

# STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF DAVID

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by

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Last week we began a look at Jonathan and David. Today we will continue to examine their relationship. Our picture of Saul and David showed us Saul, a man in the flesh, destroying himself. Although I am convinced Saul was a believer, we saw him follow the pattern of Romans 1:18-32, which is the wrath of God on those who turn to their own way in deliberate disobedience.

Saul began, first, impulsively controlled by his emotions, but then he became a victim of those emotions. This was the "impulsive" stage. Next, he began making deliberately willful, evil choices and became "compulsive." At this stage, he was driven by his emotions and could no longer really make a choice. Lastly, he reached the stage where God gave him over to a "trialless mind," one that could no longer make a trial, a reprobate mind. In direct defiance of God, he continued to reject the truth that God had torn the kingdom from him and had given it to David, so he was given over to a trialless mind.

In Romans 6:15-23, however, we see there is another side to the coin. There is also a pathway which leads to righteousness. Saul had a choice, a choice to be slave to either sin or righteousness. He chose sin. Now let us see what Jonathan chooses.

In the beginning, he also was controlled by his emotions, in a sense. He fell in love with David, but for him it was a godly love, a love of self-giving. It knit together the souls of Jonathan and David. From there he, too, progressed to the choosing stage. He chose to side with David against Saul, but he did it to preserve David's life, and also to redeem his father. He was making willful, deliberate choices and getting more and more locked into righteousness, into following God's man, David, who would replace him on the throne. Both Saul and Jonathan were losing their kingship. Saul, fought God to the last ditch to keep his. Jonathan, on the other hand, chose deliberately to give himself over to the man God had sent to replace him. So he was making a choice contrary to his temporal feelings, looking to the eternal issue.

We saw in our last lesson, Chapter 19, that Jonathan made a godly choice, using godly tactics and godly methodology, in committing civil disobedience. It was civil disobedience because Saul, who was the authority, stated to Jonathan and all his courtiers that he intended to kill David. Jonathan, however, chose to disobey his father.

Remember there are two things that mark godly civil disobedience, that always mark it, and that were not present in most of what I saw at Stanford in the 60s. First, the intent to redeem, or save, the person who is being unrighteously persecuted. Second, and just as important, the intent to redeem the persecutor. Jonathan intended not only to save David's life [save the unrighteously persecuted], but also to bring Saul back to a walk with God [redeem the persecutor]. If those two factors are not present, the disobedience is ungodly, for the law is the instrument of God to run the affairs of state, even though, as in Paul's day, a Nero, a madman, may be sitting on the throne.

So Jonathan looked very good in Chapter 19, but Chapter 20 is another matter. His civil disobedience here was ungodly. His desire to save David was godly, but his methodology was ungodly, and you can watch the

deterioration of relationships. When he used godly methodology, Jonathan was open and transparent with both David and Saul; he restored the relationship of Saul, David and himself, and everything was in harmony. Admittedly, it only lasted for awhile, but Jonathan's first approach did restore harmony and peace between two opposing factors.

Now let us look at Chapter 20. To put things in context, David had fled to Samuel in Ramah, to Naioth, and Saul had tried to pursue him there, but God intervened. Every time Saul sent a messenger, or messengers, in pursuit of David, God filled them with the Spirit and they prophesied. Finally Saul went himself, but he, too, was filled with the Spirit and prophesied. Thus God prevented him from laying a hand on David. In an attempt to woo Saul back to himself, God made it plain to Saul that he was acting in direct opposition to God.

Chapter 20, Verse 1:

Then David fled from Naioth ["dwellings" It is probably a compound of prophets in Ramah] in Ramah, and came [undoubtedly secretly] and said to Jonathan, 'What have I done? What is my iniquity? And what is my sin before your father, that he is seeking my life?' And he [Jonathan] said to him, 'Far from it, you shall not die. Behold, my father does nothing either great or small without disclosing it to me. So why should my father hide this thing from me? It is not so!'

Jonathan has the utter love and trust of his father, and he has utter love and trust for his father. So even though Saul could see Jonathan siding with David, he still loved his son and trusted him enough that he did not want to hurt him. So, again, we see this beautiful relationship between son and father.

