

Exegetical Notes – 1 Samuel 18:1-16

Prepared by Charles H. Jensen for Cornerstone Fellowship

101 Kylies Road, Coatesville, PA 19320

610-384-1375

charleshjensen@aol.com

1 Samuel 18:1-16

Verses 1-4

¹ After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself. ² From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return home to his family. ³ And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. ⁴ Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt.

- David was now known by King Saul as a significant “player” in Israel.
- David became good friends with Jonathan, King Saul’s eldest son.
- Jonathan made a unilateral covenant to David. He gave David his clothing and his weapons in a show of his love for David and his willingness to serve David. Jonathan committed himself to David, but David did not make any vow of commitment in return.

Verse 5

⁵ Whatever mission Saul sent him on, David was so successful that Saul gave him a high rank in the army. This pleased all the troops, and Saul’s officers as well.

- David proved his loyalty to King Saul. He was exceptionally successful in battle and was rewarded by high rank in the army. The men with whom he served respected him and trusted him.

Verses 6-7

⁶ When the men were returning home after David had killed the Philistine, the women came out from all the towns of Israel to meet King Saul with singing and dancing, with joyful songs and with timbrels and lyres. ⁷ As they danced, they sang:

***“Saul has slain his thousands,
and David his tens of thousands.”***

- When David returned home after defeating Goliath, the women in the villages through which he passed greeted him as a hero. They sang a song which elevated him above King Saul.

Verses 8-9

⁸ Saul was very angry; this refrain displeased him greatly. “They have credited David with tens of thousands,” he thought, “but me with only thousands. What more can he get but the kingdom?”⁹ And from that time on Saul kept a close eye on David.

- The song made Saul jealous of David.
- Saul saw David as a threat to his throne. He watched David because he suspected that David would attempt to take the kingdom from him.

Verses 10-11

¹⁰ The next day an evil spirit from God came forcefully on Saul. He was prophesying in his house, while David was playing the lyre, as he usually did. Saul had a spear in his hand¹¹ and he hurled it, saying to himself, “I’ll pin David to the wall.” But David eluded him twice.

- “An evil spirit from God came forcefully on Saul” (see 1 Samuel 16:14). All spirits are subject to God. He can use them if he chooses. This spirit came upon Saul with great power. He was unable to control himself because the spirit was so strong.
- “He was prophesying”.... The Hebrew word implies that Saul was involved in some kind of hysterical behavior. He was most likely saying things which did not make sense. In some way this evil spirit was causing Saul to act out.
- David was playing his harp to calm Saul down (see 1 Samuel 16:23).
- In an irrational rage, Saul threw a spear at David to kill David. This happened twice. David eluded both attempts to kill him.

Verses 12-16

¹² Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with David but had departed from Saul. ¹³ So he sent David away from him and gave him command over a thousand men, and David led the troops in their campaigns. ¹⁴ In everything he did he had great success, because the LORD was with him. ¹⁵ When Saul saw how successful he was, he was afraid of him. ¹⁶ But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he led them in their campaigns.

- Saul's jealousy was driven by unfounded fear of David. The Holy Spirit had left Saul. The Holy Spirit was with David.
- Saul sent David away from him. He gave him command of 1000 men and sent David on campaign. He probably hoped that David would not be successful and perhaps would be killed in battle. But because the Holy Spirit was with David, David was successful. God's hand was on David.
- David's success made Saul even more jealous of him. His jealousy made him even more afraid of David. But David's esteem among the army and the people of Israel continued to increase.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon based on 1 Samuel 18:1-16. They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen. All rights are reserved by Cornerstone Fellowship & The Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen. They are used here by permission.)