

1. Let me open with a cliché I've used before: "To God, people are both the pawns and the prizes".
 - a) We are the "prizes" in that God desires that we spend eternity with Him. He wants us to choose Him of our own free will. When we express that desire to live our lives for God, we become His "prizes for eternity."
 - b) We are also "pawns". Whether we accept it or not, God "manipulates" us to do his will.
 - i) Moses told Pharaoh, the most powerful man on earth at that time, "But I (God) have raised you (Pharaoh) up for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." (Exodus 9:16 NIV)
 - ii) When Peter proclaimed that Jesus was the Messiah, Jesus said, "This (information) was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven." (Matt. 16:17b NIV)
 - iii) My point in both cases is God works "behind the scenes" of our lives.
 - iv) Does that mean we don't have free will? No. It simply means that God is working to "manipulate life" for His glory.
 - c) A related cliché is ""Coincidence" is God working in the background".
 - i) Not everything that is "God's will" is spoken through a burnish bush. ☺ As we go through life, be aware that "things happen to us for a reason". (See Romans 8:28) That includes horrible consequences as well as the positive things in life.
 - ii) In these chapters, we are going to read of King Saul trying to kill David. Despite the fact it is obvious that David is rising in power and Saul is losing power, Saul does everything in his power to try to stop God's will from happening.
 - iii) At any given moment in our lives, especially when we are struggling, we have to ask ourselves, "Are we acting like King Saul at this moment?" Am I fighting against God's will for my life? Saul never figured out that "If God said it, it is going to happen whether you like it or not." Saul was told he was going to lose his kingdom and spent the remainder of 1st Samuel trying to prevent that.
 - d) If you are confused by this introduction, hang in there. ☺ Hopefully, this concept will be clearer as we get through these two chapters. I'll come back to it in the conclusion.
2. Chapter 18, Verse 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 to his father's house. 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.
 - a) Here we read of the friendship between Jonathan and David.
 - i) First, let me say this is not a homosexual relationship in anyway, shape or form.
 - ii) If you do a study of the Hebrew text, you cannot draw that inference.
 - iii) What we do read is of Jonathan respecting David over his father.
 - iv) In Verse 4, Jonathan gives David his robe, tunic, sword, bow and belt. This is a symbolic gesture of submission. It is the idea of submitting his will to David.
 - b) Remember that Jonathan was next in line to be the king.
 - i) He was the oldest son of King Saul, so he was next in line.
 - ii) Yet, he submits his will to David and not his father.
 - iii) Did Jonathan know that David was anointed to be king? The text does not say.

- c) Next, let me give some parental advice:
- i) Kids watch the parents' actions far more than what they say. Jonathan was wise enough to see Saul's fear of life and realize that David has more faith. All the lectures in the world that King Saul could have given "Prince Jonathan" on his future reign were meaningless since Saul didn't "walk the walk and talk the talk".
 - ii) Whenever I meet a pastor or a rabbi, I always like to ask if their father was also a pastor or a rabbi. In almost every case, the answer is yes. For those kids, despite growing up in a lifestyle without a lot of money, they see their father's sincerity to do good in the world and have faith toward God. That usually influences the son to also go into the professional ministry. I'm not saying this is a requirement, just that parents whose actions speak louder than words influences the children.
- d) Now, let's discuss this from Jonathan's perspective.
- i) Give Jonathan some credit. He knew that to submit to David was to go against his father. We're going to be reading of that action for the next bunch of chapters.
 - ii) It takes "guts" to stand up to your parents when their action is wrong. We're assuming Jonathan is a grown man at this point. This doesn't apply to children.
 - iii) I'm sure Jonathan still loved his father as a father, but somehow knew that David's faith was far greater than his father, and it was David that Jonathan wanted to emulate and not his father.
 - iv) OK, and the lesson to us is? ☺ We are called to be followers of Jesus Christ. Sometimes, that following is at the expense of our parents or our siblings.
 - a) Jesus said, "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters – yes, even his own life – he cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:26 NIV)
 - b) Jesus is not talking about having a hatred of others. That would be a contradiction to "love one another". This is about making Jesus a priority over all other relationships.
 - c) That is what Jonathan is doing. He is trusting in one who has faith in God over his own family. For Jonathan to "be one in spirit" with David is to forgo the rewards of being King Saul's son.
- e) These verses also give one of the best biblical models on friendship.
- i) I have a close, lifelong friend who I think the world of. We used to jokingly say that the two of us are "twins joined at the common thought". ☺ This is because we often thought alike in our personalities, humor and our values.
 - a) Does that friend have priority over God? No. Over my wife and kids? No. But he is my friend and I love the guy. Given the opportunity, I would submit to his will as I know he would submit to mine. To have that type of friendship is something to be cherished and appreciated as gift from God.