Verse 3:

Yet David vowed again saying, "Your father knows well that I have found favor in your sight, and he has said, 'Do not let Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved.' But truly as the LORD lives and as your soul lives, there is hardly a step between me and death." Then Jonathan said to David, "Whatever you say, I will do for you."

The tyranny of the urgent! David had said, "...as your soul lives, there is hardly a step between me and death." The emotions of Jonathan took over now and circumvented his reason. He made a very rash promise. "Whatever you say I will do." Because of his love for David and the urgency of the circumstances, and without waiting to see what God would do, Jonathan made this rash vow and opened the way for a little deceit by David.

Verse 5:

So David said to Jonathan, "Behold, tomorrow is the new moon, and I ought to sit down to eat with the king. But let me go, that I may hide myself in the field until the third evening. If your father misses me at all, then say, 'David earnestly asked leave of me to run to Bethlehem his city, because it is the yearly sacrifice there for the whole family.' If he says, 'It is good,' your servant shall be safe; but if he is very angry, know that he has decided on evil."

Notice David is totally centered on David. He is not interested in Saul nor does he think about Jonathan. No transparency here. He is only interested in escaping from Saul, and is not above deceit. He is using his friend's emotion to manipulate Saul and to save his own skin. So he deliberately asks Jonathan to lie.

[In those days there was no central location of the Ark, so no permanent place of worship. The Ark had been captured by the Philistines, but, because God visited them with tremendous afflictions, they returned it to Israel. Israel then stored it at Kirjath-jearim, which was about 7 miles west of Jerusalem, but it did not constitute a central place of worship. So, the Israelites celebrated feasts, like the new moon feast, wherever they happened to choose. It was David who finally established Jerusalem as the headquarters of the civil law and the religious worship.]

All loyal Jews were expected to attend the feast of the new moon, and Saul was expecting David to show up. David, however, was afraid to go because he knew Saul had plans for him.

Do you see anyone missing in all this? Nowhere do you hear anything of Yahweh, the God of the Covenant, the God who anointed David king. David knew, from God himself, that he had been anointed, not to be killed by Saul, but to replace Saul on the throne. God told Samuel he was going to tear the kingdom from Saul, and give it to the "neighbor," who was better than Saul. In fact, he had torn it from Saul, and Samuel had anointed David king. So David knew he was king over Israel, and that he was to replace Saul. Please note, however, this kingship was by God's appointment not by David's merit. When David was walking in the flesh, as in this instance, he was no better than Saul for he, like Saul, had taken matters into his own hands, leaving God out of the picture.

It reminds me of that funny little tale in the gospel of Mark where the Lord tells the disciples, "Let's get in the boat and go over to the other side of the Sea of Galilee." They get in the boat and are out in the middle of the water when a fierce gale comes up. The Lord is asleep on the fan-tail, at peace with the world, relaxing in his Father's love. The ship is going up and down. Waves are coming over the side. The disciples take a look at the waves. They take a look at Jesus sacked out on the fan-tail and dash back, "Lord, don't you care if we perish?" What does Jesus do? Does he give them any kind of consolation? No, indeed. He rebukes them for their lack of faith. Why? The Lord had not said, "Let's go out in the middle of the sea and drown." He had said, "Let's go across to the other side." They had taken their minds off Him. He could walk on water. He could still storms. He could stop winds. He could multiply loaves and fishes enough to feed 15,000 to 20,000 people. He was not a victim of creation. He was not a victim of circumstances. He had ordered the disciples onto the sea, but they had taken their minds off Him.

David has done the same thing here. He has forgotten all about his anointing by God. He has one thought in mind, the unholy trinity: "me, myself and I." David has one friend, Jonathan, who loves him like a brother and has made a covenant of brotherhood with him. So he throws himself on Jonathan's mercy and poor Jonathan, in his distress at David's suffering, gets his eyes off the Lord, too. David cinched it when he threw himself on Jonathan's mercy, but remember, circumstances never justify deliberate deceit. David was a man after God's own heart, but David was stepping right out of the will of God. Yes, he might be only a step away from death, but that step was God's step. It was a mile long, and David was not even aware of that.

