

# David, Waiting for the Kingdom

## *Waiting for the Lord*

In the rest of 1 Samuel we see David, the anointed king, waiting for the promised kingdom. This was a time of preparation. It was a time of humiliation and danger as He faced opposition and threats on his life from the hand of Saul, the outgoing king. A favorite theme of David in the psalms was “wait for the Lord,” 5 times specifically, “wait” alone, of the Lord, 23 times.<sup>1</sup> Our own struggles need to be informed by this same dynamic as we wait for the Lord in our own lives and apply New Testament truth about growth, that God uses testing in our journey to become like Jesus Christ. Few things test our faith like waiting for God to act in His own timing and for His own purposes. It should be of some comfort and encouragement for us to persevere in faith as we see God’s faithfulness to David. We, also, must fight the “little battles” as we grow and serve and wait, trusting in His faithfulness, even as our own unfaithfulness is exposed. The New Testament reveals this kind of testing as part of the process of character growth we must all go through (James 1:2-4).

## David and Saul’s Family

1 Samuel 18-20 share with us some details of the relationship between David and Saul also Saul’s family, especially Jonathan, the heir apparent to the throne of Israel. The main characters are Saul, Jonathan and Michal, Saul’s daughter.

### *The fall from grace.*

David’s success in the contest with Goliath gained him a favored place in Saul’s house. He was not allowed to go home afterwards even though it seems like he did not know of David beforehand, as indicated in 17:55-58. David and Jonathan, heir apparent to the throne, hit it off immediately as “Jonathan committed himself to David.” Even more, it says “Jonathan loved him as himself,” 18:1, 3. He made a covenant with David and even gave David the robe he was wearing and his sword, bow and belt. They were good buddies!

This was a favorable time for David. Saul even sent him out on various missions and, after much success, installed him as commander of the army. The text says all this pleased all the people and those close to Saul. Things were going well.

As is usually true in life, this didn’t last long. At some point David’s notoriety started to work against him. We read in 18:6-8 that women singers came out to proclaim the military victories of the Israeli army but gave David more credit saying,

“Saul has slain his thousands,  
And David his ten thousands.” 2 Samuel 18:7

Of course this didn’t go over well with the insecure and disobedient Saul. He became “very angry” at being overshadowed by his young counterpart which he saw as threatening to remove

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<sup>1</sup> 5 times total in Psalms (English) 2 times in Psa 27:17; “wait” alone, of the Lord, 23 times. [\*New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update\*](#) (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995). All scripture quotes are from this version unless otherwise noted.

the kingdom from him. The key sentence in the text is the last one, “Saul eyed David with suspicion from that day on.”<sup>2</sup> So we are introduced to the pre-kingdom phase of David’s life as He waited on God to make him king as anointed by Samuel the prophet and last judge of Israel.

### *The evil spirit and marriage*

These are not necessarily related subjects though some might disagree! No it’s simply that they appear in our story in proximity not consequently. Verses 10-11 relate to the evil spirit and its effect on Saul, closer proximity and yes consequently. The demon is said to have been “from God” and it “rushed upon Saul,” with the consequential English pronoun, “and,” used causally to indicate it produced the instability referred to as “rave” by many translations, “and he raved in the midst of the house”<sup>3</sup>. A small detail turns up the drama as the text almost casually mentions that “a spear was in Saul’s hand.” Beware of deranged kings with a spear! So the text wastes no time with suspense, saying immediately, “Saul hurled the spear.” This time David, playing on his instrument was a stationary target for the deranged King Saul. But the text says David still avoided the weapon thrust at him, “twice.” So the hero prevails for the time being!



Guercino, [Saul Attacking David](#) (1646), Galeria Nacional de Arte Antiguo, Rome<sup>4</sup>

However the relationship doesn’t improve but it does enter a new phase, in which Saul’s fear of David increases, “because the Lord was with him but had left Saul” 18:12. In this new phase, Saul removed David from his personal presence and gave him command over a thousand of the warriors of the kingdom. This may have been different than what was described in the text in 18:5, “so Saul put him in charge of the men of war,”<sup>5</sup> making this a demotion. This could be a more specific description of 18:5 and what was referenced there. However, this seems to be different, which would constitute a demotion from the more general reference there, “men of

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<sup>2</sup> [New American Standard Bible](#) (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 2020), 1 Sa 18:9; so the rest (**et all**), unless otherwise noted.

<sup>3</sup> NASB95, NASB2020, ESV; “prophesying” NIV, LEB, speaking of an irrational emotional state.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.jesuswalk.com/david/images/tissot-saul-endavors-to-pierce-david-800x552.jpg>

<sup>5</sup> 1 Sa 18:5.

war.” That seems to be a reference to the whole army and the context was positive in the aftermath of the struggle with Goliath. Whereas the context now is more unfavorable, with Saul being afraid of David and trying to put distance between David and himself.<sup>6</sup> Still the end is the same, “David was successful in all his ways, for the LORD *was* with him.”<sup>7</sup> He also had high standing with the general public, “all Israel and Judah loved David.”<sup>8</sup>

Saul, being highly devious, hatched a new strategy, he would get David married! Surely this would be his ruin. Saul’s oldest daughter was named Merab and he proposed the marriage as a pretext to engage David (intended) in danger from Israel’s mortal enemy of the time, the Philistines. He would obligate David to fight the Philistines, ignoring the fact that David had already faced this foe with great success. Oh well, I guess, keep trying the same thing hoping for a different result! After all, Saul was unbalanced already. So why not prove the old adage true by employing this tactic to prove his insanity.

However, David sidestepped this strategy with a tactic of his own, true humility. This is decidedly not a popular strategy in this world, unfortunately, and Saul did not recognize it but gave Merab to someone else as wife. “Humility goes before honor,” Pro 18:12. David considered himself unworthy to be son-in-law of the king. David was a man of character and that godly character protected him against evil.

In time, however, a new romance developed with another daughter of Saul. Her name was Michal. She “loved David” 18:20. Saul liked the idea and hatched the same plot he did with his other daughter earlier, “I will give her to him so that she may become a trap for him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him,” 18:21. Still considering himself too insignificant to be the king’s son-in-law, David was reluctant, again, in spite of devious mediation by some of Saul’s servants, at his behest.

Their intervention on behalf of Saul and his plan turned out to be counterproductive, again. Told the king only asked for a dowry of a hundred foreskins of the uncircumcised Philistines, Saul was hoping the Philistines would resolve his problem. David foiled the plot, again, however. He and his men promptly went out and collected double what was asked for the dowry. “And (“So,” NASB95) Saul gave him his daughter Michal as a wife,” 18:27.

So ends the “marriage strategy” of King Saul against David, the man anointed by God to be the next king of Israel. Chapter 18 chronicles Saul’s progression from “suspicion,” 9, to fear, 12 and 15, to being “even more afraid of David”, 29. It, however, records that “the Lord was with David,” 3 times, 12, 14 and 28. He proves faithful to His word as David perseveres in faith under pressure.

This section of 1 Samuel now ends in verse 30 with another account of David’s prowess in battle against the Philistines, the arch enemy of Israel at this time in history. “So his name was held in high esteem,” 30. But “Saul was David’s enemy continually,” 29.

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<sup>6</sup> The conclusion is supported by the 3 fold sentence structure with “and” separating the parts of the new phase for David, with removal, new command and a more public presence before the people of the nation.

<sup>7</sup> 1 Sa 18:14.

<sup>8</sup> 1 Sa 18:16.