

There is a common theme running throughout chapters 18-20:
and that is the theme of Saul’s family (and everybody else) following David.

18:1-5	Jonathan loved David and made a covenant with him
18:6-16	All Israel and Judah loved David
18:17-30	Michal loved David
19:1-10	Jonathan delighted in David
19:11-17	Michal protected David
19:18-24	Samuel protected David
20:1-42	Jonathan protected David and made a covenant with him

There is even a chiasmic structure to this—
with Jonathan at the beginning, end, and middle of this love-fest for David!

And the completeness of this particular passage is seen
in the fact that Jonathan and Michal then vanish from the narrative.

We will not hear about Jonathan again until his death in chapter 31
(except briefly in chapter 23),
while Michal only reappears in 2 Samuel 3.

Next time we will take a look at chapter 20 –
but tonight we will see the pattern established here in chapters 18-19.

In 1 Samuel 18-20,

David is the general who goes up against Saul’s enemies—the LORD’s enemies.
After Goliath we hear about David’s victories in 18:5, 18:14-16, 18:27, 18:30, and 19:8.

And Saul is not blind to who David is.

By the end of chapter 20, Saul understands full well that David is the Lord’s anointed (20:31).
But Saul is jealous and wants to see his own line follow him as king.

What is interesting is that Saul’s family (and all Israel)
sees more clearly than Saul.

They see that the LORD is with David, and that is enough for them.

If we are going to keep our Messianic theme here—

since the king *is* the Lord’s anointed one (meshiach)--
then we need to see that loving David, protecting David, and making a covenant with David
is all about loving Jesus, delighting in Jesus, and protecting Jesus –
and by “protecting” I mean defending and maintaining *his kingdom* –
rather than seeking our own kingdoms!

1. Loving David (18)

a. Jonathan Loved David (v1-5)

As soon as he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. ² And Saul took him that day and would not let him return to his

father's house. ³ Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul. ⁴ And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, and his armor, and even his sword and his bow and his belt. ⁵ And David went out and was successful wherever Saul sent him, so that Saul set him over the men of war. And this was good in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul's servants.

Chapter 18 is all about loving David.

Verse 1—"Jonathan loved him as his own soul"

verse 16—"all Israel and Judah loved David"

verse 20—"Now Saul's daughter, Michal, loved David" (echoed in v29)

Loving David is not just an abstract feeling.

Loving David is, in every case, given practical expression.

In verses 1-5, Jonathan gives David his armor, his robe, his sword, his bow and his belt.

Jonathan makes a covenant with David – "because he loved him as his own soul."

Jonathan is a man of faith –

and so he sees the LORD's anointed for who he is!

This is a man that I can follow – indeed, this is the man that I *must follow*
if I am to be faithful to my God!

b. All Israel and Judah Loved David (v6-16)

⁶ As they were coming home, when David returned from striking down the Philistine, the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with songs of joy, and with musical instruments. ⁷ And the women sang to one another as they celebrated, "Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands."

⁸ And Saul was very angry, and this saying displeased him. He said, "They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed thousands, and what more can he have but the kingdom?" ⁹ And Saul eyed David from that day on.

¹⁰ The next day a harmful spirit from God rushed upon Saul, and he raved within his house while David was playing the lyre, as he did day by day. Saul had his spear in his hand. ¹¹ And Saul hurled the spear, for he thought, "I will pin David to the wall." But David evaded him twice.

¹² Saul was afraid of David because the LORD was with him but had departed from Saul. ¹³ So Saul removed him from his presence and made him a commander of a thousand. And he went out and came in before the people. ¹⁴ And David had success in all his undertakings, for the LORD was with him. ¹⁵ And when Saul saw that he had great success, he stood in fearful awe of him. ¹⁶ But all Israel and Judah loved David, for he went out and came in before them.

And the LORD gave success to David –

such that the women of Israel sing his praise,

Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands.

This gets Saul steamed!

"They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed thousands, and what more can he have but the kingdom"! (v8)

And so twice Saul tries to pin David to the wall with a spear!

And yet notice who is the person who is afraid?!

(v12) “Saul was afraid of David because the LORD was with him but had departed from Saul.”

When you fear God, you do not fear man.

When you fear man, you do not fear God.

The armies of Israel and Judah follow David

for he went out and came in before them. (v16)

Michal, Saul’s daughter, desired to marry him.

Why does Saul’s family—and all Israel—love David?