When David threw himself on Jonathan's mercy, Jonathan became the victim of his own emotions, Chapter 20, verse 8:

"Therefore deal kindly [literally the word is "loyally." This is really a sharp thrust] with your servant, [How? By being disloyal to your father.] for you have brought your servant into a covenant of the LORD with you. [a covenant of brotherhood] But if there is iniquity in me, put me to death yourself; for why then should you bring me to your father?" [He throws himself on Jonathan's mercy and says, "If there is anything wrong with me, you kill me, my brother." Of course, this pulls at the heartstrings of Jonathan. So he, too, gets his eyes off the Lord.] And Jonathan said, "Far be it from you! For if I should indeed learn that evil has been decided by my father to come upon you, then would I not tell you about it?" [This is probably what sways Jonathan to agree.]

Now, maybe we can say about David, "O.K. here is a fellow who probably has always had to live by his wits. He is the runt of the litter, not accepted by his family, maybe illegitimate, always gotten the short end of the stick and had to fight for everything. So it is not too unusual for him to fall back on his old pattern of living." But what about Jonathan, does he have to live by his wits? No! He is secure, remember? He is the beloved son, Jonathan, "Yahweh given." He has wealth, power, pomp and circumstance. He is accepted. He is the crown prince, Israel's next king. He has no need to rely on his wits. He falls into this trap because of his love for David. Yes, his love for David makes him vulnerable, but love, without control by God, causes all kinds of trouble. Jonathan, without realizing it, allows his love for David to sway his emotions. As a result, he is disloyal to his father and rationalizes his fleshly behavior, when he, of all people, should know better.

Chapter 20, verse 10:

Then David said to Jonathan, "Who will tell me if your father answers you harshly?" [Saul obviously knows that David and Jonathan have a pact. Then how is Jonathan ever going to tell David, if he finds out, without Saul knowing it, again forgetting about God.] And Jonathan said to David, "Come, and let us go out into the field." So both of them went out to the field.

Now, Jonathan begins to get a little anxious, and we see the irony of deceit. If you deliberately choose to deceive, you always end up self-deceived. So Jonathan becomes insensitive to the very Lord who will be the one to help him, while at the same time pleading with David to become sensitive to that Lord. There is an interesting little dichotomy here.

I Samuel 20, Verse 12:

Then Jonathan said to David, "The LORD, the God of Israel, be witness! When I have sounded out my father about this time tomorrow, or the third day, behold, if there is good feeling toward David, shall I not then send to you and make it known to you? If it please my father to do you harm, may the LORD do so to Jonathan and more also, if I do not make it known to you and send you away, that you may go in safety. And may the LORD be with you as He has been with my father. And if I am still alive, will you not show me the lovingkindness of the LORD, that I may not die? And you shall not cut off your lovingkindness from my house forever, not even when the LORD cuts off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth.

Notice how many times Jonathan has mentioned the LORD in this passage. He did not say anything about him the last time, but now he temporarily forgets David and focuses his eyes on the Lord. How many times does he mention the Lord, Yahweh, the covenant God? One, two, three, four, five times. He keeps focusing on Yahweh, the God of the covenant, while totalling forgetting the covenant that the God of the covenant made. He is trying to get David to look upon the covenant, while he, himself, is taking his eyes off it. When you begin to deceive, you begin to become self-deceived. What he is trying to accomplish for his friend, he is losing in his own life.

The first thing he points out to David is the Lord, the God of Israel, is the one in charge. "Get your eyes off your circumstances, David, and onto Him." And he points out "May the LORD be with you as He has been with my father." There was a time when Saul had the Spirit of God. He was anointed of God and filled with His Spirit. He was God's man. Now Jonathan's will for David is that he have that same exact experience, since he also has been anointed with God's Spirit.

More than that, he knows, apparently, that David has been anointed king and will in fact be king. Notice, "And if I am still alive, will you not show me the lovingkindness of the LORD, that I may not die? And you shall not cut off your lovingkindness from my house forever, not even when the LORD cuts off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth." He knows in his heart David will be king. He knows, too, that God does not require a vast army to handle Saul. He can handle by few.

