

## 1 Samuel 18-19 – “Leading by Spears or by the Spirit?”

### Summary Statement:

David begins to be publicly praised for his heroism and good character, while Saul grows jealous of David's accolades. It leads to Saul's attempts to take David's life. It highlights the struggles of faith against the backdrop of adversity and the necessity of relying on God when friends or leaders become threats.

### 1. David's Rise – 18:1-30

**18:1-4 - *Now when 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. <sup>2</sup> Saul took him that day, and would not let him go home to his father's house anymore. <sup>3</sup> Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. <sup>4</sup> And Jonathan took off the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his armor, even to his sword and his bow and his belt.***

Following the great victory over Goliath, David is brought into Saul's court. Previously David would be before Saul ministering in music, then would return back to his father's house periodically to feed the sheep before returning back to Saul (17:15). But now David is remaining with Saul (18:2).

And it's while he is ministering before Saul that he and Jonathan (Saul's son) begin to strike up a special bond. In fact, it says that their souls were knit together. This was a deep seated love and admiration that these two had for each other.

- Now sadly, the LGBTQ+ squad has hijacked this account and tried to make it more than it really was. They would say that these two had a same sex attraction for each other and entered into a homosexual covenant with each other. Let me set the record straight. That is nothing more than an erroneous interpretation that couldn't be farther from the truth.
- These two are warriors. Jonathan is the guy that sees a Philistine garrison and says to his armor bearer, *“...Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; it may be that the Lord will work for us. For nothing restrains the Lord from saving by many or by few”* (1 Samuel 14:6).
- And he, along with his armor bearer, take out 20 Philistines. This guy isn't backing down. He's ready to put it all on the line.
- But then in comes David to the court of the palace and he's holding the giant's head in his hands. David did what an entire army was unwilling to do. Jonathan suddenly sees a kindred spirit. Another who's willing to put it all on

the line. Jonathan is like, *‘Bro you cut off a giant’s head? Respect. Let’s go on a hunting trip and eat some venison.’* This is the original man-crush, completely platonic.

- Both these guys were married. In fact, David is going to commit adultery because he fell prey to the temptation of seeing a woman naked. This is not conduct becoming of a homosexual.
- So you can see that it’s a real stretch to make it anything but two men who had a deep admiration for each other.

Now this love for David is evident in that there was no jealousy or threat of David. We’ll see that Saul became very jealous of David, but it wasn’t the case for Jonathan. No inferior complex or anything like that. He loved him as an equal for he saw a similar courage and heart.

Now what’s even more remarkable about this relationship is the fact that Jonathan should have been the heir to the throne. He doesn’t look to David with competitiveness, instead he gives him his own princely garments.

- Perhaps Jonathan had heard about Samuel’s words to Saul saying, *“The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today, and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you”* (1 Samuel 15:28). And now Jonathan recognizes and believes that David is that man. Instead of fighting for position and prestige (like his dad) Jonathan surrenders.
- Surrender is always the path to peace – surrender to the Lord that is. We can come and knit ourselves to Him and ask Him to be our King, or you can continue to try and fight for control. One is a way of frustration; the other is the way of freedom and fulfillment.

As followers of Christ, we’re ultimately called to follow Jonathan’s example and honor others before ourselves:

**Romans 12:10**, *"Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;"*

**18:5-9** - ***So David went out wherever Saul sent him, and behaved wisely. And Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul’s servants. <sup>6</sup> Now it had happened as they were coming home, when David was returning from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women had come 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> So the women sang as they danced, and***

***said: “Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands.”<sup>8</sup> Then Saul was very angry, and the saying displeased him; and he said, “They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed only thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom?”<sup>9</sup> So Saul eyed David from that day forward.***

Speaking of submission, David submitted himself to Saul. He's outclassed him in character, outclassed him in military might, yet David doesn't look to put Saul in his place. He knows he's going to be the next king, but this doesn't go to his head. David knows this is something the Lord needs to coordinate; it's not David's job to usurp Saul. ***So David went out wherever Saul sent him.***

And David ***behaved wisely***. He wasn't bitter, he wasn't conniving, he's not grumbling or talking smack against Saul. He's just doing what he's asked to do in a way where people can't help but respect him: ***he was accepted in the sight of all the people...***

Because of that David is promoted to a high military rank, probably as a captain over a division of soldiers.

