me the kindness of the LORD while I still live, that I may not die;
¹⁵but you shall not cut off your kindness from my house forever, no, not when the LORD has cut off every one of the enemies of David...”¹⁶Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, “Let the LORD require it at the hand of David’s enemies.”¹⁷Now Jonathan again caused David to vow, because he loved him; for he loved him as he loved his own soul. (1 Sam. 20:14-17)*
- D. *Jonathan’s request of David:* Initially David asked Jonathan to protect him when Jonathan executed their plan with Saul (20:8). Now the roles are reversed as Jonathan asks David to promise to protect him and his descendants in the purges that occur when a new king takes office (20:14-15).
- E. *When the LORD cuts off David’s enemies:* Jonathan recognized the coming kingship of David and that the Lord would remove his enemies in due time, including the Philistines and Saul (20:15).
- F. *Leadership lesson:* During this time, Jonathan had more faith in God’s promises for David than David had for his own life. Sometimes we believe God’s promise for others more than for our life.
- G. *At the hand of David’s enemies:* May the Lord punish any of Jonathan’s descendants who make themselves an enemy of David by seeking to overthrow David or his descendants in the future.
- H. *Jonathan’s love:* Jonathan’s motivation of this political covenant was genuine love for David.
- I. *Jonathan caused David to vow:* Jonathan asked David to solemnly renew his vow to Jonathan’s house or family line (20:17). He did this because he was convinced that David would be king.
- J. Jonathan and David kept their promises. David showed kindness to Jonathan’s son, Mephibosheth, by giving him his father’s land and a place in David’s court (2 Sam 9:1-13; 16:1-4; 19:25-30; 21:7). David took initiative in this by asking, “Is there anybody from Jonathan’s house?” (2 Sam. 9:1)
*¹David said, “Is there still anyone who is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan’s sake?”...⁷David said to him, “Do not fear, for I will surely show you kindness for Jonathan your father’s sake, and will restore to you all the land of Saul your grandfather...”
¹³So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem, for he ate continually at the king’s table. (2 Sam. 9:1-13)*

IV. JONATHAN’S PLAN TO GIVE DAVID INFORMATION (1 SAM. 20:18-23)

- A. Jonathan gave David the details about how he would pass the vital information to him (20:18-23). Many in the court would have been paying close attention to Prince Jonathan and looking for David. Secrecy was of the greatest importance since David’s life depended on it.

¹⁸Then Jonathan said to David, “Tomorrow is the New Moon; and you will be missed, because your seat will be empty. ¹⁹And when you have stayed three days, go down quickly and come to the place where you hid on the day of the deed; and remain by the stone Ezel. ²⁰Then I will shoot three arrows to the side, as though I shot at a target; ²¹and there I will send a lad, saying, ‘Go, find the arrows.’ If I expressly say to the lad, ‘Look, the arrows are on this side of you; get them and come’—then, as the LORD lives, there is safety for you and no harm. ²²But if I say thus to the young man, ‘Look, the arrows are beyond you’—go your way, for the LORD has sent you away. ²³As for the matter which you and I have spoken of...the LORD be between you and me forever.” (1 Sam. 20:18-23)

- B. *Your seat will be empty*: Jonathan had to give an excuse for David’s absence from the meal to determine from Saul’s reaction whether he meant to do harm to David.
- C. *I will shoot three arrows*: Jonathan brought a lad with him to alleviate suspicion. He was to shoot three arrows near the stone where David was hiding in the field to signal if David was safe.
- D. *The Lord has sent you away*: We see Jonathan’s spiritual interpretation of their separation. Jonathan reminded David that the Lord was overseeing the relationship that existed between them.
- E. *The Lord be between us*: Jonathan called on the Lord to witness the commitments they made and to intervene in their lives accordingly.

V. WHY DAVID MISSED THE FEAST (1 SAM. 20:24-29)

- A. Jonathan gave a dishonest reason to Saul as to why David was missing feast (20:24-29).

