Exegetical Notes – 1 Samuel 19:18-24
Prepared by Charles H. Jensen for Cornerstone Fellowship
101 Kylies Road, Coatesville, PA 19320
610-384-1375
charleshjensen@aol.com

1 Samuel 19:18-24

Verses 18-22
[18] When David had fled and made his escape, he went to Samuel at Ramah and told him all that Saul had done to him. Then he and Samuel went to Naioth and stayed there. [19] Word came to Saul: "David is in Naioth at Ramah"; [20] so he sent men to capture him. But when they saw a group of prophets prophesying, with Samuel standing there as their leader, the Spirit of God came on Saul's men, and they also prophesied. [21] Saul was told about it, and he sent more men, and they prophesied too. Saul sent men a third time, and they also prophesied. [22] Finally, he himself left for Ramah and went to the great cistern at Seku. And he asked, "Where are Samuel and David?"
"Over in Naioth at Ramah," they said.

- David fled from Saul to save his life. He went to the Prophet/Priest Samuel at Ramah and told Samuel all that Saul had done to him. Samuel took David to Naioth, a place in Ramah where there was a community of prophets. These prophets were most likely students/disciples of Samuel. This community was a special group of men who were not priests but who were dedicated to proclaiming the word of the Lord and to prayer. David's inclusion among them was probably to put him in a safe place protected from Saul and to strengthen him spiritually for what lay ahead of him.

- Saul sent men to the community of Prophets in Ramah to arrest David. When Saul's men arrived there, they saw Samuel, but not David, standing among his disciples prophesying. Saul's men, to their surprise, were overcome by the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of the Lord themselves. They did not return to Saul, but Saul heard about what had happened to his men. So, he sent more men to arrest David. The same thing happened to them as had happened to first group Saul had sent. When Saul heard that the same thing had happened to the second group as had happened to the first, he dispatched a third group to arrest David. The same thing happened to the third group as had happened to the first two.

- Then, Saul took matters into his own hands. He left for Ramah, but he did not go to Naioth. Instead, he went to the cistern at Seku and asked after David and Samuel there. He was told that they were at Naioth. He was probably afraid to go directly to Naioth.

Verses 23-24
²³ So Saul went to Naioth at Ramah. But the Spirit of God came even on him, and he walked along prophesying until he came to Naioth. ²⁴ He stripped off his garments, and he too prophesied in Samuel's presence. He lay naked all that day and all that night. This is why people say, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

- Saul set off for Naioth to arrest, or maybe kill, David. But the Holy Spirit came on Saul, too. As he walked toward Naioth, he started to prophesy, to speak the word of the Lord. When he came to Naioth, he stripped naked and lay face down on the ground speaking the word of YHWH in the presence of Samuel. He remained on the ground naked, speaking the word of the Lord all through the night.
- As Saul laid on the ground rendered helpless by the Holy Spirit, David made his escape. There is a lesson here for Saul. God is protecting David, and Saul will not be allowed to harm David. He does not learn that lesson. And there is a lesson here for Daivd. He does not need to resort to lies and deception to protect himself (see I Samuel 19:11-17). God will protect him. But he also does not learn that lesson.