Where did he get that concept? Do you remember, in their campaign to restore Israel, the first Israelite victory over the Philistines? How did that victory at Michmash begin? It was Jonathan alone with his armor-bearer, and what did he say to encourage his armor-bearer? "'The Lord is not restrained to save by many or by few.' Even though there are only two of us, let's just go up and take on the Philistines" The army of Saul was at Gibeah and across the valley were the Philistines at Michmash. Jonathan and his armor-bearer, all alone, crossed the valley, stole up a high promontory, and on the flat area up there, took on the Philistines and butchered them. Because of this act of faith, God triggered an earthquake, which terrified the Philistines, and they scattered in disarray. Sudden confusion turned into crushing defeat as the armies of Israel pursued the Philistines to their own land. You will remember, from what we have already studied, that there were only two iron swords in Israel. Saul had one, and Jonathan had the other. The rest of the Israelites fought with iron farming equipment or with wooden weapons. The Philistines discovered the secret of iron smelting and controlled it. They allowed no smiths in Israel to prevent the Israelites from making swords or spears.

Interestingly enough we have a repeat of this battle 3,000 years later. Ray Miller, who is a retired Brigadier-General, likes to study the doctrine of warfare. Here is something he discovered from the history books. This is World War I. The British are in Palestine under General Allenby who was a Bible student and may or may not have been a believer. Let me just read you a little article.

An officer of the British 60th Division serving in Palestine in 1918 tells a story.

"February 13th we took over the Dier Ibu Obeid--Ras es Suffa--Hizme line from the 53rd Division, and on the fourteenth of the same month operation orders were issued for an attack on Jericho with the object of driving the enemy back across the river Jordan. [Michmash and Gibeah are located to the west of Jericho. The British were going to attack to the east, force the Turks out of Jericho across the Jordan River and use that as a line of defense. This was going to be expensive.] Before the main attack could take place it was necessary to strengthen the line by the capture of a small village, directly to our front, known as Mukhmas or Mickmash. [Exactly the same place] Mickmash was on a high rocky hill. The brigade outpost line was on a chain of hills, too, and between us and the enemy ran a deep valley [This is that same valley that Jonathan crossed] A frontal attack was decided upon; that is, supported by artillery and machine guns, the brigade was to advance down into the valley just before dawn, and take Michmash from the front. [With a frontal assault, there would be a lot of casualties. By the time they started down that hill, the enemy would be shooting down on them. Then they would have to go up a hill, and the enemy would be shooting down on them again. It would be a bloody battle, but they had to take the pass. They had to take this high part to stabilize their line as they crossed to Jericho] All orders were given out, and the troops were getting what rest was possible before zero hour. In his bivouac, [his temporary camp] by the light of a candle, the brigade major was reading his Bible. When the raid was first discussed the name Mickmash had seemed vaguely familiar, although he could not quite place it. Just as he was about to turn in for the night, however, he recollected and thought he would look it up. He found what he was searching for in Samuel I, Chapters 13 and 14: [which we covered awhile back, and here is a quote right out of this chapter] 'And Saul and Jonathan his son, and the people that were present with them, abode in Gibeah of Benjamin: [That is on one side of the valley, the Southern side] but the Philistines encamped in Michmash. . . . [on the other side of the valley on the high place] Now it came to pass upon a day that Jonathan, the son of Saul, said unto the young man that bare his armour, 'Come and let us go over to the Philistines' garrison, that is on the other side.' But he told not his father. . .

And the people knew not that Jonathan was gone. And between the passages, by which Jonathan sought to go over unto the Philistines' garrison, there was a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other side: [There were two promontories in this valley] and the name of the one was Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh. The forefront of the one was situate northward over against Michmash, [over on their side] and the other southward over against Gibeah. And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armour, 'Come, and let us go over unto the garrison. . . . It may be that the Lord will work for us: for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few.'" [That is how he encouraged the armour bearer to go with him] And the major read on how Jonathan went through the pass, or passage, of Michmash, between Bozez and Seneh, and climbed the hill dragging his armour-bearer with him until they came to a place high up, about 'an half acre of land, which a yoke of oxen might plow'; and the Philistines who were sleeping awoke, thought they were surrounded by the armies of Saul, and fled in disorder, and 'the multitude melted away.' Saul then attacked with his whole army. It was a great a victory for him; his first against the Philistines, and 'so the Lord saved Israel that day, and the battle passed over unto Beth-aven.' The brigade major thought to himself: 'This pass, these two rocky headlands and flat piece of ground are probably still here; [3,000 years later] very little has changed in Palestine throughout the centuries,' and he woke the brigadier. [The General in charge]