²⁴David hid in the field. And when the New Moon had come, the king sat down to eat the feast. ²⁵Now the king sat on his seat, as at other times, on a seat by the wall. And Jonathan arose, and Abner sat by Saul’s side, but David’s place was empty. ²⁶Nevertheless Saul did not say anything that day, for he thought, “Something has happened to him; he is unclean, surely he is unclean.” ²⁷And it happened the next day, the second day of the month, that David’s place was empty. Saul said to Jonathan his son, “Why has the son of Jesse not come to eat, either yesterday or today?” ²⁸So Jonathan answered Saul, “David earnestly asked permission of me to go to Bethlehem. ²⁹And he said, ‘Please let me go, for our family has a sacrifice in the city, and my brother has commanded me to be there...please let me get away and see my brothers.’” (1 Sam. 20:24-29)

- B. *First day of the New Moon*: At the first of each month a three-day feast occurred (Num. 28:11-15).
- C. *Saul said nothing*: Saul was not concerned by David’s absence from the meal on the first day. Saul assumed he must have become accidentally unclean for it, but would be clean the next evening.
- D. *Jonathan’s lie*: Jonathan lied as David requested him to do (20:6).

VI. SAUL'S ANGER AT JONATHAN (1 SAM. 20:30-34)

- A. Saul was very angry that Jonathan chose David over him (20:30-34).
*³⁰Then Saul's anger was aroused against Jonathan, and he said to him, "You son of a perverse, rebellious woman! Do I not know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame...?"
³¹As long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, you shall not be established, nor your kingdom. Now therefore, send and bring him to me, for he shall surely die."³² Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said to him, "Why should he be killed? What has he done?"³³Then Saul cast a spear at him to kill him, by which Jonathan knew that it was determined by his father to kill David.
³⁴So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger and ate no food the second day of the month, for he was grieved for David, because his father had treated him shamefully. (1 Sam. 20:30-34)*
- B. **Saul's anger:** Saul accused Jonathan of helping David to destroy the family dynasty.
- C. **David shall surely die:** The king warned Jonathan that he would lose his right to the kingship.
- D. **Saul cast a spear at him to kill him:** Since Jonathan chose to identify with David, Saul treated him like David, throwing a spear at him. After this, Jonathan knew that Saul determined to kill David.
- E. **Jonathan was angry:** Jonathan left the room in anger and fasted that day. He was grieved for David's sake because of his father's shameful treatment of David.
- F. **Leadership lesson:** Jonathan paid a heavy price for standing for truth and the relationships associated with it. He showed his loyalty by resisting Saul's lures as he stood with David.

VII. JONATHAN AND DAVID'S COMMITMENT AND FAREWELL (1 SAM. 20:35-42)

- A. Jonathan fulfilled his commitment to David (20:35-42). With a heavy heart he left the royal court to go to the field, having to be secretive in reporting back to David.
*³⁵So it was, in the morning, that Jonathan went into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little lad was with him.³⁶Then he said to his lad, "Now run, find the arrows which I shoot." As the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him.³⁷When the lad had come to the place where the arrow was which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried out after the lad and said, "Is not the arrow beyond you?"³⁸And Jonathan cried out after the lad, "Make haste, hurry, do not delay!" So Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows and came back...³⁹But the lad did not know anything...
⁴⁰Then Jonathan gave his weapons to his lad, and said to him, "Go, carry them to the city."
⁴¹As soon as the lad had gone, David arose from a place toward the south, fell on his face to the ground, and bowed down three times. And they kissed one another; and they wept together, but David more so.⁴²Then Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, since we have both sworn in the name of the LORD, saying, 'May the LORD be between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants, forever.'" So he [David] arose and departed... (1 Sam. 20:35-42)*
- B. **David's response:** David came out of hiding and fell to the ground. The men wept together.
- C. **Jonathan's response:** He told David to go in peace, since they had both made a covenant together. Jonathan and David briefly met one more time at Horesh in the wilderness of Ziph (23:15-18).