

“DAVID AND THE HOUSE OF SAUL”

I. Introduction

- A. As we come to this chapter in 1 Samuel, we see that Saul is still on the throne in Israel even though we know that the Lord is going to replace him with David.
- B. The question that remains to be answered is how the throne will be passed from Saul to David.
- C. Saul knows that the Lord has rejected him and is going to replace him, but Saul is not showing any signs of repentance or any willingness to step aside to make way for his replacement.
- D. David knows that he is the Lord’s anointed, but David is not making any plans to overthrow Saul and install himself in his place.
- E. It is very clear that the transition from the rejected king to the chosen king will have to be brought about by the Lord’s providential guiding of events.
- F. First Samuel 18 begins to unfold the story of how the Lord simultaneously brings about Saul’s demise and David’s accession to the throne.
- G. In the remainder of 1 Samuel, we see how David continues to rise in popularity in spite of Saul’s efforts to destroy him.

II. David and Jonathan (1-5)

- A. The chapter begins by pointing out how Saul’s son Jonathan was affected by the faith and courage that David exhibited in going up against Goliath.
 - 1. Remember that Jonathan himself did not respond to Goliath’s challenge.
 - 2. This is surprising when we remember the faith and courage that Jonathan displayed when he took on an entire garrison of

Philistines back in chapter 14.

3. For some reason, Jonathan followed his father and the rest of the Israelites in letting Goliath's challenges go unanswered.
 4. Perhaps his faith was growing weaker as he watched his father's continued downward spiral.
 5. If so, then David's actions clearly renewed Jonathan's faith.
 6. When he saw how David's faith in the Lord gave him the confidence to take on Goliath and defeat him, Jonathan's soul was knit to the soul of David.
 7. He had found a kindred spirit.
- B. It is unfortunate that I even have to mention this, but you may be aware that in recent decades some liberal scholars have argued that David and Jonathan had a homosexual relationship.
1. This is a perfect example of the kind of revisionist history that so often takes place these days.
 2. Instead of taking the time to read the text in its own literary and historical context, these interpreters simply read their own ideas back into the text.
 3. There is no reason to take the text's assertion that Jonathan loved David means as a matter of same sex attraction.
 4. As Robert Gagnon explains, "The statement that 'the soul of Jonathan was bound to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul' (1 Samuel 18:1) can be compared to the non-erotic kinship language in Genesis 44:31 ('[Jacob's] soul is bound up with [his son Benjamin's] soul') and Leviticus 19:18 ('You shall love your neighbor as yourself'). It can also be compared to formulaic treaty language in the ancient Near East, such as the address of the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal to his vassals ('You must love [me] as yourselves') and the reference in 1 Kings 5:1 to King Hiram of Tyre

as [one who loved David]." [<http://www.orthodoxytoday.org/articles8/Gagnon-Lisa-Miller-Of-Newsweek-Against-Scripture-And-Jesus.php?>]

5. The revisionist homosexual interpretation of Jonathan and David's relationship is also a sad example of how our culture tends to view all love through a lens of eroticism.
 6. This has resulted in a virtual inability to conceive of male friendships that are not sexual in nature.
 7. C.S. Lewis points this out in his chapter on friendship in the *The Four Loves*, noting that while friendship was extolled by the ancients, it is ignored in the modern world.
 8. Even back in Lewis' day, he wrote that "It has actually become necessary to rebut the theory that every firm and serious friendship is really homosexual." [90]
 9. It is sad that so many people in our day can only think of love in terms of sex.
 10. The Bible gives us plenty of examples of friendship, and we need to let our thinking be shaped by God's Word rather than by the sex-obsessed outlook of our culture.
- C. The thing that especially stands out about Jonathan's love for David is that Jonathan had reason to be jealous of David.
1. Previously, Jonathan was the one who was held in high esteem by the people.
 2. Israel was so devoted to Jonathan that they were willing to stand up to Saul when Saul's rash vow put Jonathan's life in jeopardy.
 3. Yet in this chapter we see that the eyes of the people are turning from Jonathan to David.
 4. David is becoming a threat to Jonathan's path to the throne.

5. But Jonathan is not jealous of David.
 6. On the contrary, he joins the people in honoring David.
 7. His actions show that he recognizes David as God's anointed.
- D. It was deeply meaningful for Jonathan to clothe David in his own robe and armor.
1. The clothes were symbolic of the person.
 2. In giving David his clothes, Jonathan was transferring his rights as crown prince to David.
 3. He was surrendering his rights in order to honor David above himself.
 4. His actions foreshadowed the transfer of the kingship from the house of Saul to the house of David.
 5. In God's providence, Saul's rightful heir willingly gave up his claim to the throne and clothed David with his armor as an act of royal investiture.
 6. David did not usurp Saul's throne.
 7. Jonathan essentially adopted David into his father's royal line and willingly surrendered his status as firstborn to David.