 - ii) If you don't have that in your life, pray for God to bring "godly people" who you can have a close intimate friendship with and share your life.
 - iii) For married people, I would strongly recommend that friend be of the same sex. A married Christian should never have an intimate friendship with anyone of the opposite sex other than his wife. There are issues that men best talk out with other men and women with other women. Such a friendship is a great asset in life.
 - iv) I think that is what Jonathan thought of David. Jonathan thought, "Here is a guy I can relate to. He is my hero. He has the kind of faith in God I want to have in my life. I want to submit to him, not as an idol, but as one I want to emulate."

3. Verse 5: Whatever Saul sent him to do, David did it so successfully that Saul gave him a high rank in the army. This pleased all the people, and Saul's officers as well.
 - a) After David beat Goliath, David became part of Saul's army.
 - i) Saul would send David on some mission, and David was successful.
 - ii) Saul would then promote David.
 - iii) Saul would then send David on a bigger mission, and David was successful.
 - iv) This was an "upward spiral". Verse 5 also mentions how this pleased people as well as Saul's officers. The point is we don't read of any jealousy.
 - b) You can't help reading this story within the story and see the parallels to Joseph.
 - i) The last part of Genesis deals with the life of Joseph. Despite the fact that he was enslaved and then put in jail, he succeeds at whatever he did and got promoted to "head slave" when he was a slave and "head prisoner" when he was imprisoned.
 - ii) The point of both David's and Joseph's rise to power is that God was behind it.
 - a) Here's the application. Every now and then we will see God raise somebody up in power. The question is, "Are we jealous because God picked "them" and not us?" Or, are we saying, "Hey, God is obviously using that person greatly. Let's support them and do God's will!"
4. Verse 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 tambourines and lutes. ⁷ As they danced, they sang: "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands."
 - a) Notice the word "Philistine" is singular. Therefore, it must refer to David killing Goliath.
 - b) Remember that after David killed Goliath, the Israelites went on to slaughter the Philistines and conquer them. This refers to the battle(s) right after that victory.
 - c) In Verse 6, the war is now over and the soldiers are returning home. The women, who stayed home from the battle, came out in the roads to sing some victory songs. The chorus of the song goes in effect, "Saul killed thousands and David tens of thousands".
 - i) To paraphrase, "Thank God for Saul who was appointed our leader. Thank God even more so for David who defeated Goliath and inspired the Israelite army!"
 - ii) Give the women credit to have the guts to sing that song in front of Saul! ☺
 - iii) The point is word got around real fast just who was the real hero of the battle.
 - d) By the way, do you think David bragged about his victories? Do you think David kept tabs on how many Philistines he killed and how many Saul killed? I seriously doubt it.
 - i) The point is "success has a way of spreading all by itself". You don't have to brag about your accomplishments. Word will get around by itself.
5. Verse 8: Saul was very angry; this refrain galled him. "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 jealous eye on David.
 - a) A main point of this chapter is to see the contrast in lifestyle between Saul and Jonathan.
 - i) Jonathan saw David rise to power and submitted to David.
 - ii) Saul saw David rise to power and watched him jealously.
 - b) Whether the Israelites liked it or not, God was now working through David. The point is "are we submitting to God's will and following who God has chosen, or are we "jealously watching" those who are rising to power?
 - i) Submitting to God's will means accepting God's will. Our big egos want God to use us, and us alone to do His will. Sometimes a great prayer in any situation is simply to say, "Lord, help me to submit to Your will for my life and not mine." It usually takes the power of the Holy Spirit to get our egos off the throne of our hearts and let God rule.

6. Verse 10: The next day an evil spirit from God came forcefully upon Saul. He was prophesying in his house, while David was playing the harp, as he usually did. Saul had a spear in his hand ¹¹ and he hurled it, saying to himself, "I'll pin David to the wall." But David eluded him twice.
- a) Back in Chapter 16, before David and Goliath was the story of how a "distressing spirit" would bother Saul. The only remedy that got this distressing spirit to go away was to call David in and play a harp for him.
 - b) Here we read again of the distressing spirit and David playing the harp for him.
 - i) Notice David submitting to Saul's will. There is no hint of David saying, "Excuse me oh soon-to-be-ex-king, I'm the guy everyone's singing about. Go play your own harp." ☺
 - ii) Notice in Verse 11 the word "twice". That means that Saul was so angry with David that twice Saul threw a spear at David trying to kill him. The text doesn't explicitly say so, but obviously Saul missed. No wonder David killed more Philistines than Saul. Saul's a lousy shot! ☺
 - a) What I wanted to point out here is that David continued to play the harp for Saul after the first time Saul threw the spear! Now that's submission! David probably thought, "Look, God anointed me to be king one day. The timing is God's problem. In the meantime, I will submit to Saul's will as he is the one appointed by God at this moment."
