

## 1 Samuel 18:1 – 19:24

<sup>18:1</sup> Now it came about when he had finished speaking to Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as himself. <sup>2</sup> Saul took him that day and did not let him return to his father's house. <sup>3</sup> Then Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. <sup>4</sup> Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his armor, including his sword and his bow and his belt. <sup>5</sup> So David went out wherever Saul sent him, and prospered; and Saul set him over the men of war. And it was pleasing in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul's servants. <sup>6</sup> It happened as they were coming, when David returned from killing the Philistine, that the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with joy and with musical instruments. <sup>7</sup> The women sang as they played, and said, 'Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.' <sup>8</sup> Then Saul became very angry, for this saying displeased him; and he said, 'They have ascribed to David ten thousands, but to me they have ascribed thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom?' <sup>9</sup> Saul looked at David with suspicion from that day on. <sup>10</sup> Now it came about on the next day that an evil spirit from God<sup>1</sup> came mightily upon Saul, and he raved in the midst of the house, while David was playing the harp with his hand, as usual; and a spear was in Saul's hand. <sup>11</sup> Saul hurled the spear for he thought, 'I will pin David to the wall.' But David escaped from his presence twice. <sup>12</sup> Now Saul was afraid of David, for the LORD was with him but had departed from Saul. <sup>13</sup> Therefore Saul removed him from his presence and appointed him as his commander of a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people. <sup>14</sup> David was prospering in all his ways for the LORD was with him. <sup>15</sup> When Saul saw that he was prospering greatly, he dreaded him. <sup>16</sup> But all Israel and Judah loved David, and he went out and came in before them.

<sup>17</sup> Then Saul said to David, 'Here is my older daughter Merab; I will give her to you as a wife, only be a valiant man for me and fight the LORD'S battles.' For Saul thought, 'My hand shall not be against him, but let the hand of the Philistines be against him.' <sup>18</sup> But David said to Saul, 'Who am I, and what is my life or my father's family in Israel, that I should be the king's son-in-law?' <sup>19</sup> So it came about at the time when Merab, Saul's daughter, should have been given to David, that she was given to Adriel the Meholathite for a wife. <sup>20</sup> Now Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David. When they told Saul, the thing was agreeable to him. <sup>21</sup> Saul thought, 'I will give her to him that she may become a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him.' Therefore Saul said to David, 'For a second time you may be my son-in-law today.' <sup>22</sup> Then Saul commanded his servants, 'Speak to David secretly, saying, 'Behold, the king delights in you, and all his servants love you; now therefore, become the king's son-in-law.' <sup>23</sup> So Saul's servants spoke these words to David. But David said, 'Is it trivial in your sight to become the king's son-in-law, since I am a poor man and lightly esteemed?' <sup>24</sup> The servants of Saul reported to him according to these words which David spoke. <sup>25</sup> Saul then said, 'Thus you shall say to David, 'The king does not desire any dowry except a hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to take vengeance on the king's enemies.' Now Saul planned to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines. <sup>26</sup> When his servants told David these words, it pleased David to become the king's son-in-law. Before the days had expired <sup>27</sup> David rose up and went, he and his men, and struck down two hundred men among the Philistines. Then David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full number to the king, that he might become the king's son-in-law. So Saul gave him Michal his daughter for a wife. <sup>28</sup> When Saul saw and knew that the LORD was with David, and that Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him, <sup>29</sup> then Saul was even more afraid of David. Thus Saul was David's enemy continually. <sup>30</sup> Then the commanders of the Philistines went out to battle, and it happened as often as they went out, that David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul. So his name was highly esteemed.

---

<sup>1</sup> This phrase in Hebrew and its translation into English raise a number of questions. Perhaps the ancient Israelites attributed to God or the supernatural realm unexplainable things. Perhaps it is fine for the Creator God to use spirits that became evil, so long as God did not create them as evil. Perhaps the term 'elohim,' which is translated 'of God' should be translated something else here; elsewhere it can mean 'of rulers' or 'powerful,' as in Genesis 6:2; Psalm 8:5; 82:6; Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7 (see <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/430.htm>); this would make this 'an evil spirit of power.' Perhaps God did send a spirit, which was not evil itself but Saul's response produced an evil effect, much like a spirit of truth might keep telling Saul that God was taking the kingship away from him, even out of a desire to produce a good humility in Saul, but Saul's resistance produced the evil effect of paranoia. That is possible, as the verbal form 'came' is 3fs, so its subject is rwh 'lhym. So this sentence is best understood as: 'A spirit of God sent evil against Saul.' Although it is still possible that it can be understood as: 'An evil spirit of God was sent to Saul.' The Hebrew word tslh appears to be intransitive, not transitive, so that would solve one problem.

