



International Bible Lessons Commentary

Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series

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1 Samuel 18:1-5 & 19:1-7 **New Revised Standard Version** **August 4, 2019**

The [International Bible Lesson](#) (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, August 4, 2019**, is from **1 Samuel 18:1-5 & 19:1-7**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary*. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the [International Bible Lessons Commentary](#) website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the [International Bible Lesson Forum](#).

(1 Samuel 18:1) When David had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was bound to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.

King Saul recruited the young man David into his army after David killed the giant Goliath and the Philistines fled in fear before Saul's army. Jonathan and David had a like faith in and love for the LORD. With the help of the LORD, but single-handedly, Jonathan had defeated a Philistine garrison and had given his father the courage to enter the battle with his army. Through faith in the LORD, but single-handedly, David had defeated Goliath, and had given the Israelites the courage to attack and defeat the Philistines. They were probably close to the same age and each one found in the other a courageous man after God's own heart which brought them into a lasting and protective friendship.

(1 Samuel 18:2) Saul took him that day and would not let him return to his father's house.

Saul lived in fear instead of in faith in the LORD; so, he desperately needed courageous leaders and soldiers like David to defeat the enemies of Israel. Saul also knew that whenever an evil spirit came upon him that only David could bring him comfort when David played the lyre. The prophet Samuel had warned the Israelites that if they wanted a king the king would compel whomever he chose to serve him, and Saul compelled David to serve him and would not let David go home.

(1 Samuel 18:3) Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul.

The Bible commands us to love one another and to love our neighbors as ourselves: Jonathan and David loved each other with a “soul love” as the LORD has commanded us to love others. They were “soul brothers.” Jesus expressed this type of love for us, but an infinitely greater and divine type of love for us, when He died sacrificially on the cross to save us from our sins. Jonathan knew that because of his father’s faithless rebellion against the LORD that his kingdom would come to an end and he would never be king after his father. Instead, the LORD would begin a new dynasty with a man after God’s own heart, and Jonathan believed that king would be David. In 1 Samuel 13:13-14, we read, “Samuel said to Saul, ‘You have done foolishly; you have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which he commanded you. The LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever, but now your kingdom will not continue; the LORD has sought out a man after his own heart; and the LORD has appointed him to be ruler over his people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you.’” In David, Jonathan recognized a man with a deep faith in the LORD like himself, a man after God’s own heart, so he made a covenant with David that committed him to protect David whenever possible and David would protect him and his family. We learn more about the covenant they made in 1 Samuel 20:13-17, Jonathan said, “But if my father intends to do you harm, the LORD do so to Jonathan, and more also, if I do not disclose it to you, and send you away, so that you may go in safety. May the LORD be with you, as he has been with my father. If I am

still alive, show me the faithful love of the LORD; but if I die, never cut off your faithful love from my house, even if the LORD were to cut off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth.’ Thus Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, ‘May the LORD seek out the enemies of David.’ Jonathan made David swear again by his love for him; for he loved him as he loved his own life.” Jonathan knew that David would be the next king, and he wanted David to have the presence and protection of the LORD as his father once had before he became a rebellious king. After Jonathan died, David kept the covenant for as long as he wisely could.

(1 Samuel 18:4) Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that he was wearing, and gave it to David, and his armor, and even his sword and his bow and his belt.

Jonathan and David were such loyal friends that Jonathan also committed himself to helping David achieve the future God planned for him no matter the personal cost. In John 15:13, Jesus described the kind of love this “band of brothers” had for one another, “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.” Jonathan gave up his claim to be the king and showed that he believed David should follow his father as king. To seal the covenant between them, Jonathan gave David the royal symbols that showed he was transferring his right to be king to David. Jonathan knew in his heart and from what the LORD had said to his father about the end of his dynasty that David would be the next king after his father. Therefore, Jonathan sacrificially gave David the royal symbols and weapons that David would need to lead the Israelites as their king and defeat their enemies. Of course, Jonathan also knew that he could easily get more armor and swords for future battles from defeated Philistines—but Philistine armor would not be the royal armor of a king or the son of a king. Eventually, King Saul came to believe that David was a threat to his dynasty for in 1 Samuel 20:31, he said to Jonathan, “For as long as the son of Jesse lives upon the earth, neither you nor your kingdom shall be established. Now send and bring him to me, for he shall surely die.”

(1 Samuel 18:5) David went out and was successful wherever Saul sent him; as a result, Saul set him over the army. And all the

people, even the servants of Saul, approved.