- Some translations say he was made a commander. We know that Abner was the commander of the army (17:55) and he continued to be (26:5), so most likely it speaks of David having a position like a captain or general.

It's easy to think that the only way a person can advance is to be cutthroat, especially when it seems to work that way with other people. But it's not so in God's economy. **James 4:10**, *"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up."*

- David humbled himself, and God lifted Him up. And it will be a number of years before David will actually take the throne as king (15 years from the time he was anointed). Years of waiting, trusting, escaping Saul's wrath, and letting God bring everything into place.

Keep note of that phrase he ***behaved wisely***. We'll see it repeated throughout the chapter and it's meant to build that growing contrast between David and Saul. David is moving with skill and success as a servant, while Saul is moving in sin and spite as a jealous king to his detriment.

Now we come upon a scene that would not have helped Saul in this growing jealousy and animosity. Women come out to celebrate the defeat over the Philistines and they're playing their music and dancing in the streets. They're recognizing their king and saying that Saul has killed his thousands. He should

have been happy with that. But then they sing of David, he's slain his ten thousands.

- Now, these are figurative numbers these women are giving, that or they can't count. Because it says they're returning after the slaughter of the Philistine, singular = Goliath. Saul should have recognized that. Both of them were praised in this song.
- But Saul wasn't content with that. He wanted all the accolades and he became infuriated. The idea is that this kindled a fire in him that caused him to burn with rage against David. The saying **displeased him**. That's translated elsewhere as 'do evil' or 'act wickedly'. Saul saw this as a wicked act and it fired him up against David.
- This is nothing more than jealousy getting the better of Saul. Saul is only thinking of himself and what he has to lose, not what can be gained by having a guy like David at his side. **What more can he have but the kingdom?**
- **Proverbs 14:30**, *"A sound heart is life to the body, But envy is rottenness to the bones."*
- "Envy easily leads to anger, and anger is often the first step toward murder (Matt. 5:21–26)."<sup>1</sup> We're about to see this progression unfold.

So from this point on Saul eyed David. This means he looked with suspicion at David. There was no trust, only the intention of doing him evil.

**18:10-11 - And it happened on the next day that the distressing spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied inside the house. So David played music with his hand, as at other times; but there was a spear in Saul's hand. <sup>11</sup> And Saul cast the spear, for he said, "I will pin David to the wall!" But David escaped his presence twice.**

After Saul is bent on squashing David, he's eyeing him out of jealousy, Saul has this distressing spirit come upon him again (see 16:14). It's interesting to see the connection with Saul's thoughts to his actual spiritual state. You see, when we begin to let a little poison in, we give an open door for Satan to have even more influence in our life. What began as an open door turned into floodgates of demonic oppression and potential possession.

<sup>1</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (2001). *Be successful* (p. 102). Victor/Cook Communications.

***And he prophesied inside the house.*** Why would a demonic spirit help Saul prophesy? This is actually a bad translation for this word as Saul isn't so much prophesying the Word of the Lord, as he is babbling on like a madman.

***David played music with his hand... but there was a spear in Saul's hand.***

- The tale of two kings. One on the way up, one on the way down. In one's hand there is an instrument of worship, in the other's hand there is an instrument of war. The instrument of worship for helping, the instrument of war for hurting. This is how you can often times discover those who are moving up or moving down, by what they're holding in their hand. These two both were anointed, but were walking in two different directions. Saul was looking to throw the spear in desperation dragging people down with him, but David in humility just worshipped the Lord and looked to dodge the spears without flinching any back.

Notice that David ***escaped his presence twice***. It would seem that this was not the first time David had to deal with Saul's rage. He's becoming accustomed to flying spears when he's around Saul.

***18:12-16 - Now Saul was afraid of David, because the Lord was with him, but had departed from Saul. <sup>13</sup> Therefore Saul removed him from his presence, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people. <sup>14</sup> And David behaved wisely in all his ways, and the Lord was with him. <sup>15</sup> Therefore, when Saul saw that he behaved very wisely, he was afraid of him. <sup>16</sup> But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them.***

Saul's promotion of David again looks like Saul is blessing David. But there's a hidden agenda here. Saul is hoping that David will be thrust into a position he's not ready for and will be hurt or killed in battle.