 - c) Let's compare the "distressing spirit" of Chapter 16 and the "distressing spirit" here and one here in Chapter 18.
 - i) In Chapter 16, when David played, it went away. Now we read of Saul trying to kill David. Did the "distressing spirit" play a part in that? Don't know. Was it just Saul's personal jealousy that was now overwhelming Saul? Probably!
 - ii) The point is that sin can "consume" you. It doesn't have to be a distressing spirit that causes you to sin. We are more than capable of all sorts of sin without any demonic influence.
 - iii) In Revelation Chapter 20, there is a 1,000-year period of time coming after Jesus' Second Coming. During that period Satan is bound in chains.
 - a) I believe a purpose of that 1,000-year period is to show just how sinful mankind can be without Satan's influence. It is to show mankind that we can't use the excuse of "the devil made me do it" when it was our own sinful nature.
 - d) Another interesting thing to get out of this verse is that Saul was "prophesying" when David was playing!
 - i) Does that mean "words were coming out of Saul's mouth" that he never intended to say without the spirit of God working in him?
 - ii) The text doesn't say what Saul was prophesying. I'll discuss prophesying in a few pages. Know for now that it doesn't necessarily mean he was predicting the future. That term also can include praising God and expounding upon God's word.
7. Verse 12: Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with David but had left 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.
- a) The first thing to notice is that Saul knew God was with David.
 - i) Remember that the prophet Samuel told Saul personally that he would no longer be king and "someone else" would rise to power. Saul figured it out.

- b) The next thing is that we read of Saul sending out David to lead the troops. What is implied is that Saul was hoping David would get killed in the battles.
 - c) The success of David had two different reactions:
 - i) Saul became afraid of David.
 - ii) All of Israel and Judah (the tribe that David was a part of) loved David.
 - d) Some commentators argue that 1st and 2nd Samuel were not “put together” until the days after Israel was split into two kingdoms. The names of the two separate kingdoms were “Israel and Judah”. Therefore, for the benefit of the reader, the Nation of Israel was described as “Israel and Judah” so the reader knew it covered both territories.
 - e) I’d like to stop and discuss a of “big picture” idea. Remember that the Messiah is a direct descendant of David. One of the titles of the Messiah to come is the “Son of David”.
 - i) When you study the Old Testament, there are very few direct references to the idea of “There will be a great king one day, called the Messiah, who will rule the earth”. Much of what is taught about the Messiah in the Old Testament comes from word-pictures and subtleties in the text.
 - ii) There are passages about a “ruling Messiah” that will rule over the world. The rise to power by David is often considered one of the passages that teach of a ruling Messiah.
 - iii) There are other passages that teach of a “suffering Messiah” that suffers of the sins of mankind (e.g., Isaiah Chapter 53 and Psalm 22).
 - iv) So either there are two Messiah’s as some Orthodox Jews argue (one to suffer for our sins, another to reign over the earth) or the same Messiah comes twice as Christians obviously argue.
 - v) The joke is when the Messiah comes to Israel, the first question religious Jews will ask is, “Is this your first visit, or your second?” ☺
8. Verse 17: Saul said to David, "Here is my older daughter Merab. I will give her to you in marriage; only serve me bravely and fight the battles of the LORD." For Saul said to himself, "I will not raise a hand against him. Let the Philistines do that!"
- a) Notice Saul’s intent. He is scheming here by telling David in effect, “I’ll give you my wife in exchange for leading the battles”. Saul was hoping the Philistines would kill David.
 - b) Let’s get back to my word-picture as Saul as a model of our old human nature.
 - i) Don’t expect our human nature to “give in easily” to God’s will. If anything, it will scheme, lie, connive and do anything and everything to get control back!
 - ii) Just as Saul schemed to keep power, so our “flesh” schemes to keep power!
 - iii) When I wrote my introduction of 1st Samuel, I stated that one should see the contrast between King Saul and (future) King David.
 - a) Saul represents our human nature that wants to do “our will” and not “God’s will”. David is often a word picture of one who submits to “God’ will” over and above his own will.
 - iv) My point here is notice how Saul refuses to “give up”. Saul was afraid of David, but Saul refused to let go of power.
 - v) That is the way our human nature is. We constantly “fight” against God’s will because our old human nature still wants to be in charge.
 - a) Paul said, “For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.” (Galatians 5:17 NKJV)

9. Verse 18: But David said to Saul, "Who am I, and what is my family or my father's clan in Israel, that I should become the king's son-in-law?" ¹⁹ So when the time came for Merab, Saul's daughter, to be given to David, she was given in marriage to Adriel of Meholah.
- a) David responded to the king's offer to marry his daughter with humbleness. He realizes to marry this girl would make David a prince and inline for the throne.