Because David was successful in battle.

The women sing of his great triumphs (greater than Saul’s!)

David had success in all his undertakings, for the LORD was with him. (18:14)

But because of this great success Saul hated him and was jealous of him:

Saul stood in fearful awe of him. (18:15)

Something we rarely *really* think about,

is that David was loved by his people because he was really good at killing people.

This is repugnant to the modern world.

We think of mighty warriors as a thing of the past.

But throughout American history we have frequently elected great generals as presidents:

George Washington

Andrew Jackson

William Henry Harrison

Ulysses S. Grant

Dwight Eisenhower.

None of these men campaigned on their political ideas.

They campaigned on their war record.

“I like Ike” is not exactly a slogan designed to persuade!

“Tippecanoe and Tyler too” was a slogan used to remind voters of Harrison’s great victory.

Andrew Jackson kept saying he was for reform,

even though nobody ever did figure out what he was going to reform!

Some people have thought it somewhat odd

to reward men who are especially proficient at killing others, with political office!

But when you are encircled by enemies who want to kill you and your children and take your land,
you tend to reward men who are especially proficient at *defending* you!

And while some may not like it,

the very heart of Christianity is about a man
who is remarkably proficient at destroying the wicked.
Our Lord Jesus Christ is the king who will destroy his opponents by the word of his mouth!

And this is prefigured in David.
And all who refuse to bow the knee to Christ are prefigured in Saul—
the one who was jealous of the LORD's anointed warrior.
Saul's jealousy is revealed in his statement, *what more can he have but the kingdom?*

Saul had been made king so that he might be the one who goes before his people,
and deliver them from their enemies.
But Saul's focus on his calling slipped.
And he did not pursue the kingdom of God—but his own kingdom (literally).

And so in pursuit of his own kingdom,
Saul will demonstrate once again that folly is set upon its own destruction.

If you are like Saul,
and you have the tendency to seek first your own kingdom,
then pay attention to Saul and learn from his mistakes.

What is it that matters to you?
Is it your success?
Your family?
Your career?
Your children?

Saul wants to see Jonathan sit on the throne of Israel.
But his children love David and want what is good for the LORD's true anointed one!

c. Michal (Saul's Daughter) Loved David (v17-30)

¹⁷ Then Saul said to David, "Here is my elder daughter Merab. I will give her to you for a wife. Only be valiant for me and fight the LORD's battles." For Saul thought, "Let not my hand be against him, but let the hand of the Philistines be against him." ¹⁸ And David said to Saul, "Who am I, and who are my relatives, my father's clan in Israel, that I should be son-in-law to the king?" ¹⁹ But at the time when Merab, Saul's daughter, should have been given to David, she was given to Adriel the Meholathite for a wife.

²⁰ Now Saul's daughter Michal loved David. And they told Saul, and the thing pleased him. ²¹ Saul thought, "Let me give her to him, that she may be a snare for him and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him." Therefore Saul said to David a second time, "You shall now be my son-in-law." ²² And Saul commanded his servants, "Speak to David in private and say, 'Behold, the king has delight in you, and all his servants love you. Now then become the king's son-in-law.'" ²³ And Saul's servants spoke those words in the ears of David. And David said, "Does it seem to you a little thing to become the king's son-in-law, since I am a poor man and have no reputation?" ²⁴ And the servants of Saul told him, "Thus and so did David speak." ²⁵ Then Saul said, "Thus shall you say to David, 'The king desires no bride-price except a hundred foreskins of the Philistines, that he may be avenged of the king's enemies.'" Now Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines. ²⁶ And when his servants told David these

words, it pleased David well to be the king's son-in-law. Before the time had expired, ²⁷ David arose and went, along with his men, and killed two hundred of the Philistines. And David brought their foreskins, which were given in full number to the king, that he might become the king's son-in-law. And Saul gave him his daughter Michal for a wife. ²⁸ But when Saul saw and knew that the LORD was with David, and that Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him, ²⁹ Saul was even more afraid of David. So Saul was David's enemy continually.

³⁰ Then the commanders of the Philistines came out to battle, and as often as they came out David had more success than all the servants of Saul, so that his name was highly esteemed.

In chapter 17 we heard that Saul had promised his daughter in marriage to the man who killed Goliath.

Now we discover that Saul tries to use his daughters to lure David to his death.

Verse 17—*Here is my elder daughter Merab.*

I will give her to you for a wife.