<sup>19:1</sup> Now Saul told Jonathan his son and all his servants to put David to death. But Jonathan, Saul's son, greatly delighted in David. <sup>2</sup> So Jonathan told David saying, 'Saul my father is seeking to put you to death. Now therefore, please be on guard in the morning, and stay in a secret place and hide yourself. <sup>3</sup> I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where you are, and I will speak with my father about you; if I find out anything, then I will tell you.' <sup>4</sup> Then Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father and said to him, 'Do not let the king sin against his servant David, since he has not sinned against you, and since his deeds have been very beneficial to you. <sup>5</sup> For he took his life in his hand and struck the Philistine, and the LORD brought about a great deliverance for all Israel; you saw it and rejoiced. Why then will you sin against innocent blood by putting David to death without a cause?' <sup>6</sup> Saul listened to the voice of Jonathan, and Saul vowed, 'As the LORD lives, he shall not be put to death.' <sup>7</sup> Then Jonathan called David, and Jonathan told him all these words. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence as formerly. <sup>8</sup> When there was war again, David went out and fought with the Philistines and defeated them with great slaughter, so that they fled before him. <sup>9</sup> Now there was an evil spirit from the LORD on Saul as he was sitting in his house with his spear in his hand, and David was playing the harp with his hand. <sup>10</sup> Saul tried to pin David to the wall with the spear, but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, so that he stuck the spear into the wall. And David fled and escaped that night.

<sup>11</sup> Then Saul sent messengers to David's house to watch him, in order to put him to death in the morning. But Michal, David's wife, told him, saying, 'If you do not save your life tonight, tomorrow you will be put to death.' <sup>12</sup> So Michal let David down through a window, and he went out and fled and escaped. <sup>13</sup> Michal took the household idol and laid it on the bed, and put a quilt of goats' hair at its head, and covered it with clothes. <sup>14</sup> When Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, 'He is sick.' <sup>15</sup> Then Saul sent messengers to see David, saying, 'Bring him up to me on his bed, that I may put him to death.' <sup>16</sup> When the messengers entered, behold, the household idol was on the bed with the quilt of goats' hair at its head. <sup>17</sup> So Saul said to Michal, 'Why have you deceived me like this and let my enemy go, so that he has escaped?' And Michal said to Saul, 'He said to me, 'Let me go! Why should I put you to death?'' <sup>18</sup> Now David fled and escaped and came to Samuel at Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and stayed in Naioth. <sup>19</sup> It was told Saul, saying, 'Behold, David is at Naioth in Ramah.' <sup>20</sup> Then Saul sent messengers to take David, but when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, with Samuel standing and presiding over them, the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul; and they also prophesied. <sup>21</sup> When it was told Saul, he sent other messengers, and they also prophesied. So Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they also prophesied. <sup>22</sup> Then he himself went to Ramah and came as far as the large well that is in Secu; and he asked and said, 'Where are Samuel and David?' And someone said, 'Behold, they are at Naioth in Ramah.' <sup>23</sup> He proceeded there to Naioth in Ramah; and the Spirit of God came upon him also, so that he went along prophesying continually until he came to Naioth in Ramah. <sup>24</sup> He also stripped off his clothes, and he too prophesied before Samuel and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Therefore they say, 'Is Saul also among the prophets?'