Together they read the story over again. Then the general sent out scouts, who came back and

reported finding the pass, thinly held by Turks, [You do not expect the enemy to attack straight up a rough promontory] with rocky crags on either side, obviously Bozez and Seneh; whilst in the distance, high up in Mickmash the moonlight was shining on a flat piece of ground just about big enough for a team to plough. [Exactly as the Scriptures said] The general decided then and there to change the plan of attack, and instead of the whole brigade, one infantry company alone advanced at dead of night along the pass of Mickmash. A few Turks met were silently dealt with. We passed between Bozez and Seneh, [the two promontories] climbed the hillside, [exactly where Jonathan pulled up his armour-bearer] and just before dawn, found ourselves on the flat piece of ground.[Where Jonathan slaughtered the Philistines] The Turks who were sleeping awoke, thought they were surrounded by the armies of Allenby and fled in disorder. We killed or captured every Turk that night in Mickmash; so that, after thousands of years, [3,000 years] the tactics of Saul and Jonathan were repeated with success by a British force.

And unbelievers say the Bible is out of date!

The key thing to remember is that Jonathan, along with only one other man, was instrumental in the first victory at this place, and it was accomplished while only one of them had an iron weapon and against an army equipped with iron weapons. Of all the people who knew the ability of God to "deliver with few," Jonathan knew it. So what is his problem right now? His desire to save David is godly, but he is resorting to the flesh. He is not doing something obviously evil or dirty. It is the love he has for his "younger brother," who has never had a break, that has caused him to lose his moorings.

Can you see that "love" is not enough? It matters not how "godly" it appears to be or how self-giving. Jonathan is deliberately being disloyal to a father whom he loves and respects [and dies for eventually] in order to save David, but he is sinning against Yahweh. Only when love fits the pattern of Scripture is it valid love. Otherwise it is strictly human emotion, no matter how noble. Paul said, even if I give my body to be burned, without the indwelling love of Christ as a motivating force, it is worthless. Here we see an accurate picture of that. It would seem Jonathan should be the last one to be caught this way, but he is. He is now going to add a little deceit of his own.

Verse 18:

Then Jonathan said to him, "Tomorrow is the new moon, and you will be missed because your seat will be empty. When you have stayed for three days, you shall go down quickly and come to the place where you hid yourself on that eventful day, and you shall remain by the stone Ezel.

The first time Jonathan pleaded with Saul, [Chapter 19:4-7] he was transparent. He just laid the facts before Saul without trying to manipulate him. He wanted his father to face up to the fact that David had served him properly, had won great victories for him in Yahweh's name, had in no way threatened him, and that Saul had rejoiced in David's victories for the nation of Israel. While Jonathan was confronting his father, David hid in a field waiting to see how Saul responded. When Jonathan was openly transparent and just laid out the facts before his father, Saul responded. He repented, and David went back to the court. Now David is back in the same spot as on that eventful day, probably in the same location. He is leaning by the stone Ezel, which is the sign of demarcation.

Jonathan knew his father was not above using his children to get to David. He had already used Michal, David's wife. Being a child of Saul, Jonathan now becomes a suspicious son who no longer trusts and loves his father with unqualified acceptance and unconditional love. He figures, "If Father did that to Michal and Merab [Jonathan's sisters], he might use me too, so I need to work out a plan to deceive him." That is exactly what he does here.

Verse 20:

"And I will shoot three arrows to the side, as though I shot at a target. And behold, I will

send the lad, saying, 'Go, find the arrows.' If I specifically say to the lad, 'Behold, the arrows are on this side of you, get them,' then come; for there is safety for you and no harm, as the LORD lives. But if I say to the youth, 'Behold, the arrows are beyond you,' go, for the LORD has sent you away. As for the agreement of which you and I have spoken, behold, the LORD is between you and me forever."

"How do I make sure the little lad is not Saul's spy? I will deceive him too."