But we see those familiar words again, ***David behaved wisely*** and notice the outcome of that – ***and the Lord was with him***. David couldn't really control what Saul was doing, but he could certainly control how he responded. And David behaved wisely.

There's not much you can do to a man when the Lord is with him. You can try to bring him down, but you'll just be fighting against the Lord.

- And in this case, David just became more adored by all Israel. What Saul intended for evil, God intended for good!



**18:17-19 - Then Saul said to David, “Here is my older daughter Merab; I will give her to you as a wife. Only be valiant for me, and fight the Lord’s battles.” For Saul thought, “Let my hand not be against him, but let the hand of the Philistines be against him.”<sup>18</sup> So David said to Saul, “Who am I, and what is my life or my father’s family in Israel, that I should be son-in-law to the king?”<sup>19</sup> But it happened at the time when Merab, Saul’s daughter, should have been given to David, that she was given to Adriel the Meholathite as a wife.**

Saul attempts to offer his older daughter to David as a wife. Now this was already the agreed reward for whoever killed Goliath, but Saul has apparently not honored his end of the deal. It was customary for the groom’s father to pay a bride price, kind of an advanced alimony. Saul seems to be waving this in lieu of David fighting on Saul’s behalf. But here’s the hidden motive, Saul assumes it’s going to put David at greater risk and he’ll eventually die in battle.

Most people would have jumped at the chance of marrying into royalty. But David says his family background is too humble to even consider marrying the king’s daughter.

- Now maybe he’s saying this because Merab was a piece of work and he’s trying to avoid any more difficulty. He already knows Saul is a piece of work. Either way, She ends up getting married before David can take any action.

But Saul has another daughter that seemed to be of more interest to David. She certainly was interested in him...

**18:20-21 - Now Michal, Saul’s daughter, loved David. And they told Saul, and the thing pleased him.<sup>21</sup> So Saul said, “I will give her to him, that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him.” Therefore Saul said to David a second time, “You shall be my son-in-law today.”**

Now we’re not sure how Saul thought Michal would be a snare to David. We know from 2 Samuel 6:16-23 that Michal had a problematic character that didn’t seem to align with God. We’ll see later that there’s an issue with idols. So perhaps Saul just knows his daughter is trouble and that she’s going to make David’s life miserable.

Saul also sees that this will provide an opportunity to get David in front of the Philistines again and bring their anger against him.

**18:22-25 - And Saul commanded his servants, “Communicate with David secretly, and say, ‘Look, the king has delight 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 those words in the hearing of David. And David said, “Does it seem to you a light thing to be a king’s son-in-law, seeing I am a poor and lightly esteemed man?”<sup>24</sup> And the servants of Saul told him, saying, “In this manner David spoke.”<sup>25</sup> Then Saul said, “Thus you shall say to David: ‘The king does not desire any dowry but one hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to take vengeance on the king’s enemies.’ ” But Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines.**

Saul offers David a seeming good deal, no need to pay a dowry, just get me 100 Philistine foreskins. At which point I’d be asking, *what is the dowry price? I think I may be more interested in that.* You see, Saul knows this would absolutely bring Philistine outrage against David. Not only would it be defiling to the Philistines, it would also bring great shame. Circumcision was the sign of the covenant for the Israelites, they were to be separate, cutoff from the pagan practices of the foreign nations, so they cutoff a piece of them to show their separation to the Lord.

The point is, Saul figured this would be enough to cause the Philistines to take David out.

**18:26-31 - So when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to become the king’s son-in-law. Now the days had not expired;<sup>27</sup> therefore David arose and went, he and his men, and killed two hundred men of the Philistines. And David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full count to the king, that he might become the king’s son-in-law. Then Saul gave him Michal his daughter as a wife.<sup>28</sup> Thus Saul saw and knew that the Lord was with David, and that Michal, Saul’s daughter, loved him;<sup>29</sup> and Saul was still more afraid of David. So Saul became David’s enemy continually.<sup>30</sup> Then the princes of the Philistines went out to war. And so it was, whenever they went out, that David behaved more wisely than all the servants of Saul, so that his name became highly esteemed.**

Everything Saul tried to do to take out David only made things worse for himself. Instead of accepting David as a real blessing and asset, he allowed himself to be filled with petty jealousy and anger. And now everything is compounding against him. He’s now got 200 foreskins dropped at his feet, I’m sure he wasn’t expecting that. His daughter loves David, and Saul recognizes that the Lord is with David.

