

THE FRIENDSHIP OF JONATHAN AND DAVID

[BIBLE TEXT](#) : 1 Samuel 18:1-4; 20 :1-42

LESSON 212 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35).

[BIBLE TEXT in King James Version](#)

1 Samuel 18:1-4

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.

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

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.

1 Samuel 20:1-42

¹ And David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said before Jonathan, What have I done? what *is* mine iniquity? and what *is* my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life?

² And he said unto him, God forbid; thou shalt not die: behold, my father will do nothing either great or small, but that he will shew it me: and why should my father hide this thing from me? it *is* not so.

³ And David sware moreover, and said, Thy father certainly knoweth that I have found grace in thine eyes; and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved: but truly *as* the LORD liveth, and *as* thy soul liveth, *there is* but a step between me and death.

⁴ Then said Jonathan unto David, Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do *it* for thee.

⁵ And David said unto Jonathan, Behold, to morrow *is* the new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat: but let me go, that I may hide myself in the field unto the third *day* at even.

⁶ If thy father at all miss me, then say, David earnestly asked *leave* of me that he might run to Bethlehem his city: for *there is* a yearly sacrifice there for all the family.

⁷ If he say thus, *It is* well; thy servant

[BIBLE REFERENCES:](#)

[NOTES:](#)

David's Return to the Palace

David had returned to the palace of Saul with the head of the giant he had killed with his slingshot. Jonathan, the son of Saul and heir apparent to the throne, met David and loved him. It was decided that David should not go home any more but continue to live with Jonathan.

The clothes that the prince wore showed his station in life, and were to be worn only by those of royal birth. Jonathan took of those royal robes and gave them to David to wear. That showed how much Jonathan loved David. He was willing to give up his position at the court for his friend.

Of course, we know that David had already been anointed by God to be the next king, so it was sure to come to pass. But we do not know if Jonathan and Saul knew it yet.

Unselfish Love

The love between David and Jonathan is regarded as one of the greatest friendships that the world has ever known. Jonathan was willing to give up not only his honor and power, but also the favor of his own father, for the sake of David, the Lord's anointed.

Do you think you could be so unselfish as to give the very best thing you have to one of your friends? Would you still be his friend if he were given an honor that you thought you should have? Do you pray enough so that you know it is the Lord's will when someone gets to do what you want to do? Jonathan was not only willing to have his honor taken from him and given to David, but he himself gave it freely.

Jonathan's Love for God

Jonathan knew the Lord and had enjoyed His blessings in times past. One time he and his armor-bearer had attacked an entire garrison of the Philistines, and with God's help had won the victory. Jonathan had not trusted in his own strength and strategy. He said to his young man: "Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: 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" (1 Samuel 14:6). This battle was going to be power of God that is the Lord's and He did not need many soldiers to help Him. Two consecrated men conquered the powers of evil.

It was this consecration of Jonathan that made him love David so unselfishly. The love for God in his heart made him honor David, although from the worldly standpoint David was his rival.

Saul's Hatred for David

Saul did not share his son's love for David at this time. He could see that if David became king the royal line would be taken from the house of Saul. The Prophet Samuel had already said that this would happen as a result of Saul's disobedience, but Saul tried in his own power to change the judgment of God.

shall have peace: but if he be very wroth, *then* be sure that evil is determined by him.

⁸ Therefore thou shalt deal kindly with thy servant; for thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of the LORD with thee: notwithstanding, if there be in me iniquity, slay me thyself; for why shouldst thou bring me to thy father?

⁹ And Jonathan said, Far be it from thee: for if I knew certainly that evil were determined by my father to come upon thee, then would not I tell it thee?

¹⁰ Then said David to Jonathan, Who shall tell me? or what *if* thy father answer thee roughly?

¹¹ And Jonathan said unto David, Come, and let us go out into the field. And they went out both of them into the field.

¹² And Jonathan said unto David, O LORD God of Israel, when I have sounded my father about to morrow any time, *or* the third *day*, and, behold, *if there be* good toward David, and I then send not unto thee, and shew it thee;

¹³ The LORD do so and much more to Jonathan: but if it please my father *to do* thee evil, then I will shew it thee, and send thee away, that thou mayest go in peace: and the LORD be with thee, as he hath been with my father.

¹⁴ And thou shalt not only while yet I live shew me the kindness of the LORD, that I die not:

¹⁵ But *also* thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever: no, not when the LORD hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth.

¹⁶ So Jonathan made *a covenant* with the house of David, *saying*, Let the LORD even require *it* at the hand of David's enemies.

¹⁷ And Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him: for he loved him as he loved his own soul.

¹⁸ Then Jonathan said to David, To morrow *is* the new moon: and thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty.

¹⁹ And *when* thou hast stayed three days, *then* thou shalt go down quickly, and come to the place where thou didst hide thyself when the business was *in hand*, and shalt remain by the stone Ezel.

²⁰ And I will shoot three arrows on the

God has power against all men and against the powers of Satan. Man is helpless to fight against Him. We need never fear that the Lord will forsake His children, no matter where the enemy may come against them.

Missionaries in lands where the heathen worship devils have often told of the terrible pressure of demon power, but God has always been more powerful. Satan cannot destroy the man of God who is under the Blood of Jesus.

Saul's hate became murder. He instructed Jonathan and his servants to kill David. While David hid, Jonathan tried to reason with his father that his beloved friend had never done anything but good for them, and surely he did not deserve to die. Saul seemed to be persuaded, and David returned to the palace to live. But soon Saul was angry again, and all his fury burst forth on David.