From verse 22, what does Jonathan recognize even during this deceit? If David has to go, he has to go because the LORD wants him to go. And then, verse 23, how sure is Jonathan that David will be king, ? Remember the agreement he made with David? "That the LORD is between you and me forever." He recognizes David will be king because God has anointed David king, and nobody can stop God. He wants that agreement to last forever, not just for himself but for his house.

Do you see what self-deception does? You can feel you are correct. You can have the best intentions in the world, and you can still be sinning. The results are always the same. No matter how godly your intentions, if you use the flesh to make those godly intentions work, you will always reap the flesh.

Verse 24:

So David hid in the field; and when the new moon came, the king sat down to eat food. And the king sat on his seat as usual, the seat by the wall [The king sat against the wall so he could see everyone in front of him]; then Jonathan rose up and Abner sat down by Saul's side, but David's place was empty.

Jonathan, as the crown prince, was seated at the right hand of his father, who was seated as king of Israel. Saul held his spear in his hand, the scepter of a warrior king. When he slept, we will see later, the scepter was at the back of his head. This scepter marked the king. It marked his right to reign. So there he sat spear in hand. Remember, Saul was a seasoned warrior. He could throw a spear with great accuracy, and but for the hand of God, would already have speared David twice. Jonathan knew what a fighter his dad was. So what did he do? He rose from the place of honor, and gave it to Abner, the general. What do you think God was trying to tell Jonathan?

Have you ever noticed that when you begin to play little games of deceit you begin to feel uneasy, not quite right about things? Up to now Saul and Jonathan have been side-by-side, very close, and Jonathan has had total freedom and trust in his father. He faced right up to Saul about the plan to destroy David, even though Saul was given over to violent rages that he could not control. As long as Jonathan was transparent, he felt perfect peace and security with his dad. But now he feels guilty and uneasy. So he probably reasoned in his mind, "Daddy has a spear, and where I am sitting, one thrust and I've had it." So, he gets up and gives the place of honor to Abner. "If daddy gets angry let Abner get skewered," [a little more deceit], and this is a godly man. We will see shortly that Jonathan's reasoning was absolutely correct, but he overlooked one factor: God!

Do you notice the steps downward? Jonathan did not start out this way. He started out with a love affair, but now he is ready to sacrifice Abner to protect himself. See the pattern?

It is reminiscent of Abram. He started at Ur of the Chaldeans, went on to Haran and then down through the land of Canaan. As he went through Canaan, in the valley, he saw vicious tribe after vicious tribe living in fortified cities and, in the highlands, wandering Bedouin tribes who were also vicious. They were all bigger and tougher than Abram.

When he left Haran to go into Canaan, in obedience to God, Abram played a little game with his wife Sarai. Although middle-aged, she was a beautiful woman. She had had no children; she had not lost her figure; she was a Semite, and married Semite women wore no veils. Since beautiful women, who were foreigners, had no rights, Abram was afraid that as they went through Canaan someone would kill him to get his wife. There was a peculiar moral code in those days. A man could take any number of unmarried women, but he could not

touch married women, so what he did was eliminate the husband. The woman became unmarried and thus fair game. Even King David followed that pattern in a slightly different manner.

So, Abram told Sarai, "We will be going through vicious country, and since you are a very beautiful woman, they are going to want you. Because I am your husband, they will kill me to get you. So do me a favor and say you are my sister. It's only half a lie. We did have the same father, just a different mother. So, for my sake, just say that you are my sister."

Now, he went all the way down through Canaan and never once used this deceit. He felt totally secure in this vicious land because he was where God wanted him. God met him and said, "This is the land I gave you." Abram built an altar to God and got very religious.

But then came a famine. The winds off the Mediterranean did not blow and Abram had a lot of livestock and a large household. So, instead of trusting Yahweh to take care of him in the land that Yahweh had just given him, he followed the Canaanites right down to Egypt to buy grain. As soon as he left the Negev, the south country, and got close to Egypt, he told Sarai, "Remember that little deal we made, start now. I am your brother, and you are my sister." Right there he should have been tipped off that he was not where God wanted him.