 - b) Notice what David did not say: "Yeah, your right I'll marry her. You did promise that before Goliath. Besides, I'll be king one day anyway. I may as well practice now!" ☺
 - i) My point is that David is still submitting to God's timing and God's will. Even if Saul went back on His word, God is still faithful to His promises for us.
 - c) Verse 19 then states that when it was time for Merab to be given in marriage, Saul gave her away to someone else instead, a man named Adriel of Meholah.
 - i) Remember before David fought Goliath, Saul offered his oldest daughter Merab to whoever killed Goliath. Saul went back on his word to give this girl to David.
 - ii) There are lots of questions as to the details that we don't know. Did this girl not want to marry David? How did the king know it was "time" to marry her off? The point is to focus on the story that is told and not worry about the details that are not part of the story at hand.
10. Verse 20: Now Saul's daughter Michal was in love with David, and when they told Saul about it, he was pleased. ²¹ "I will give her to him," he thought, "so that she may be a snare to him and so that the hand of the Philistines may be against him." So Saul said to David, "Now you have a second opportunity to become my son-in-law."
- a) So now we have Saul's second daughter Michal who wanted to marry David.
 - i) Notice Verse 21 says, "She may be a snare to him".
 - a) That phrase speaks volumes. Lots of fathers are chuckling at that verse. ☺ Apparently, Michal was the kind of girl who rebelled against her father and her father was happy to pass her on to David.
 - b) My view of Michal is a little different. I see her, like Jonathan being more loyal to David than to her father. Michal, like her brother Jonathan saw how God was favoring David and wanted to join "the right team".
 - b) Notice how Saul is using every opportunity to kill David other than killing him himself.
 - i) Saul figured that Michal would be a distraction.
 - ii) Remember that in Jewish custom, a groom must pay the father of the bride a large sum of money called a "dowry". This is done to help prevent divorce. If a man divorced his wife, she would have to go back to her parents. To pay for the rest of her life, the groom provides this dowry as a type of a savings account.
 - a) If you remember in Genesis, Jacob worked 14 years for his two wives. That was supposed to be the dowry money to Jacob's father in law.
 - b) Saul figured that since David's family didn't have any significant money to pay a dowry, Saul could require David's service as a soldier for a dowry.
 - iii) The word-picture is "never underestimate the power of our human nature to fight God's will". Our old human nature will lie, scheme, trick, "anything" to get back in power. Saul is a picture of this type of action.
11. Verse 22: Then Saul ordered his attendants: "Speak to David privately and say, 'Look, the king is pleased with you, and his attendants all like you; now become his son-in-law.' " ²³ They repeated these words to David. But David said, "Do you think it is a small matter to become the king's son-in-law? I'm only a poor man and little known." ²⁴ When Saul's servants told him what David had said, ²⁵ Saul replied, "Say to David, 'The king wants no other price for the bride than a hundred Philistine foreskins, to take revenge on his enemies.' " Saul's plan was to have David fall by the hands of the Philistines.

- a) Verses 22-25 describe the actions of Saul in order to get David killed.
 - i) Saul announced that David would be his son in law by marrying Michah.
 - ii) David stating he didn't have any dowry money.
 - iii) Saul stating that he wants David to kill 100 Philistines as a dowry price.
 - iv) Saul wanted David to bring back 100 Philistine foreskins. Without getting into a lot of details and bad jokes, let's just say the Philistines would not cooperate. ☺
 - b) If you have any doubt I'm reading too much into these verse, look at the last line of Verse 25. It says, "Saul's plan was to have David fall by the hands of the Philistines."
 - i) In that sense, the rest of the text is just the details.
 - ii) Saul is so obsessed with killing David he's willing to offer his own daughter's hand in marriage to get rid of David. No wonder Michal and Jonathan saw through their father. It goes back to what I stated how a parents actions speak louder than words.
 - iii) On a different note, what should you say to your children when you mess up?
 - a) Tell them your sorry! Kids don't expect parents to be perfect, just honest.
12. Verse 26: When the attendants told David these things, he was pleased to become the king's son-in-law. So before the allotted time elapsed,²⁷ David and his men went out and killed two hundred Philistines. He brought their foreskins and presented the full number to the king so that he might become the king's son-in-law. Then Saul gave him his daughter Michal in marriage.
- a) Remember David knew he was going to be king one day. Verse 26 says David was "pleased with these things". Personally, I think David was pleased that the "only" cost to be the king's son in law was to kill one hundred Philistines. I could just hear David think, "Is that all he wants?" No problem! Instead of bringing back 100, he brought back 200!
 - i) David knew that Samuel anointed him to be the king and therefore, David knew he couldn't lose the battle against the Philistines.
13. Verse 28: When Saul realized that the LORD was with David and that his daughter Michal loved David,²⁹ Saul became still more afraid of him, and he remained his enemy the rest of his days.