Everything Saul tried to do to end David's life only made his life more celebrated and appreciated by others – ***his name became highly esteemed.*** This all added to the fear and insecurity Saul struggled with. Instead of receiving a son-in-law to partner with, Saul becomes his enemy to the day he dies. This doesn't add anything for Saul but only makes his life more miserable.

## 2. Saul's Rage – 19:1-18

***19:1-6 - Now Saul spoke to Jonathan his son and to all his servants, that they should kill David; but Jonathan, Saul's son, delighted greatly in David. <sup>2</sup> So Jonathan told David, saying, "My father Saul seeks to kill you. Therefore please be on your guard until morning, and stay in a secret place and hide. <sup>3</sup> And I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where you are, and I will speak with my father about you. Then what I observe, I will tell you." <sup>4</sup> Thus Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father, and said to him, "Let not the king sin against his servant, against David, because he has not sinned against you, and because his works have been very good toward you. <sup>5</sup> For he took his life in his hands and killed 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, to kill David without a cause?" <sup>6</sup> So Saul heeded the voice of Jonathan, and Saul swore, "As the Lord lives, he shall not be killed."***

Saul has tried to kill David himself; he's tried to have him killed by the Philistines. When either of those failed, he just comes out and blatantly asks someone, anyone, to kill David.

But Jonathan goes on the defense of David and confronts his father, Saul. This could have put Jonathan's life in jeopardy. But he's willing to stand up for his bud. He asks his father how he could kill an innocent man without a cause.

Saul actually relents and makes an oath with his son that he will not kill David. Saul however is not a great keeper of promises.

***19:7-10 - Then Jonathan called David, and Jonathan told him all these things. So Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence as in times past. <sup>8</sup> And there was war again; and David went out and fought with the Philistines, and struck them with a mighty blow, and they fled from him. <sup>9</sup> Now the distressing spirit from the Lord came upon Saul as he sat in his house with his spear in his hand. And David was playing music with his***



***hand. <sup>10</sup> Then Saul sought to pin David to the wall with the spear, but he slipped away from Saul's presence; and he drove the spear into the wall. So David fled and escaped that night.***

David had a very brief reunion with Saul. David went out to war and had great success once again. But as he's back in the palace playing music, Saul is overcome with that jealous rage once more and the Lord permitted this spirit to plague Saul once again.

- There is nothing evil with the Lord, nor does He commit evil, but sometimes He allows evil agents to carry out His purposes. That is the case again here.

Saul tried to take David's life for the third time now. This time David is out. He's not gonna stick around to see if he needs to dodge a 4<sup>th</sup> spear.

***19:11-18 - Saul also sent messengers to David's house to watch him and to kill him in the morning. And Michal, David's wife, told him, saying, "If you do not save your life tonight, tomorrow you will be killed." <sup>12</sup> So Michal let David down through a window. And he went and fled and escaped. <sup>13</sup> And Michal took an image and laid it in the bed, put a cover of goats' hair for his head, and covered it with clothes. <sup>14</sup> So when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, "He is sick." <sup>15</sup> Then Saul sent the messengers back to see David, saying, "Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may kill him." <sup>16</sup> And when the messengers had come in, there was the image in the bed, with a cover of goats' hair for his head. <sup>17</sup> Then Saul said to Michal, "Why have you deceived me like this, and sent my enemy away, so that he has escaped?" And Michal answered Saul, "He said to me, 'Let me go! Why should I kill you?' " <sup>18</sup> So David fled and escaped, and went to Samuel at Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and stayed in Naioth.***

Saul hunts down David ready to go to great lengths to kill him. But like Jonathan, Michal covers for David. Again we get a little insight into who Michal is. Notice she puts an image in the bed pretending it's David.

