

After the defeat of Goliath, Saul saw David as being a valuable man to have in his service. Saul's son Jonathan saw David as a kindred spirit and entered a life-long covenant of friendship with him. However, Saul's favor soon turned to jealousy and he began to seek opportunity to kill David, eventually forcing David to flee for his life with Saul in pursuit.

1 Samuel 18

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

“And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul” – After David had killed Goliath, Abner, the captain of the Israelite army, had taken David to see Saul (1 Sam. 17:57-58). We know this was immediately after the slaying of Goliath because David was still holding Goliath's head in his hands. Saul becomes interested in David's background and asks who David's father was. This verse picks up immediately after David finished speaking with Saul.

“that the soul of Jonathan was knit [to be bound] with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul” – No doubt Jonathan was impressed with the faith of David and found him to be a kindred spirit. We saw Jonathan's faith in chapter 14 when he depended on the LORD to help him and his armor bearer destroy a garrison of the Philistines (1 Sam. 14:1-14). Jonathan obviously appreciated David's trust in the LORD and immediately wanted to become his friend.

“And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house” – Apparently when David's only duty to Saul was to occasionally play the harp for him, he was allowed to return home after each session. Now after Saul saw the victory over the Philistines that happened because the LORD had blessed David, he apparently realized that David was a valuable man to have around. Occasionally the world recognizes the value of being associated with God's people. Remember Laban's words to Jacob: *“And Laban said unto him, I pray thee, if I have found favour in thine eyes, tarry: for I have learned by experience that the LORD hath blessed me for thy sake” (Gen. 30:27).*

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

We are not given any specifics to this covenant, but it apparently was one of friendship and loyalty. Jonathan and David agree to be life-long friends and this covenant even extended eternally to their descendants (1 Sam. 20:42). Some have tried to give homosexual overtones to the love between Jonathan and David but there is nothing of the sort here.

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.

The act of removing his own royal clothes and giving them to David, along with his weapons and his other royal accouterments symbolized Jonathan's view that David was equal to himself, sharing with him all that belonged to him as the king's son. Whether Jonathan realized it or not, this was a prophetic act because David would eventually take Jonathan's place as the next king after Saul.

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.

“And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, and behaved himself wisely [to give attention; be prudent]” – This verse seems to give an overview of the days ahead after Saul and the armies of Israel have returned home. David proved to be a responsible servant, making sure to accomplish whatever task Saul assigned to him to the best of his ability.

“and Saul set him over the men of war” – David's faithfulness was rewarded as Saul gave him authority over the men in the army.

“and he was accepted in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants” – No one held a grudge against David because of his youth or inexperience. People respected him because of his victory over Goliath and his faithfulness to his job.

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

After the defeat of the Philistines, Saul returns home and is met by women celebrating the victory with singing. While they do not neglect to glorify Saul in their songs, they give the greater glory to David. Their lyrics describe Saul killing thousands of enemy soldiers but attributing tens times as many to David. They were, in effect, saying that David was ten-times the warrior that Saul was. Obviously David's defeat of Goliath had made him a hero in Israel.

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?

“And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him” – This song made Saul angry and his jealousy was aroused. His insecurity and lack of self-esteem are evident because he is not satisfied to allow David to have his day in the sun. Saul was the king and he felt he ought to have more glory than anyone else.

“and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed *but* thousands” – Israel wanted a king to fight their battles (1 Sam. 8:20) but the women were singing a song that portrayed David as ten times the greater warrior than Saul, perhaps implying that he would be ten times the king that Saul was.

“and *what* can he have more but the kingdom?” – Samuel had told Saul that the LORD would take the kingdom from him and give it to another man that was “better than thou” (1 Sam. 15:28). Saul is now recognizing that the LORD was no longer with him and that the LORD was now with David. Saul may be becoming suspicious that David might be the man that Samuel spoke of who would take the kingdom from him.

9 And Saul eyed David from that day and forward.

Saul did not look at David as just another servant, but kept a suspicious eye on him, watching for additional signs that the LORD had chosen him as the next king. Perhaps he was following the same idea expressed by the saying “keep your friends close and your enemies closer.” In those days it was not unusual for someone to assassinate the king and take their place, so Saul may have wondered if David might try something like that. David, however, was not that kind of person because he had the utmost reverence for “the LORD’s anointed” (1 Sam. 24:6).

Verses 10-30: The next day the evil spirit was tormenting Saul and David was playing his harp to give Saul some relief, but Saul threw a javelin at David, intentionally trying to kill him. Recognizing that the Spirit of God had left him and was now with David, Saul became afraid and decided to give David authority over a thousand men, and assignment that would keep David away from Saul. However, David gained more public exposure from the assignment as he faithfully performed his duty, making Saul that much more afraid of David. Saul offered to give David his oldest daughter as a wife, but David did not consider himself worthy to be the son-in-law to the king and the oldest daughter was given to another man. Saul then told David that he could marry his other daughter, Michal, if he brought him the foreskins of 100 Philistines, hoping that David would be killed attempting to collect the foreskins. However, David was able to accomplish the task and marry Michal, causing Saul to continue to becoming more and more afraid of David.

1 Samuel 19: Saul commanded Jonathan and his servants that they should kill David, but Jonathan reminds his father of how the LORD used David to slay Goliath and thereby bring a great victory over the Philistines. Saul then swore that David would not be killed. However, the next time the evil spirit came upon Saul again and David was playing to give him relief, Saul once again threw his javelin at David in an attempt to kill him. After David fled for his life, Saul sent men to his house to find David and kill him, but his Michal helped David escape. David then goes to Samuel in Ramah and tells him all that Saul has done. The two leave together and go to Naioth and Saul sends men to capture David. When the men arrive, the LORD protects David and Samuel by causing the men to prophesy. Saul eventually goes personally to capture David and the same thing happens to him.

1 Samuel 20:1-40: David flees Naioth in Ramah and comes to Jonathan, asking why his father Saul is trying to kill him. Jonathan devises a plan to determine if his father still intends to kill David. When David does not show up in his place at Saul’s supper table the next evening then Jonathan would make an excuse for his absence. Saul’s reaction to David’s absence will expose his true intentions toward David, and Jonathan will secretly report back to David. The secret method involved Jonathan coming to the very field they were standing, shooting arrows and having a young lad run after them. If David’s life was not in danger then he will tell the lad that the arrows are this side of where the lad was. However, if Saul was still intent on killing David then he will call out to the lad that the arrows were still farther out. Saul’s behavior at supper the next evening indicated that he still wanted to kill David and Jonathan passes this message along to David as they had planned. Jonathan then sends the lad back home with the bow and arrows so he can talk to David privately.

1 Samuel 20

41 And as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of a place toward the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded.

David comes out of his hiding place to meet Jonathan. The fact that he bowed himself three times shows David’s humility and his respect for Jonathan as the prince. Knowing that this is may be the last time they will see each other, they give each other a brotherly kiss and weep profusely. They finally stopped weeping over their parting after David “exceeded” (wept much more) and became emotionally exhausted. These are two close friends who will be going their separate ways, broken hearted over the circumstances that will be separating them.

42 And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD, saying, The LORD be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever. And he arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city.

“And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD” – In contrast to his father Saul, Jonathan holds no ill will toward David and is sending him away as a friend. The peace between them is a reflection of the covenant of friendship sworn between them (1 Sam. 18:3).

“saying, The LORD be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever” – The LORD will serve as a witness of the oath/covenant that Jonathan and David have made between themselves, which will apply to their descendants as well.

“And he arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city” – David leaves and Jonathan returns home in the city.