III. David and Saul (6-16)

- A. This brings us to the second part of the chapter, where the focus shifts to Saul's attitude toward David.
1. Saul is incited to jealousy by the song that the women sang in celebration of David's victory over Goliath.
 2. They sang,

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

3. When Saul heard those words, he took great offense at the fact that he was only attributed with defeating thousands while David was attributed with tens of thousands.
4. The song was probably not intended to exalt David over Saul.
5. It employs Hebrew parallelism, with thousand and ten thousand not intended to be taken as literal figures.
6. In Hebrew poetry, the second item in a set like this often increases the number simply for the sake of emphasis.
7. We see an example of this in Micah 6:7, where it says,

“Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams,
with ten thousands of rivers of oil?”
8. We see another example in Psalm 91, where it says,

“You will not fear the terror of the night,
nor the arrow that flies by day,
nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness,
nor the destruction that wastes at noonday.
A thousand may fall at your side,
ten thousand at your right hand,
but it will not come near you.”
9. Moreover, Saul was even given the first position in the song, the place of honor, but he still takes it to mean that David is ten times the warrior that he is.
10. The song did not produce the jealousy in Saul’s heart.
11. It simply exposed what was already there.

- B. Saul's angry tirade after hearing the song of the women included a statement that was more significant than Saul realized.
1. Saul said of David, "what more can he have but the kingdom?"
 2. Saul does not know that David has been anointed as his successor, but he certainly feels threatened by him.
 3. When David evaded the attempts on his life that Saul made in his state of madness, Saul puts him in a position of leadership in the army, hoping that David will meet his end on the battlefield.
 4. In all of this, Saul does not realize that he is really fighting against the Lord.
 5. Saul's efforts show us the futility of fighting against God.
 6. If you say, 'I know God says I should do this, but I am going to do this instead', you will not find success, not in the long run.
 7. Saul wanted to kill David by putting him on the battlefield.
 8. But instead of getting David killed, this gave David more opportunities to win the admiration and love of the people.
 9. Saul's attempts to destroy David only made him more popular.

IV. David and Michal (17-30)

- A. This becomes even more clear in the last section of the chapter, which describes how David came to be Saul's son-in-law.
1. Saul had promised the man who defeated Goliath the hand of his daughter Merab.
 2. Nevertheless, instead of giving her to David right away, Saul instructed David to continue proving himself in battle, secretly hoping that the Philistines would eventually get David's number.

3. David responded to this delay with humble dignity, pointing out his unworthiness to become son-in-law to the king.
 4. Yet when the time to give Merab to David arrived, Saul went back on his word and gave her to someone else.
- B. Once again, we see that Saul's efforts are frustrated by the hand of providence.
1. Though Merab was given to another man, Saul's daughter Michal is in love with David.
 2. This time, Saul sees an opportunity to ensure David's destruction.
 3. He urges his servants to take advantage of David's humility by telling him that Saul would accept a bride-price of one hundred Philistine foreskins for Michal.
 4. Saul reasons that he will kill two birds with one stone in doing this.
 5. On one hand, David will probably succeed in killing some Philistines, which will give Saul vengeance upon his enemies.
 6. On the other hand, Saul reckons that the number that he has set is far too high to be attained.
 7. This will surely be the end of David.
- C. Yet once again, Saul's efforts against David were in vain.
1. David did not bring back a mere one hundred Philistine foreskins.
 2. He brought back two hundred.
 3. Consider what this says about the love that David must have had for Michal.
 4. Husbands — what did you do to win the hand of your wife?

5. David's heroic deed leaves Saul with no choice but to give him Michal to be his wife, making David a son-in-law of the king.
6. Thus David's path to the throne is made even more clear.
7. Not only that, but David continues to enjoy success on the battlefield and win the esteem of the people.
8. Saul is fighting a losing battle.
9. The Lord laughs at those who set themselves against his anointed.

V. Conclusion

- A. The story of David's path to the throne foreshadowed the coming of Christ.
- B. Just as David was opposed by Israel's king, Jesus was opposed by Israel's leaders.
- C. As John writes in the prologue to his Gospel, Jesus "came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God." (Jn. 1:11-13)
- D. It is only by receiving Christ that we can obtain an inheritance in his kingdom.
- E. And receiving Christ involves the forsaking of self.
- F. As Jesus said, "For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it." (Lk. 9:24)
- G. We see a beautiful example of this in Jonathan.
- H. Jonathan let go of his claim on the throne, but in doing so he bound himself in covenant to the one to whom God promised to build an eternal

kingdom.

- I. That is exactly what we are doing when we forsake our own lives in order embrace Christ.