- a) Saul did not say, "You know, God is with David and Samuel told me I would lose my kingship. So since it is God's will for David to be king, maybe I should accept the fact and get on with my life." ☺ That didn't happen.
 - i) Even when his son Jonathan "figured it out" and his daughter Michal "figured it out", Saul refused to budge.
 - ii) Again, the word-picture is our human nature refuses to give in to God's will.
 - b) Notice Saul was afraid of David. If you asked me the first word that popped in my head if you said "Saul", I would say "fear".
 - i) Fear is the opposite of faith. Fear causes you to trust your wits and your own intellect as opposed to God's will for your life. That is Saul in a nutshell.
 - ii) The fact that Saul hated David the rest of his life is a "natural output" of his fear.
14. Verse 30: The Philistine commanders continued to go out to battle, and as often as they did, David met with more success than the rest of Saul's officers, and his name became well known.
- a) Here were the Philistines battling the Israelites, and the Philistines kept losing.
 - i) On a different note, what sin did the Philistines commit to get this punishment?
 - ii) Remember that God wanted to show the surrounding nations that the God of Israel is the true God of the world. Losing a few battles "helped". ☺
 - iii) Second, God judges individuals fairly for salvation. I'm comfortable believing that God is perfect, and therefore, he will judge all individuals perfectly.

- b) God's plan through all of this was to show David's rise to power and the Nation of Israel to be aware of David's success.
 - i) Remember that Saul became king by God saying, "Saul is now your king and watch what will happen".
 - ii) David will be king by God saying in effect, "Watch what I do with David and he will become your king".
 - iii) This teaches us a lot about discerning God's will. The mistake Christians make is we tell God, "OK, God here is my plan, now bless it". What God wants us to do is follow. What we need to do is look how God is working and follow. That is the idea behind the rise of David to power.
15. Chap. 19, Vs. 1: Saul told his son Jonathan and all the attendants to kill David. But Jonathan was very fond of David ² and warned him, "My father Saul is looking for a chance to kill you. Be on your guard tomorrow morning; go into hiding and stay there. ³ I will go out and stand with my father in the field where you are. I'll speak to him about you and will tell you what I find out."
- a) Stop and think about that first sentence for a moment: Saul told everyone around him, including his son to kill David.
 - i) Before, Saul wanted to kill him, but he wanted to do it in a subtle way. Saul kept sending David off into battle hoping the enemy would do it for him.
 - ii) Since David kept winning, this wasn't happening.
 - iii) Now Saul is telling everyone around him to kill David.
 - iv) By the middle of this chapter, Saul will try to do it himself.
 - b) This gets back to one of the major themes of the "war of the flesh and the spirit".
 - i) The "flesh", which refers to our old human nature, wants control of our lives.
 - ii) The "flesh" is saying in effect, "Will somebody please kill off this godly influence over here? I tried to do it subtly, now I'm asking for help. Eventually I have to take matters into my own hands".
 - c) Verse 2 and 3 is about Saul's son Jonathan defending David in the presence of his father.
 - i) Notice Jonathan does not say, "Well, he is my dad, and the king and all. After all, the bible does teach me to honor my father and mother (Exodus 20:12) as well as to obey all of those in authority (Hebrews 13:17). If I want to live to see tomorrow, I better obey my father".
 - ii) Jonathan's response is essentially the same as Peter's in Acts: "We must obey God rather than men!" (Acts 5:29b NIV)
 - iii) There are situations in life where the principal of "Higher Authority" comes into play. Yes God does call us to honor the wishes of our parents and obey those in authority. The only times we can violate those principals is when they are violating direct commands of God. Saul is asking his son to murder an innocent man. That is an example of obeying God over man.
 - a) One has to be careful not "Higher Authority" too far. For example, some might argue it is ok to not pay taxes because the U.S. government funds abortions. As wrong as that is, that is not an excuse to avoid taxes.
 - b) The issue of "Higher Authority" is about specific direct commands given to you personally that violate other biblical commands. It is not a "blanket policy" for us to rebel against all of those in authority. If that were the case, we could find excuses never to submit to anyone for anything.
 - iv) Give Jonathan credit. He was risking his life to "do the right thing". His father could have had him killed for his questioning his orders.

- d) Notice David cooperated with this plan.
 - i) David must have been thinking, "What did I do to deserve this? After all, I've done whatever the king asked me to do, I've played the harp for him, I've won victories over his enemies, I'm his son-in-law for goodness sakes! ☺ Yet the guy wants to kill me."
 - ii) Instead of boldly approaching Saul himself saying it was wrong, he was willing to let Jonathan intercede for him.
16. Verse 4: Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father and said to him, "Let not the king do wrong to his servant David; he has not wronged you, and what he has done has benefited you greatly. ⁵ He took his life in his hands when he killed the Philistine. The LORD won a great victory for all Israel, and you saw it and were glad. Why then would you do wrong to an innocent man like David by killing him for no reason?"