## Small Group Leader's Notes

1. Give context
  - a. God's search for a mediator
  - b. Simultaneously, Israel's search for a king: Found in Saul???
  - c. God has already declared to the prophet Samuel that he will find another king: David. David has been anointed by Samuel, one of the greatest spiritual leaders Israel will ever have (1 Sam.16).
  - d. David has just slain Goliath, as a representative of Israel (1 Sam.17).
2. Questions from everyone?
3. Why is Saul increasingly paranoid? Trace the development of who admires David
  - a. He senses that his own family members admire and respect David more than him (18:1)
  - b. He feels threatened by David's success in war (18:5)
  - c. He is jealous of the song that the women made, ascribing to David more personal victories than Saul by a multiple of ten (18:6 – 8)
  - d. His military men respect David more than him (18:13 – 15)
  - e. All Israel and Judah love David (18:16)
  - f. Saul doesn't want to lose 'the kingdom' (18:8) but God has already told him he would. David presents him with an opportunity. Here is a very gracious and responsible and popular way to bow out. But Saul cannot share in the celebration of what God is doing through David. He only sees David as a competitor.
4. What archetype does Saul fit? To whom can we compare Saul today?
  - a. The corporate executive who is jealous of anyone else's success
  - b. The football quarterback who wants all the glory
  - c. The 'mean girl' (see movie) who wants all the admiration of the school
5. Application: What happens in our hearts when someone is more celebrated than us?
6. Describe Saul's anger. How does Saul violate God's commandments and God's heart?
  - a. We see language describing his inner life for the first time: 'very angry' (v.8), 'looked at him with suspicion' (v.9), 'afraid of David' (v.12), 'he dreaded him' (v.15). Saul's inner life is a mess. He's a paranoid maniac obsessed with power.
  - b. It's especially strange that after Saul threw a spear at David, who is afraid? In v.12, Saul is afraid of David. But the more natural way of storytelling would have been to say, 'so David was afraid of Saul.' But it was the other way around.
  - c. Saul personally tries to kill David with a spear twice (18:8 – 12)
  - d. Saul manipulates his daughters to make David into a subordinate (18:17ff.)
  - e. Saul tries to get David killed through battle (18:17ff.)
7. What's going on with Saul here?
  - a. He's losing his grip on reality.
  - b. What does the household idol (19:13) reveal about Saul?
  - c. What is the evil spirit from God (18:10; 19:9)? Notice that it comes on Saul when David is popular (18:9; 19:8)? It is a spirit that probably is telling Saul to step down from the kingship because his anointing by the Holy Spirit is gone, but Saul can only hear it as a threat.
  - d. When he goes to Samuel, the Spirit of God comes on him and he prophesies. Then he strips off his clothes (19:20 – 24). That seems to indicate not madness but clarity. He is enacting the future, in which he will be stripped of the robes of his kingship. This, too, is an act of mercy.
    - i. Most scholars believe that 'Naioth' is not a geographical place but a reference to the dwelling places where Samuel housed his school for other prophets he was training. The Targum (the Aramaic paraphrase of the Old Testament) calls Naioth 'house of instruction.' Thus, Naioth were the dormitories of the young prophets studying under Samuel. Samuel had begun this little academy in response to the spiritual and ethical decline in Israel since the days of the judges.
    - ii. When Saul comes to Samuel, perhaps he is reminded of his first meeting with Samuel, when Samuel overruled his earlier errand (1 Sam.9) and made him king. Saul hesitates here, as shown by his question, 'Where are Samuel and David?' – a question he already knows the answer to. 'He appears to hesitate just at the moment that David comes within range. Instead of the king boldly completing his march and summarily arresting his rival, his subconscious now appears to slow him down, so that he wastes energy in superfluous checks.' (Fokklemann).

8. Who steps in before King Saul to mediate for David?
  - a. Jonathan warns David (19:2)
  - b. Jonathan speaks well of David to Saul, asking Saul to spare him and bring him back into service (19:4)
  - c. Michal warns David (19:11)
  - d. Michal helps David escape through the window (19:12)
  - e. Michal disguises the household idol on the bed as David (19:13)
9. Let's look at Jonathan. What is he like?
  - a. Why was this love between Jonathan and David "immediate"?
    - i. They shared the same faith in God, love for God's purposes, integrity, etc
    - ii. (If this comes up) Was the love sexual? This is cited by pro-homosexuality advocates as an example of a homosexual male relationship. However, it's unlikely that that is the case. The Hebrew word 'love' can be used for a broad range of purposes. See v.1, 3, 16, 20. While it's true that Michal 'loved' David prior to their marriage (v.20), thus connoting a romantic dimension to the word, it is also the case that 'all Israel and Judah loved David, and he went out and came in before them' (v.16). Thus, either the context underdetermines the sense, or the more general 'admire and respect' is the meaning.
  - b. What is the friendship between David and Jonathan?
    - i. They make a covenant in v.3. Presumably for David to be king and for Jonathan to be a loyal servant.
    - ii. Jonathan welcomes him into the family in v.4 and seems to recognize him as king (by giving David his robe, armor, sword, bow, belt).
  - c. What does this relationship tell us about Jonathan?
    - i. Jonathan is a person of integrity.
    - ii. What does Jonathan gain by doing this? Well, he does gain a friend and a place in David's future kingdom. But he is also losing his inheritance as the future king. This is a big shift.
    - iii. Jonathan sees that the kingship in Israel is really from God, and God appoints whomever he likes. The kingship is not hereditary as it is in pagan countries, although Israel will go in that direction later.
10. Has anyone stood by you in a hard time? Or advocated for you before other people? What was that experience like? That is a hint of what it might mean for us to advocate for others, or be a peacemaker, or just a supportive person.