

1st Samuel

Lesson 41

(d) Saul's Change of Plans (18:19)

So, with time, David went off to be the commander of Saul's army. In the meantime, the writer tells us of Saul's change of plans. Verse 19.

"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." (18:19)

The writer did not tell us the detail of David's marriage date to Saul's daughter, but there must have been one. *"So it came about the time..."* indicates that an agreement for the date of the marriage was in play. But when the time came, Saul had a change of plans and gave his oldest daughter to Adriel instead. This new son-in-law of Saul was from Meholah. It was a town in the Jordan River Valley. It was located close to Beth-shan. In the future, it will one day, from this point in the story, be the birthplace of Elisha (1 Kings 19:16). Adriel was the son of Barzillai. Barzillai was a wealthy man who supported David when David's son, Absalom, tried to take the throne from his father. When David tries to take Barzillai along with him to keep him away from the wrath of Absalom, Barzillai declines because he is very old at the time. Adriel, the son of Barzillai, and Merab, had five sons. In 2nd Samuel 21, all five of the sons will be killed on the first day of the barley harvest by the Gibeonites with the approval of King David. We will cover the reason for their deaths when we arrive in that chapter of 2nd Samuel.

Meanwhile, because Adriel's father was a man of great wealth, Saul may have agreed to the marriage; therefore, breaking his promise to David.

(4) The Offer of Saul's Youngest Daughter in Marriage

(a) Saul's New Plan (18:20-21)

Saul's broken promise put Saul in a pickle. Saul then learns that his younger daughter loves David. The writer tells us of the offer of Saul's youngest daughter in marriage as Saul's new plan. Verse 20.

"Now Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David. When they told Saul, the thing was agreeable to him.²¹ 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.' (18:20-21)

Saul is not speaking with David. David is with the troops defending the nation from Philistine attempts. In this passage, Saul's daughter lets her love for David be known to him and she, perhaps unknowingly, solves Saul's dilemma with his broken promise to David. For a second time, Saul could offer a wife to David to fulfill the promise as a victor over Goliath.

(i) The Secret Message from Saul (18:22-23a)

With the new plan in place, the secret message from Saul was sent to David. Verse 22.

*"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.'"*²³ So Saul's servants spoke these words to David." (18:22-23a)

It was a secret message to David. Secrets are rarely good. David had already experienced the wrath of Saul several times and he had also experienced the deception of Saul with the offer of Merab to be a wife. David will be concerned with this offer.

(ii) David's Concern About the Marriage (18:23b-24)

The writer tells us of David's concern about the marriage offer. Verse 23b.

“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?’²⁴ The servants of Saul reported to him according to these words which David spoke.” (18:23b-24)

David is concerned about becoming the king's son-in-law, not because of his success as the commander of Saul's army but because he is still a poor man. This reply tells us that Saul had not fulfilled at least two of the promises of the reward for killing Goliath. Remember, Saul's offer was, *“And it will be that the king will enrich the man who kills him with great riches and will give him his daughter and make his father’s house free in Israel.”* (17:25) As yet, David did not have a daughter of Saul as a wife. In addition, we learn that Saul had not made David enriched in this verse. At this point, we can only wonder if Saul had granted David's father's family freedom from the government requirements. It was not trivial in David's mind to become the king's son-in-law. However, David, nor his father Jesse, have the money to become the king's son-in-law. David was still poor and only lightly esteemed. In other words, David could not pay the dowry required to become the king's son-in-law. Interestingly, David feels this way. After all, would not the head of Goliath be a dowry enough to receive the promised gift as a reward for the hand of Saul's daughter? Saul made the offer. Jesse, David's father, did not make the request. Why was a dowry needed in this situation? David has not mentioned the need for a dowry, but Saul will in the next verse.

(iii) Saul's Requirement in a Dowry (18:25a)

David's reply from the battle camp back to Saul in his home town, fell into Saul's purpose and thinking. The writer tells us of Saul's requirement in a dowry. Verse 25a.