- a) Here is Jonathan reasoning with his father. Jonathan recounted to his father all of the good things that David has done and explaining his innocence.
 - b) I'm sure in Saul's mind, to kill David was a "rational thing". After all, Saul saw David as a threat to his own kingship. Saul knew he would no longer be king one day and David was obviously being raised in power. Saul wanted to kill David to "protect his job".
 - c) Never underestimate the dangerous power of rational thought without having a God-based foundation (i.e., God's word). It is amazing what people can rationalize as "appropriate" when they don't have a God-based standard of right and wrong.
17. Verse 6: Saul listened to Jonathan and took this oath: "As surely as the LORD lives, David will not be put to death."
- a) The bottom line of Jonathan's speech is that it worked. Saul agreed not to kill David and took an oath not to do so. We'll read in this chapter where Saul soon violated that oath.
 - b) One of the patterns we are seeing about Saul is that he goes back on his word.
 - i) He promised in effect, "whoever kills Goliath will be tax free, have my daughter's hand in marriage and be exempt from the king's service. (1st Samuel 17:25)
 - a) David was still called into service for the king, despite the oath of "no further service required" if he killed Goliath".
 - ii) Samuel promised David he could have his first daughter in marriage, and then went back on that promise (1st Samuel 18:19).
 - iii) Now here in this verse Saul is promising with an oath not to kill David. For much of the remainder of 1st Samuel, Saul personally tries to hunt down David.
 - c) Given all of that, there is a classical debate as to whether or not Saul was sincere in this oath. Who knows, maybe he was sincere at this moment.
 - i) The point is, once you no longer have the fear of God in your life, your word means nothing. If one lives without any fear of punishment of a higher power, without any fear of accountability, there is no reason to keep an oath.
 - ii) There are too many "Christians" I've met who think "I believe in Jesus, now I can do what I want, because I live under grace". To be a Christian is to be a follower of Jesus! If you are grateful for the Cross, then we need to live in gratitude of that free gift. Further, God still cares about our behavior. God cares about His reputation and therefore as believers have to be careful how we behave in public and in private.
 - iii) Jesus taught, "Let your yes be yes". (Matthew 5:37). It is the idea that if you give your word to do something, stick to that commitment, even if you regret making it later. One's reputation for keeping their word is a necessity for life. If people don't believe you are going to keep your word about any oath you said, how will they take you seriously if and when you ever talk about God?

18. Verse 7: So Jonathan called David and told him the whole conversation. He brought him to Saul, and David was with Saul as before. ⁸ Once more war broke out, and David went out and fought the Philistines. He struck them with such force that they fled before him.
- a) Next we read of Saul telling David himself of his safety. In Verse 8, we read of another battle with the Philistines and another victory for David.
 - b) The question to ask is, "Why is Verse 8 here? How is that relevant to the story?"
 - i) The point is God is testing Saul and his vow.
 - ii) God is saying, "OK Saul, I know that you have a jealousy problem with David over his victories. You just made a vow not to kill him. Now I'm going to let David be successful in a victory again and see how you act."
 - iii) The lesson is God constantly tests us in our life.
 - iv) "Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands." (Deut. 8:2 NIV)
 - v) God is perfect by definition. He has perfect knowledge whether or not we will pass or fail any test. The tests are for "our sake" so that we are aware that God is testing us. Further, people will not have any excuses on judgment day as we can know that our lives are a series of tests to see if our heart is right toward God.
 - vi) Was David aware that all of this was a test? Of course not. He just knew that Saul no longer wanted to kill him. Saul told him to go fight the Philistines and David won another battle. The point is we don't always know why God allows good and bad things to happen to us. There is often a greater purpose than what we know.
19. Verse 9: But an evil spirit from the LORD came upon Saul as he was sitting in his house with his spear in his hand. While David was playing the harp, ¹⁰ Saul tried to pin him to the wall with his spear, but David eluded him as Saul drove the spear into the wall. That night David made good his escape.
- a) Back in Chapter 18:10-11, Saul tried twice to kill David with a spear and David escaped. Here we are a chapter later, reading of the same thing.
 - b) This time David made a run for it.
 - i) The difference this time is that David will not set foot in the king's palace again until Saul is dead, many chapters from now.
 - ii) David will spend, roughly the next 10-15 years (by some estimate) of his life running and hiding from Saul until Saul is killed in a battle with the Philistines.
 - iii) Beginning in the next chapter, we're going to spend a lot of time discussing why all of David's "running" was necessary. The big-picture idea is that this was a time where God was maturing David and preparing him for leadership.
 - iv) I'm sure David struggled a lot during that running time. I'm sure he questioned, "What did I do to deserve this?" It's easy for us to see the end results, because we can read the book. The hard part is to actually go through life not knowing the result and not know the purposes of why God puts us through trials.