Only be valiant for me and fight the LORD's battles.

But he was thinking,

let not my hand be against him, but let the hand of the Philistines be against him

Then, after proving faithless, and giving Merab to another,

we hear that Saul's younger daughter, Michal, loved David.

And Saul once again tries to use this to send David to his death:

*The king desires no bride-price except a hundred foreskins of the Philistines,
that he may be avenged on the king's enemies. (v25)*

Saul already owed David his daughter for the death of Goliath!

But he adds an extra 100 Philistine foreskins as a way to make David odious to the Philistines.

And David brought 200 foreskins to Saul,

so Saul gave him his daughter, Michal.

But when Saul saw and knew that the LORD was with David,

and that Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him,

Saul was even more afraid of David.

He wanted to destroy David,

so he used his daughters as a lure to entice David to do something foolish.

Instead, David is now his son-in-law—

and that much closer to usurping his throne! (Or at least that's how Saul's thinks of it)

If you want to pursue your own kingdom,

then don't let your kids anywhere near Jesus.

He has a way of drawing them to himself!

Saul should have rejoiced that his children loved David.

If Saul had yielded to the LORD's anointed,

then Jonathan probably would not have died in battle;

and quite possibly Michal would not have died childless.

But because Saul stood against the Messiah,

even the children who loved David paid a price for their father's folly.

2. Delighting in David (19:1-10)

a. Jonathan's Mediation (v1-7)

19 And Saul spoke to Jonathan his son and to all his servants, that they should kill David. But Jonathan, Saul's son, delighted much in David. ² And Jonathan told David, "Saul my father seeks to kill you. Therefore be on your guard in the morning. Stay in a secret place and hide yourself. ³ And I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where you are, and I will speak to my father about you. And if I learn anything I will tell you." ⁴ And Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father and said to him, "Let not the king sin against his servant David, because he has not sinned against you, and because his deeds have brought good to you. ⁵ For he took his life in his hand and he struck down the Philistine, and the LORD worked a great salvation for all Israel. You saw it, and rejoiced. Why then will you sin against innocent blood by killing David without cause?" ⁶ And Saul listened to the voice of Jonathan. Saul swore, "As the LORD lives, he shall not be put to death." ⁷ And Jonathan called David, and Jonathan reported to him all these things. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence as before.

Jonathan, on the other hand, *delighted much in David.*

And so when Jonathan heard of his father's desire to kill David,
he warned his friend to hide, while he interceded with his father.

*(v4) Let not the king sin against his servant David, because he has not sinned against you,
and because his deeds have brought good to you.
For he took his life in his hand and struck down the Philistine,
and the LORD worked a great salvation for all Israel.
You saw it and rejoiced.
Why then will you sin against innocent blood by killing David without cause?*

And Saul listened to Jonathan.

As the LORD lives, he shall not be put to death.
There is a certain fickleness to Saul that amazes us.
Unstable as water, he could not stand firm.
Jonathan's voice could remind him of what was good and true,
but the harmful (or evil) spirit from the LORD continued to plague him.

Why does God keep sending this evil spirit?

Isn't it enough that God has judged him for his sins,
and has removed the kingdom from him?
Why send this harmful spirit?

First of all, Saul was supposed to be the son of God.

He was supposed to be the one who would succeed where Adam failed.
But he didn't.

So this evil spirit is simply what he deserves—indeed, it is better than what he deserves!
Just as Israel was plagued with enemies when they rebelled against God,
so is Saul.

But secondly, this really isn't about Saul.

This is about David.

Why do bad things happen to some people and not others?

Why do some people die quietly in their sleep,
while others have prolonged agony?

Why are some people born blind?

Is it because they are worse sinners? Because their parents sinned?

No.

Jesus told us that it was so that the power of God might be revealed.

Even so, while Saul does deserve what he gets,
it is really not about him.

The LORD's anointed must be brought through suffering to glory.

The only way for a son of Adam to become the son of God
is the way of the cross.

And even as Israel was tested in the wilderness, in order to learn to trust in the LORD,
so also David must be tested in the wilderness.

And that won't happen as long as David is getting comfy as the great warrior,
the king's son-in-law.

b. Fails (v8-10)

⁸ And there was war again. And David went out and fought with the Philistines and struck them with a great blow, so that they fled before him. ⁹ Then a harmful spirit from the LORD came upon Saul, as he sat in his house with his spear in his hand. And David was playing the lyre. ¹⁰ And Saul sought to pin David to the wall with the spear, but he eluded Saul, so that he struck the spear into the wall. And David fled and escaped that night.