David was in a very difficult position with his life being threatened every minute; so he had a heart-to-heart talk with Jonathan about it. He thought that perhaps it would be better for him to go away and never come back.

Jonathan could not believe that his father would be so cruel. Surely he could trust Saul not to kill his best friend. David felt that he had done nothing worthy of death, but should iniquity be found in him, he would much rather have Jonathan execute judgment upon him than to have to be brought before Saul.

The Test

The Jews celebrated the feast of the new moon at the beginning of each of their months. This was a special event in the king's household, and David knew he was supposed to be at the table for the dinner. He saw in this a chance to prove to Jonathan the king's feelings for him. David told Jonathan that he would not come to the feast, and if the king was angry because of his absence, Jonathan would know for sure that the king meant to do him harm.

Saul missed David, but thought that he might have done something that would make him ceremonially unclean for the religious feast. But when David failed to be in his place the next night, he suspected that Jonathan knew something about his absence, and he asked, "Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat, neither yesterday, nor to day?"

Jonathan and David had arranged what to say if the king should ask such a question. Jonathan told him that David had asked permission to go to Bethlehem for a few days to be with his family during a sacrificial feast, and Jonathan had told him he could go. Saul was very angry. He practically disowned Jonathan as his son. He as much as told Jonathan that he was giving away the throne to David. He sent word that David should be called immediately that he might be put to death.

Jonathan tried to reason with his father that David had done no wrong, but it only increased Saul's anger until he threw his javelin at Jonathan. Jonathan realized he could do nothing to soothe his father, so he rose and left the table, feeling very sad that his good friend was so hated.

Target Practice

David and Jonathan had agreed that on the third day after David left they would meet in a field away from the palace. This was arranged without Saul's suspicion. Jonathan went out to do a little target practice with his bow and arrow, and took along a boy to chase the arrows for him. Out flew the arrows from Jonathan's bow, far into the field; and away ran the lad to bring them back. As he ran, Jonathan shot one more, far beyond him, and

side *thereof*, as though I shot at a mark.

²¹ And, behold, I will send a lad, *saying*, Go, find out the arrows. If I expressly say unto the lad, Behold, the arrows *are* on this side of thee, take them; then come thou: for *there is* peace to thee, and no hurt; *as* the LORD liveth.

²² But if I say thus unto the young man, Behold, the arrows *are* beyond thee; go thy way: for the LORD hath sent thee away.

²³ And *as touching* the matter which thou and I have spoken of, behold, the LORD *be* between thee and me for ever.

²⁴ So David hid himself in the field: and when the new moon was come, the king sat him down to eat meat.

²⁵ And the king sat upon his seat, as at other times, *even* upon a seat by the wall: and Jonathan arose, and Abner sat by Saul's side, and David's place was empty.

²⁶ Nevertheless Saul spake not any thing that day: for he thought, Something hath befallen him, he *is* not clean; surely he *is* not clean.

²⁷ And it came to pass on the morrow, *which was* the second *day* of the month, that David's place was empty: and Saul said unto Jonathan his son, Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat, neither yesterday, nor to day?

²⁸ And Jonathan answered Saul, David earnestly asked *leave* of me *to go* to Bethlehem:

²⁹ And he said, Let me go, I pray thee; for our family hath a sacrifice in the city; and my brother, he hath commanded me *to be there*: and now, if I have found favour in thine eyes, let me get away, I pray thee, and see my brethren. Therefore he cometh not unto the king's table.

³⁰ Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, Thou son of the perverse rebellious *woman*, do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion, and unto the confusion of thy mother's nakedness?

³¹ For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die.

³² And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said unto him, Wherefore

Jonathan called: "Is not the arrow beyond thee?" That had been the prearranged signal to David that he was not safe in the king's house any longer. When the boy returned with the arrows, Jonathan sent him back to the city, and Jonathan went out to meet David.

The Parting

Think how those two men must have felt! They loved each other dearly. Jonathan loved David as his own soul; and David said of Jonathan, "Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women" (II Samuel 1:26). And yet they would have to part, perhaps never to meet again on earth; but they had the hope that they would meet in Heaven.

Before God they had made a covenant that they would always love each other, and be good to each other's family as long as they lived. They knew the time might come when David would have to protect Jonathan against his own father if it were found out that Jonathan had helped David to escape.

Jonathan had the spiritual vision that could see that one day all David's enemies would be put down, and his kingdom would be powerful. He begged David that in that day his house might not be forgotten, though Jonathan himself might be dead. Jonathan and David wept as they repledged their covenant; and after they had kissed each other, they parted. Jonathan went back to his home, and David started out in a life of hiding which would occupy the next ten years.

QUESTIONS

- 1 How did David return to the palace of Saul?
- 2 How did Jonathan like David?
- 3 What did Saul think of David?
- 4 Why did Saul treat David as he did?
- 5 How did Jonathan and David prove Saul's feelings?
- 6 What was the covenant David and Jonathan made?
- 7 How did Jonathan let David know his father's feelings?

shall he be slain? what hath he done?

³³ And Saul cast a javelin at him to smite him: whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to slay David.

³⁴ So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat no meat the second day of the month: for he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame.

³⁵ And it came to pass in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little lad with him.

³⁶ And he said unto his lad, Run, find out now the arrows which I shoot. *And* as the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him.

³⁷ And when the lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried after the lad, and said, *Is* not the arrow beyond thee?

³⁸ And Jonathan cried after the lad, Make speed, haste, stay not. And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master.

³⁹ But the lad knew not any thing: only Jonathan and David knew the matter.

⁴⁰ And Jonathan gave his artillery unto his lad, and said unto him, Go, carry *them* to the city.

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.

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.