20. Verse 11: Saul sent men to David's house to watch it and to kill him in the morning. But Michal, David's wife, warned him, "If you don't run for your life tonight, tomorrow you'll be killed." ¹² So Michal let David down through a window, and he fled and escaped. ¹³ Then Michal took an idol and laid it on the bed, covering it with a garment and putting some goats' hair at the head.
- a) Now the scene switches to David's house.
 - b) The last we read of where David lived was as a boy with his parents.
 - c) Now he is married to Saul's daughter Michal and had a home somewhere.
 - d) Saul sent some soldiers to go to kill David.

- e) Somehow, Michal got word that the soldiers are coming to kill David and gave David time to escape. Michal then took an idol-statue and put in bed, along with some clothing and goat hair. (Apparently, she had the time and resources to do all of this.)
 - f) These verses don't say a lot about David or Saul, but teach us some things about Michal:
 - i) She had an idol in the house! Where did that come from and why is it there?
 - ii) I'm sure David told her that he was anointed to be king one day.
 - a) Was it a lack of faith on her part to lie to the soldiers and do this?
 - iii) There is a "parallel passage" to this scripture. Way back in Genesis, when Jacob was trying to follow his going-blind father that Jacob was really his brother, Jacob's mother dressed him in goat's hair to be more hairy like his brother. Since that passage, "goat's hair" has been a word-picture of sin as it is associated with deception. Here again we read of goat's hair being mentioned as a deception.
 - g) The text does not give a lot of explanation as to why Michal did this.
 - i) She loved David. That was stated in the last chapter (Verse 20).
 - ii) The debate question is whether all of this deception is "biblically acceptable".
 - a) You read of a household idol, which was forbidden. (Exodus 20:4)
 - b) She "bared false witness" to the guards that he was sick. (Exodus 20:16)
 - c) We don't read of any punishment of Michal. If anything she "got away with it" the same way Jacob got away with the goat-hair deception.
 - d) Sometimes God "allows" sin to occur to accomplish God's greater purposes. The people committing those sins are still accountable for their actions. My point is God allows this to happen for some greater good.
 - iii) Micah does bear some punishment for her sins. I'll get to that in Verses 17-18.
21. Verse 14: When Saul sent the men to capture David, Michal said, "He is ill." ¹⁵ Then Saul sent the men back to see David and told them, "Bring him up to me in his bed so that I may kill him." ¹⁶ But when the men entered, there was the idol in the bed, and at the head was some goats' hair.
- a) I personally find this text a little comical. Visualize some big strong soldiers coming to David's house with orders to kill him. Soldiers are taught to obey orders and not question them. Yet when they get there, they hear, "Oh, David's sick. Oh well, let's go back and tell Saul we couldn't kill him because he was sick." ☺ Saul had to send orders to bring back David in his sickbed so Saul could personally kill him.
 - b) This little story within the story is just another example of how God is working in the background of our lives.
 - i) The soldiers could have easily pulled the blanket and exposed the idol.
 - ii) It shows how God "controls our lives from behind the scenes".
 - a) Does this mean we are a bunch of robots obeying God? No
 - b) One has to understand there is both free will and God's will. God, just like demonic forces send us "mental suggestions" that we react upon.
22. Verse 17: Saul said to Michal, "Why did you deceive me like this and send my enemy away so that he escaped?" Michal told him, "He said to me, 'Let me get away. Why should I kill you?'"
- a) Here was Saul questioning his daughter. His daughter lied to his father's face and said in effect "David was going to kill me if you don't help me escape".
 - b) Earlier we read of Michal making the "fake David" out of a statue.
 - i) Here we read of Michal lying to her father's face.
 - c) This shows a "lack of faith" by Michal. She obviously feared for her own life. If Saul was willing to kill David, he probably was willing to kill her.
 - d) The debate question is, "Was all of this necessary?" Did she have to lie to her dad? Was it necessary to make the fake idol? Again, what was she doing with the idol in the first place? (Hey John, what about your "Higher Authority" stuff? ☺)

- e) Remember that God's plan was to make David the king. Even if David didn't run, God would "find a way" for David to live as God's plans will happen.
 - i) This was an opportunity for Michal to shine, and she failed. This section of the text is about the failure of Michal to be a good witness for God.
 - ii) It appears she may have "done the right thing" by helping David to escape. But we read of her violating all sorts of God's commandments to do so.
 - f) This "lesson within the lesson" is about obedience to God no matter what the cost.
 - g) There is an interesting epilogue to Michal's life in 2nd Samuel: "And Michal daughter of Saul had no children to the day of her death." (2nd Samuel 6:23 NIV).
 - i) In that culture, for a woman to not have children was a great shame.
 - ii) My point here is that her deception may have been a temporary victory, but it wasn't necessary. Michal is an example of someone trying to please God at the expense of violating God's commandments. It never pays in the long run.