And so God sends the evil spirit to Saul in order to drive David into the wilderness.

David needs to learn that the only way to glory is the way of the cross.

And that is what you and I – who have been joined to Christ Jesus –
need to learn as well.

3. Protecting David (19:11-24)

a. Michal Protects David (v11-17)

¹¹ Saul sent messengers to David's house to watch him, that he might kill him in the morning. But Michal, David's wife, told him, "If you do not escape with your life tonight, tomorrow you will be killed." ¹² So Michal let David down through the window, and he fled away and escaped. ¹³ Michal took an image and laid it on the bed and put a pillow of goats' hair at its head and covered it with the clothes. ¹⁴ And when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, "He is sick." ¹⁵ Then Saul sent the messengers to see David, saying, "Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may kill him." ¹⁶ And when the messengers came in, behold, the image was in the bed, with the pillow of goats' hair at its head. ¹⁷ Saul said to Michal, "Why have you deceived me thus and let my enemy go, so that he has escaped?" And Michal answered Saul, "He said to me, 'Let me go. Why should I kill you?'"

First, David flees to his house—to his wife, Michal.

But Michal told him, *If you do not escape with your life tonight,
tomorrow you will be killed.*

So she helped him out the window and he fled—
and then she deceived her father in order to give David time to escape!

Saul of Tarsus will escape from Damascus in a similar manner.

Let down out of a window in a basket...

b. Samuel Protects David (v18-24)

¹⁸ Now David fled and escaped, and he came to Samuel at Ramah and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and lived at Naioth. ¹⁹ And it was told Saul, “Behold, David is at Naioth in Ramah.” ²⁰ Then Saul sent messengers to take David, and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as head over them, the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied. ²¹ When it was told Saul, he sent other messengers, and they also prophesied. And Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they also prophesied. ²² Then he himself went to Ramah and came to the great well that is in Secu. And he asked, “Where are Samuel and David?” And one said, “Behold, they are at Naioth in Ramah.” ²³ And he went there to Naioth in Ramah. And the Spirit of God came upon him also, and as he went he prophesied until he came to Naioth in Ramah. ²⁴ And he too stripped off his clothes, and he too prophesied before Samuel and lay naked all that day and all that night. Thus it is said, “Is Saul also among the prophets?”

And David fled to Samuel.

This is an interesting twist—
though not surprising at all.

Where else would he go,
but to the prophet who had anointed him?

And Samuel protected David as well.

Saul sent messengers to take David,
*and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying,
and Samuel standing as head over them,
the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul,
and they also prophesied. (19:20)*

Three times this happens,
until finally Saul himself comes to find David.

*And the Spirit of God came upon him also,
and as he went he prophesied until he came to Naioth in Ramah.*

*And he too stripped off his clothes,
and he too prophesied before Samuel
and lay naked all that day and all that night.*

Thus it is said, “Is Saul also among the prophets?” (19:23-24)

15:35 says that Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death.

This may well be that time.

This is the last time that Samuel is mentioned until his death in 1 Samuel 25.

It is the one and only time that Samuel, David, and Saul appear in the same place at the same time.

And Samuel appears as the protector of David,
the powerful prophet who subdues Saul by the Spirit of God.

This passage clearly demonstrates that the Holy Spirit may come upon a person temporarily.

Our confession speaks of this as the “common operations of the Spirit”--
by which the Spirit uses the wicked temporarily in his service.
The key distinction between these “common operations” and “saving operations”
is that the common operations are not permanent.
There may be a temporary change of attitude and action,
but in time the old man reasserts itself--
because the old man isn’t dead!

How should we think about all this?

If David signifies our Lord Jesus Christ –
then we should see ourselves *in David – in Christ*.
As we are made partakers in Christ – we also are called to imitate him.

We are called out into the wilderness –
Deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow me.

But we are also promised the same protection –
“I will be with you always – even to the end of the age.”

You may have complete confidence that the Lord will protect and guard you from all evil.
Nothing can separate you from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus.
Not even death.

So what if Saul’s spear pins you to the wall!
You belong to Jesus!
And the one who loses his life for Jesus’ sake will find it!

When we fear man – we do not fear God.
But when we fear God – we do not fear man!