- The Hebrew word for image is *teraphim*. This speaks of a household idol used for worship. I think it's safe to say that this idol was not there because of David, but rather because of Michal. We see later on she doesn't have a heart for the things of God. Is this why Saul thought she would be a snare to David (18:21)?

She then stands before her father and makes up a story that David threatened her life. She's not speaking the truth as Jonathan is, she's resorting to deception. Clearly she's not trusting God in the way that David has been.

David then flees to Ramah to see Samuel.

### 3. God's Restriction – 19:19-24

**19:19-24 - Now it was told Saul, saying, "Take note, David is at Naioth in Ramah!" <sup>20</sup> Then Saul sent messengers to take David. And when they saw the group of prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as leader over them, the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied. <sup>21</sup> And when Saul was told, he sent other messengers, and they prophesied likewise. Then Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they prophesied also. <sup>22</sup> Then he also went to Ramah, and came to the great well that is at Sechu. So he asked, and said, "Where are Samuel and David?" And someone said, "Indeed they are at Naioth in Ramah." <sup>23</sup> So he went there to Naioth in Ramah. Then the Spirit of God was upon him also, and he went on and prophesied until he came to Naioth in Ramah. <sup>24</sup> And he also stripped off his clothes and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Therefore they say, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"**

Now this is a very interesting scene unfolding for us here. Saul has no concern that David is with Samuel. This would have brought enough fear for Saul previously, but now his fear is irrational, and he's ready to take out David in front of Samuel.

But with each of the 3 groups of messengers that he sends, they all end up prophesying. It's not that these men are having a conversion experience, but more so that God is showing His power over this situation and protecting David supernaturally.

Saul eventually goes himself and he doesn't even get to the school of the prophets, it's while he is on his way that the Spirit comes upon him. And he prophesies.

- It's important to remind ourselves that prophesying doesn't just encompass foretelling events. It can be that but most of the time it's speaking forth God's Word and God's truth. It can be simply bringing praise to God. In this case Saul would most likely be speaking forth the truth of God, not foretelling future events.

- When Saul stripped off his clothing it was really picturing the fact that the throne and kingdom has been stripped from him. Saul is laying naked, at least his outer kingly garments, and doing so to his own shame. A man who has struggled with pride is having to swallow a lot of pride here in this public humiliation. Humble yourself before God or face Him having to do it for you.

The bottom line here is that God is stepping in supernaturally to prevent Saul from taking David's life. How cool is that?

- We serve an amazing God who we can trust with our lives. He's seeing all and He's overall. He's bringing His plans and purposes to fruition.
- Saul would be in this state all day and all night, giving David plenty of time to escape.

Saul spent two chapters trying to kill David with spears, schemes, and soldiers. God shut it all down with one Spirit-filled worship service. Bottom line: Never bring a spear to a Holy Ghost fight.

### ***Is Saul also among the prophets?...***

"The use of this proverb in 10:11–12 and now here brackets the narrative descriptions of Saul's first and last encounters with Samuel as well as with the Spirit of God. Neither legitimate king nor genuine prophet, Saul continues to stumble toward his doom at the hands of the Philistines, when he will be "stripped" of his garments for the last time (31:8–9)." <sup>2</sup>

### Points to Ponder:

1. When God is with you, no weapon formed against you will prosper.  
Saul threw spears – God blocked them.  
Saul sent assassins – God stopped them.  
Saul chased David – God put him down.  
God protects His people.
2. When spears fly, don't retaliate.  
David could have thrown the spear back, but he walked away. We're better off leaving it with the Lord.
3. Saul held a spear, David held an instrument of worship.

<sup>2</sup> Barker, K. L., & Kohlenberger, J. R., III. (1994). *Expositor's Bible Commentary (Abridged Edition: Old Testament)* (p. 415). Zondervan Publishing House.

What's in your hand and how are you using it for God?

4. Jealousy destroys from within.

Saul's downward spiral started with a song. Not a scandal, not a rebellion, just a song he didn't like. Envy can turn small things into fatal things. Don't let it get a hold of you.

5. Jesus is our greater David.

He was envied by the religious Sauls, schemed against, handed over to Gentiles, and pierced for us – yet He never threw a spear back. Because He absorbed the spear, we can now live without fear under His protection and with our hands lifted to Him in worship.