23. Verse 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.
- a) David was now on the run. The only homes he had were 1) where he grew up, 2) the king's palace and 3) his own home with his wife. David couldn't go to any of those three places without Saul trying to kill him. So, he went to go find Samuel.
 - b) David went to "House of God" for a sanctuary. That's a nice picture all unto itself. When in doubt, when you don't know where to run, a place of prayer is a good place to go!
24. Verse 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 upon 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 Secu. And he asked, "Where are Samuel and David?" "Over in Naioth at Ramah," they said.
- a) Let me set the scene:
 - i) King Saul found out David was staying with Samuel.
 - ii) Saul sent soldiers to capture David. Instead of capturing David, the spirit of God came upon these soldiers and they started "prophesying".
 - iii) Saul sent more men, and they started prophesying.
 - iv) Saul sent over a third squad. The same thing happened.
 - v) Finally Saul went himself and found out where David was.
 - b) First of all to "prophesy" is not just to tell the future. The word literally means, "to shine forth". To take the Word of God and expound upon it and "make it shine" is also to prophesy. The soldiers could have just been standing there praising God and stating the glories of God. That could be prophesying. It could also be stating predictions, as we tend to think of prophesying. The point is we don't know the details.
 - c) This whole scene is pretty funny to think about. Imagine the messengers telling Saul, "Your highness, you know those soldiers you sent to get David? Well word is they are standing there near Samuel prophesying!" Imagine the messengers telling Saul the same thing after the second and third squad do the same thing.
 - d) In life, sometimes "we are the last to know". Ever notice that when someone is going through a problem, everyone around them is aware of the problem and that person themselves is the last to know they have a problem? That is the case of Saul.
 - i) By the time the third group of soldiers were prophesying, it should have been obvious to Saul that "OK, something's up. God must be behind this".
 - ii) Instead, Saul kept sending more soldiers, and finally went himself.

25. Verse 23: So Saul went to Naioth at Ramah. But the Spirit of God came even upon him, and he walked along prophesying until he came to Naioth. ²⁴ He stripped off his robes and also prophesied in Samuel's presence. He lay that way all that day and night. This is why people say, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"
- a) This is the scene that would make a great movie: Saul himself finally gets to David's presence and what happens? Saul himself gets down to his undergarments (or naked in some translations) and starts prophesying himself!
 - b) It is as if Saul was "angel-possessed" as opposed to "demon possessed" and he couldn't help what he was doing!
 - c) Imagine what the on-lookers were thinking. Here was there king either naked or in his undergarments lying on the ground for a full day prophesying out loud!
 - d) God was making it obvious to everyone but Saul himself that God was raising up David to be the king. The last phrase is how people say, "'Is Saul also among the prophets?'"
 - i) I'm guessing that phrase was around at the time this book was compiled sometime after David's life was over. This passage, along with the parallel passage in Chapter 10 about the cliché "Is Saul among the prophets" was still in use.
 - ii) The expression means, "anything is possible". To expand, it is the idea that "If Saul can be a prophet, than God can do manipulate anyone to do anything.
26. OK, quick wrap up:
- a) We are reading of the rise of David and the fall of Saul. No matter what Saul tells David to do, David succeeds. David's secret is he trusts in God and not his own abilities.
 - i) Despite Saul's best effort to kill David, despite David's wife lying to help him, David is succeeding because it is God's will for David to succeed. It is not about "How good David is". It is about God's will getting accomplished.
 - b) It is also becoming obvious to everyone in Israel except Saul as to what is going on. The reason "Is Saul among the prophets" is a popular cliché is that people were figuring out that Saul was losing power and David was gaining power.
 - c) OK, what's the lesson for us? The lesson is in order to figure out God's will, it requires prayer ("e.g., "may your will be done, period") reading of God's word in order to understand what God commands of us, and then, well, just watch.
 - i) Sometimes it becomes obvious just by "watching life" what is God's will. It was obvious to everyone in Israel what was happening.
 - ii) When it isn't obvious, sometimes we just keep moving forward and putting our trust in God that He is working it out for His glory.
 - iii) Think also about the fact that the chapter ends with David running for his life. Did David understand it was "God's will" for him to run? Probably not. Sometimes we don't understand God's will without hindsight. There are situations where we are called to move and even "run" even if we don't understand what is going on.
 - iv) The point is we have to remember that God does want the best for us, especially during the difficult moments of life.
27. Let's pray: Heavenly Father, Help us first of all, to accept Your will for our lives, especially when it is difficult. Help us to remember just how much You love us and want the best for us. Give us discernment as we go through life to make decisions for Your glory. Help us to remember that You are always guiding us, even when we don't sense it or in situations where everything appears to be going wrong. May You be glorified by all we do in all situations. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.