“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.’’ (18:25a)

The head of Goliath was not enough. The victory over Goliath was not enough. A dowry was now needed. But that was not part of the original deal. I do not know about you, but this type of bait and switch tactic goes all over me. When anyone does something like this to me, I have learned to simply walk away from all business transactions with that person. I have learned from experience that anyone who is a bait and switcher cannot be trusted. In addition, the bait and switch will just continue, and that person cannot ever be trusted. The deal is never the real deal. The end game is never the end game. The problem is never the problem. The reason is never the reason. This verse says that Saul did not want a dowry. No. Then he used the word *“except.”* That word means that there was the requirement of a dowry for Saul's daughter. Saul could not be trusted. He wanted a hundred foreskins of the Philistines. He already had the head of Goliath off the giant's body. Why this? Saul has a reason.

(iv) Saul's Reason for the Plan (18:25b)

The writer tells us of Saul's reason for the plan of the foreskins of the Philistines. Verse 25b.

“Now Saul planned to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines.” (18:25b)

Saul had no intention of allowing David to marry his youngest daughter. Instead, he wanted David to be killed in his attempt to fulfill the required dowry for his daughter. Saul should have known better.

(v) David's Collection of the Dowry (18:26-27)

To ask David for such a thing as a hundred foreskins of the Philistines was a welcome cost for the daughter of Saul, who had already expressed her love for David. Next, the writer tells us of David's collection of the dowry. Verse 26.

“When his servants told David these words, it pleased David to become the king’s son-in-law. Before the days had expired²⁷ 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.” (18:26-27)

Again, I say Saul should have known better. The request of Saul was easy for David. He collected those foreskins that day. In fact, he collected twice as many as required. David delivered those fresh foreskins that day to Saul and collected his new wife in exchange.

(vi) Saul's Fear of David (18:28-29)

Saul was a looser. What I mean by that is that after Saul failed to obey the LORD, and the LORD departed from Saul, Saul seems to have made losing decisions the rest of his life. Every effort and decision to try to kill David by Saul had failed. The failures only enhanced Saul's thoughts about David. The writer tells us about Saul's fear of David. Verse 28.

"When Saul saw and knew that the LORD was with David, and that Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him, then Saul was even more afraid of David. Thus Saul was David's enemy continually." (18:28-29)

Saul should have known better. His decisions just made everything worse. Saul now had a son-in-law that he was afraid of and basically at war with. He had a daughter who truly loved David. As we will see, David was the enemy of Saul until Saul's death, but Saul was not the enemy of David. It was not in David's makeup to see Saul as his enemy. David will not dismiss the thoughts of Saul towards him; David will be careful about how he interacts with Saul; David's thoughts of Saul will be Godly: David will always do the right thing towards Saul, but Saul will continually be against David for the rest of his life.

(b) David's New Esteem (18:30)

In the next years of life, David's new esteem will grow. Verse 30.

"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." (18:30)

Each time David, and the men he commanded, faced the Philistines trying to enter Israel for battle, David showed himself to be an expert in the art of war. With wisdom, prudence, and execution, David rose to be the most successful of all the servants of Saul who commanded the other warriors of the king. To this, David's esteem grew great. In converse, Saul's esteem diminished.

Chapter 19

f) A Summary of the Protection of David

(1) Jonathan Intercedes for David with Saul (19:1-7)

With the turn of the story to chapter 19, David is married to Michal, the daughter of King Saul. But Saul wants David dead, perhaps even more now than he did before the marriage. Just how long David has been married to Michal is not known. We can rightly surmise that the next story the writer tells is not right after the wedding, perhaps many weeks later, if not months, or perhaps a year or two. The writer tells us a summary of the protection of David when Jonathan intercedes for David with Saul. Once again, Jonathan, who loved David, and whom David loved, enters the storyline. Chapter 19, verse 1.

"Now Saul told Jonathan his son and all his servants to put David to death. But Jonathan, Saul's son, greatly delighted in David.² 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.³ 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."⁴ 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.⁵ 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?"⁶ Saul listened to the voice of Jonathan, and Saul vowed, "As the LORD lives, he shall not be put to death."⁷ 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.” (19:1-7)

Jonathan had a plan to reconcile his father with David in harmony. To do so, Jonathan had to point-blank accuse his father of sinning against David. Jonathan pointed out that Saul was guilty and David was innocent. His father was unjustly seeking harm on David when David did nothing to deserve such harm. Look at Jonathan’s words to his father. First, he said, you cannot sin against David because David “*has not sinned against you and since his deeds have been very beneficial to you.*”

Second, he said, David “*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.*”

Third, he told his father that he was sinning “*against innocent blood by putting David to death without a cause?*”