Then the very thing he feared happened. Pharaoh's courtiers saw this gorgeous Semite, and the Semite woman said, "I am his sister," and the Semite man said, "I am her brother." In Pharaoh's land Pharaoh could have all the unmarried women he wanted, so he took Sarai for his wife. Now Abram was his brother-in-law, so Pharaoh gave him cattle, sheep, oxen, camels, male and female servants, and Abram was forced to take them all, which sealed Sarai's fate. You do not make a fool out of an oriental despot in the land in which he is the oriental despot.

This is what is happening here. Godly Jonathan is putting Abner in jeopardy to save his own skin, just as Abram did with Sarai, his wife.

Verse 26:

Nevertheless Saul did not speak anything that day, for he thought, "It is an accident, he is not clean, [This is a religious festival, and he apparently thought David was ceremonially unclean so he could not come to eat] surely he is not clean." And it came about the next day, the second day of the new moon, that David's place was empty; so Saul said to Jonathan his son, "Why has the son of Jesse not come to the meal, either yesterday or today?" Jonathan then answered Saul, "David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Bethlehem, [notice what Saul calls David in contrast to what Jonathan calls him? The name David means, "Well beloved," but Saul now hates him. Jesse is a nothing in Israel. He has nothing in the way of possessions. He has no lineage. He is married to a woman who was probably previously married to an Ammonite. He has no money, no status, nothing! So we see the old put down, "son of Jesse." Jonathan calls him "David" because he loves him. But here comes the lie] for he said, 'Please let me go, since our family has a sacrifice in the city, and my brother has commanded me to attend. And now, if I have found favor in your sight, please let me get away that I may see my brothers.' For this reason he has not come to the king's table."

According to Jonathan, David approached Jonathan, the Crown Prince, asked permission and got permission for this journey. Being a godly man though, Jonathan was not a very good liar, and his nervousness apparently gave him away. Saul was no fool. He might be mad, but he was shrewd in his madness. Not only that, but he could read his son like a book. The young man was his oldest son, and had been with him for 40 years. Saul spotted the deception right away. In using deceit to avoid getting killed, all Jonathan did was make his father angry.

Verse 30:

Then Saul's anger burned against Jonathan [one of those uncontrollable rages] and he said to

him, "You son of a perverse, rebellious woman! Do I not know that you are choosing the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of your mother's nakedness? [This is a gross insult. To an oriental this is worse than a slap in the face. Saul is telling Jonathan right in front of the court, "You are not acting like the son of Saul, so you are illegitimate. You are a bastard. Your mother was a perverse rebellious woman and you were not born of me, you were born of her and someone else." Of course, it was not true, but it was a vicious slap in the face. Saul's love turned into hatred here.] For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, neither you nor your kingdom will be established. Therefore now, send and bring him to me, for he must surely die."

You can see why Saul wants to kill David. He wants to establish a line of hereditary. At this time, Israel is made up of twelve autonomous tribes held together by a very loose alliance. The only unifying force is David, and Saul is mad enough to destroy that unifying force in order to establish his line on the throne.

What had God told Saul after his first disobedience? "You won't have a line. Your line will not succeed to the throne." Saul was allowed to continue to reign, but his line was cut off. After Saul's second disobedience, God said, "Now, even the throne is torn from you." Saul knew this, but he was determined to keep the throne and establish an inherited line even if he had to kill God's anointed to do so.

Looking at Jonathan, do you see where deceit has brought him? In Chapter 20, Verse 31 Saul said to him, "Therefore now, send and bring him [David] to me, for he must surely die." We are admonished to obey the powers that be because they are ordained of God. Jonathan has placed himself in a position where he has to openly and willfully rebel against the authority of his father, against the authority of the powers ordained of God. We will see what effect this has on his father next week.

As we continue our study of Jonathan next week, you will see a beautiful redemption of him after his downward slide.

### **Prayer:**

Father, we thank you so much that even though we are foolish at times and we try to manipulate you and try to do things in our own strength and we forget all about the past experiences where you have come through every time and produced exactly what you said you would produce in your promises, we still try to play God. We still try to do things in our own strength. We still do not listen to you. We still do not seek your will. We still try to manipulate people in the name of Jesus Christ. Father, help us to realize that this is sin. I do not care what the intentions are; I do not care how godly the intentions are, it is sin to manipulate, to be deceitful. Father, teach us to be open and transparent as you yourself are. We ask this in Jesus name. Amen.

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