

A Close Friendship and a Bitter Animosity Grows (1 Samuel 18)

Context: David had just killed the giant Goliath and immediately became a national hero!

I. A Close Friendship Develops between David and Jonathan. (18:1-4)

A. Jonathan has already been wonderfully portrayed in the narrative. (1 Samuel 13-14)

- Jonathan is named and listed as Saul's oldest son (**14:49**) and is always shown in a positive or righteous light by the Narrator. In literary jargon, Jonathan is a foil for Saul (Jonathan is an example of how Saul should have acted).



- Jonathan defeats a garrison of Philistines at Geba (but Saul takes credit for the victory). (**13:1-7**)



- After the Philistines sent a large force in retaliation, and after most of Saul's army had deserted him in fear, Jonathan courageously (through faith in the LORD) defeated the Philistine garrison in Michmash. (**14:1-23**)

- Saul makes a foolish and rash command that none of the Israelites could eat anything until the evening (and after the Philistines were sent away in total defeat). However, Jonathan didn't hear his father's oath (probably because he was at the front lines of the battle). Jonathan found honey in the forest and after eating it was physically refreshed. After being made aware of how his actions had gone against Saul's commands, he stood up against his father's foolish command and rebuked Saul before the people. (**14:24-30**)

- Saul's pride caused Israel to sin in eating the blood of animals as they ate raw animals out of desperation and hunger. (**14:31-35**)
- Saul's pride nearly cost Jonathan his life as Saul, through an elaborate process, determined that it was Jonathan who was to blame for the sin of the people as Jonathan had broken command for the people to fast. Saul planned to kill his own son, but the people intervened by rebuking Saul and crediting Jonathan for his valiant actions in battle. (**14:36-46**)
- Jonathan is not mentioned again until **18:1-4**. (It is interesting to note that Jonathan did not accept Goliath's challenge.)
- Jonathan reaped the consequences of his father's sin and punishment by not being given the opportunity to serve as Israel's next king (**13:8-23**). The 1 Samuel narrative ends with Jonathan's courageous yet sorrowful death as part of God's judgment on Saul and his family line. (**Chapter 31**)

B. Jonathan became a perfect, sacrificial, and life-long friend to David.



- Jonathan would have been aware of David's earlier service to Saul (16:14-23) and he was older and was more famous and respected than David.
- Jonathan is never shown to be jealous of David or spiteful towards either him or God for not being able to become Israel's next king. Rather, both his soul and David's were "knit" together in an inseparable and wonderful friendship—one that would last for life. (2 Samuel 1:25-27)
- The godly love that Jonathan had for David would be manifested in many sacrificial ways. One was through making a solemn covenant with David that would last beyond Jonathan's life. (9:1)



- Jonathan wholeheartedly supported God's blessing on David and gave him his own royal robe and his highly prized and effective armor and weapons.

II. A Bitter Animosity Grows in Saul's Heart towards David. (18:5-30)



A. Saul initially welcomed and supported David as one of his mighty and successful warriors. (vs. 2, 5; 14:52)

B. However, Saul's jealousy over David's recognized success quickly turned to a bitter and murderous animosity. (vs. 6-11)



- God had already told Saul that because of his rebellion against God's Word his son and descendants would not reign in Israel. (13:11-14; 15:16-35)
- No one had been singing Jonathan's praises. A good reason may have been Saul's growing jealousy and paranoid actions towards anyone or anything that would threaten to outdo him for praise and glory.



- Saul was so blinded by his jealousy that he was willing to kill David—the one who God was using to bless Saul when the harmful spirit rushed on him.

C. Every time Saul attempted to destroy David, the LORD's hand of blessing and preservation on David's life was evident. (vs. 12-30)



- Saul hatred of David was fruit of his constant rebellion against God's Word and plan. Saul may have even suspected that David would be his replacement. (18:8-9, 12, 28-29)
- "The LORD was with him" defined David's life and became a stark contrast with Saul's pattern of life. (18:12, 14, 28)

OBSERVATIONS

- *“The LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.” (16:7) While Saul treated David as a threat, Jonathan treated him as a friend.*
- *God gave David a wonderful friendship with Jonathan that was a comfort and help against the evil actions of Saul.*
- *Jonathan showed a strong faith in the LORD that brought courage against the enemy, contentment in God’s plan, and an unthreatened kindness towards others. He proved to be a greater leader than King Saul was in many ways. Instead of wallowing in rebellion towards God’s Word, Jonathan believed in God and trusted in Him.*
- *Psalm 23:5 – “You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.”*



IMPLICATIONS/APPLICATIONS

- *While the righteous will always be hated and despised by the unrighteous, righteous, and godly friendships must be cultivated between God’s people.*
- *If “the LORD is with” you, nothing man or Satan can do to oppose you will succeed.*
- *Those who have true faith in the LORD will be blessed with courage against their enemies, with contentment in God’s plan for their lives, and they will show an unthreatened kindness to others and will rejoice in God’s blessing on others.*
- *Do you feel threatened when God blesses others and allows them to prosper in their ministries or positions?*
- *God is glorified when we show faithful love to others rather than fearful animosity.*

LOOKING AHEAD – 1 Samuel 19-20 (David’s Faithful Shepherd Protects Him)