In these three statements by Jonathan, I am reminded of the three things that I have had to endure from evil people throughout my adult life. For decades I have had sayings that fall right in line with the accusations of Jonathan to his father. To the first case, Jonathan’s words were, David “*has not sinned against you, and since his deeds have been very beneficial to you.*” My words are “no good deed goes unpunished.” To the second case, Jonathan’s words were, David “*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.*” My words are “heroes are only heroes until the people get jealous and sick of you being a hero.” To the third case, Jonathan’s words were, dad, you cannot sin “*against innocent blood by putting David to death without a cause?*” My words are, “people don’t need a cause to strike out when they are tired of a person’s integrity and righteousness.” Remember, Jonathan was pointing his finger at Saul and calling him the sinner, the one without integrity, the unrighteous one. We have already discovered the nature of Saul in earlier lessons. He was not filled with the fruit of the Spirit; rather, he was filled with the deeds of the flesh, which are all sinful. When a righteous person does righteous things for a sinful person, it will not be long before the righteousness is a stench in the nostrils of the sinner.

According to the writer, Saul listened to Jonathan. Saul promised Jonathan that he would not put David to death. As the story goes, Jonathan retrieved David and returned him to Saul, where David picked up as Saul’s musician, commander of an army, and armor-bearer.

We must stop at this point to make an observation. Did the mere lecture from Jonathan change the thinking of Saul? Did Saul’s promise assure David of a safe life with Saul from now on? By now, we have a history with Saul. We know his nature. He is not a man in harmony with the LORD. He is a man demon-possessed at times. He is filled with “*...immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these....*”⁶ He is not like David, filled with “*...love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control....*” Saul cannot be trusted because he has not surrendered to the LORD and taken on a new nature. Looking at his history with David, David is in grave danger with Saul.

I am reminded of a lesson I learned out at the Danbury Lodge build that I led from 1999 to 2003. I call it *The Mice and the Snakes*. As supplies became available for the build, I purchased them, often long before they were needed. Such was the case with the air conditioners and heaters. The offer was made by a supplier who was selling his business, and I just could not pass up the deal even though I did not need the units for another year. Twenty pallets of supplies came in, and we stored

⁶ *New American Standard Bible, 1995 Edition: Paragraph Version* (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995), Ga 5:19–21.

⁷ *New American Standard Bible, 1995 Edition: Paragraph Version* (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995), Ga 5:22–23.

them in the middle of the dining room, still under construction. Months later, when we were ready to install the units, we began moving the pallets around the building site to the installation location of each unit. To our surprise, under every pallet, mice and snakes were living together. One of the guys was a vet student at A & M, and he told us that many animals in the wild live in strange harmony. You see, the snake needs a meal about every two weeks. One mouse will do. Mice need to eat about twenty times a day. The snake slips into the mouse habitat and lays quietly until it is hungry. The mice come and go, crawling all over the still snake, doing what mice do, scampering around, not thinking or knowing the true danger each of them is in. When it is time for the snake to eat, he waits for a mouse to run in front of him, strikes about two inches, not far enough to disturb the scampering mice, and begins to ingest a mouse. It starts as a big bulge near the head and gets smaller as it goes down the snake's body. The mice are so many that they do not even notice the missing brother or sister. They have their own business to attend. They need a meal. The snake is the snake, and his nature will never change. Although he seems to live in harmony with the mice, he is not there to help the mice; he is there to eat the mice. So too, it is the same with human snakes who come into the churches today. You would think all the snakes would live together in harmony, but that is not their nature. They see a good church, enter its fellowship, and lay in wait, intending to devour the old theology and bring what they know and believe – against the Word of God. They cannot be trusted because of their nature.

Saul cannot be trusted. But like the mice doing the business assigned to them, Jonathan and David wanted to trust Saul, the snake, but his nature will soon break his promise.

[**\(2\) Saul Attempts to Kill David with a Spear a Second Time \(19:8-10\)**](#)

The writer straightway moves to show the true nature of Saul. He writes how Saul attempts to kill David with a spear a second time. Verse 18.

"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. ⁹Now, 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. ¹⁰Saul 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." (19:8-10)

The Philistines had tried again to invade Israel, and David had taken command and repulsed the attempt. The victory stirred the true nature of Saul, who attempted to kill David with the spear this second time. This second attempt was foretold to us by the writer in chapter 18, verse 11. Where did David go? He went home to his wife.