In the beginning of their relationship, King Saul thought David would enhance and strengthen his rule over Israel by defeating Israel's enemies. When David succeeded, Saul set him over the whole army, to lead them into battle instead of leading the army himself. Because the LORD was with him, David succeeded, and all the people approved of Saul's choice of David. When an evil spirit entered Saul, and Saul became jealous, Saul wanted to kill David. But true to his covenant promise, Jonathan sought to save David from his father's wrath. And David's wife, Michal, also loved David; so she saved David from being murdered by Saul, her father.

(1 Samuel 19:1) Saul spoke with his son Jonathan and with all his servants about killing David. But Saul's son Jonathan took great delight in David.

As we study the relationship between King Saul and David, an evil spirit sometimes came upon Saul and moved him to try to kill David, but the evil spirit never succeeded in harming David. Through these experiences, David learned about the spiritual and physical protection that the LORD would provide for him if he remained faithful to the LORD. No matter what evil spirits attacked David through their influence over King Saul, the LORD ultimately protected David through many hardships and David became the king of Israel after Saul and Jonathan were killed in battle.

(1 Samuel 19:2) Jonathan told David, "My father Saul is trying to kill you; therefore be on guard tomorrow morning; stay in a secret place and hide yourself.

In keeping with their covenant, no doubt inspired by the LORD through the work of His Spirit, Jonathan warned David about his father's plans and how David should hide until he could tell David about the results of his efforts to persuade his father not to harm David. Jonathan did this believing that David was the most qualified person to succeed his father as king, but he probably did not know he would need to die in battle to make David's ascension to the throne politically possible.

(1 Samuel 19:3) I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where you are, and I will speak to my father about you; if I learn anything I will tell you.”

Jonathan somehow persuaded his father to accompany him to the field where David hid and where he could talk to his father about David. No evil spirit was upon Saul at that time, so Jonathan could reason with him.

(1 Samuel 19:4) Jonathan spoke well of David to his father Saul, saying to him, “The king should not sin against his servant David, because he has not sinned against you, and because his deeds have been of good service to you;

In trying to reason with his father, Jonathan gave his father the most important reason, “It would be a sin” to murder David. Second, David was his servant and David had never sinned against him. Third, not only had David never done anything against Saul, but David had been of good service to Saul. Notice how Jonathan had to finally appeal to the selfish nature of his father—he reminded him of the benefits that he had received from David as his servant. If Saul killed David, he would lose all these benefits. Since Saul was a selfish sinful person, if the moral arguments of Jonathan and appealing to the law of God would not work to save David, then an appeal to his sinful selfish nature surely would. Many people will do what is good when they see it benefits their selfish nature, but this is not the goodness that comes from a good heart, a heart that seeks after God.

(1 Samuel 19:5) for he took his life in his hand when he attacked the Philistine, and the LORD brought about a great victory for all Israel. You saw it, and rejoiced; why then will you sin against an innocent person by killing David without cause?”

Next, Jonathan listed some of the personal benefits Saul had received from David. At the risk of David’s own life, when everyone else was afraid, David had risked his life to help secure Saul’s reign over Israel when David killed Goliath and Saul had then defeated the Philistine army in a great battle. Since Saul was king, even though the LORD brought the great victory through David, Saul was honored for being victorious and not dishonored

by a sure defeat if David had not killed Goliath. Jonathan reminded his father how he had rejoiced over David's victory. Then, Jonathan gave King Saul a moral argument: David was innocent because he had never sinned against Saul; Saul had no justifiable reason to kill David for David had done nothing wrong against the kingdom of Israel or King Saul's dynasty. David had never rebelled against God or the Kingdom of Israel.

(1 Samuel 19:6) Saul heeded the voice of Jonathan; Saul swore, "As the LORD lives, he shall not be put to death."

Without the misleading of an evil spirit upon him, King Saul responded to his son's arguments and made an oath before God that he would not put David to death; however, King Saul did try to kill David several times (and even tried to kill his own son, Jonathan) after he made this oath, but the LORD protected David and David never raised his hand against his king to protect himself. David trusted in the LORD and His promise that he would be king. David patiently waited on the LORD's timing to be king—for the time when the LORD had fully prepared him to reign as king of Israel.

(1 Samuel 19:7) So Jonathan called David and related all these things to him. Jonathan then brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence as before.

After telling David what had happened, Jonathan personally took David to his father, and David again served as a military leader over Saul's army and as a player of the lyre to bring Saul peace of mind and heart.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. Why do you think King Saul wanted David in his army? See 1 Samuel 17.
2. Why do you think Jonathan and David were kindred spirits?
3. Do you think Jonathan came to understand that David should become king instead of him?
4. Why do you think Jonathan gave David his battle dress?

5. Why do you think King Saul wanted to kill David?

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