

Bi235 Old Testament 2

Lesson Bi235-18 Saul Tries to Kill David

One of the proverbs of Solomon says, “Jealousy makes a man furious, and he will not spare when he takes revenge (Prov 6:34). We learned that after David’s victory over Goliath, Saul ordered David to stay with him. David became a great friend of Prince Jonathan, Saul’s son. Saul began sending David on military missions. He was so successful as a fighter that Saul promoted him to high rank in the army.

But Saul became jealous of David. As Saul and his soldiers returned to Gibeah from the battle with the Philistines, they were greeted by women dancing and singing. The women sang, “Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands.” Of course, they were exaggerating, but the song made Saul angry. From that time on, Saul watched David carefully.

The next day David was in the palace, playing his lyre for Saul. Saul became so jealous and angry that he threw a spear at David. “I’ll pin David to the wall,” Saul said to himself. But David dodged the spear. Saul was afraid of David because Yahweh was with David and had departed from Saul.

Saul put David in command of 1,000 men and sent them on dangerous missions. “Maybe the Philistines will kill David for me,” thought Saul. But David had success after success as a military leader. This made Saul more afraid of David.

Saul had another idea: he would give his elder daughter to David in marriage. He thought this would make David more loyal to him. But David humbly refused, saying, “Who am I, that I should become the king’s son-in-law?” So Saul gave her in marriage to another man.

Saul’s other daughter Michal was in love with David. Saul was pleased when he heard about it. “I will give Michal to David.” He ordered his servants to speak to David privately and encourage him to marry Michal. David listened to the servants, but was still reluctant to marry.

So Saul sent word to David. “For a bride-price, I want you to kill 100 Philistines. This will be revenge against our enemies.” Saul secretly hoped that David would be killed in battle. David accepted the challenge. He and his troops went out and killed 200 Philistines—twice the number required as a bride-price. Saul kept his word and gave his daughter to David as his wife. But now Saul was even more afraid of David’s popularity (1Sam 18:7-29).

Saul even commanded his son Jonathan and other court attendants to kill David. But Jonathan loved David and sent him a warning. “My father Saul is looking for a chance to kill you. Go into hiding and stay there. I’ll talk to my father about you, and secretly let you know what I find out.” Jonathan talked with King Saul about David. He reminded his father that David had been loyal to him and had never wronged him. “Why kill an innocent man like David?” he asked.

Saul listened to Jonathan and changed his mind. “As surely as Yahweh lives, David will not be put to death.” Jonathan repeated the whole conversation to David, and brought David back into the palace to be with Saul. Saul was agreeable with this.

Once again, Saul became jealous of David's military successes. He tried to kill him in the palace. David escaped, but Saul sent men to David's house to ambush him. David's wife Michal warned him, "If you don't run for your life tonight, tomorrow you'll be killed." She let David down through a window, and he ran away.

When Saul realized that his daughter Michal had helped David escape, he demanded, "Why did you deceive me like this and let my enemy escape?" (1Sam 19:1-17).

Michal lied and said, "He threatened to kill me if I didn't help him escape."

David ran away to Samuel's home in Ramah and told him everything that had happened. Saul tried to catch him in Ramah, but Yahweh protected him. David contacted his friend Jonathan and asked, "What have I done? What is my crime? How have I wronged your father that he is trying to take my life?" (1Sam 20:1). Jonathan was surprised that his father had once again turned against David. He and David agreed on a plan to find out what Saul's true feelings were about David. Sadly, Jonathan discovered that his father was determined to get rid of David.

During the next months David was on the run from Saul. He gathered some soldiers around him and tried to find safe places to hide. Anyone who helped David was killed by Saul. He even killed 85 priests of the Lord for helping David. Saul kept trying to find him, but God protected David, and he escaped time and time again.

One time Saul was chasing him, and turned aside to go into a cave. This was the very cave where David and his men were hiding. David's men encouraged him to kill Saul. "The LORD forbid that I should do such a thing to my master. He is the LORD'S anointed king!" said David. But David crept up unnoticed behind the king and cut off a piece of Saul's robe. After Saul and his men had relieved themselves, they left the cave.

When Saul was some distance away, David came out and called to him, "My lord the king!" Then David bowed low to the ground. "Why do you listen to men who say that I'm trying to harm you? You were here in the cave, and my men wanted me to kill you. But I said, 'I will not lay my hand on the LORD'S anointed one.' See this piece of your robe. I cut it off, but I didn't harm you."

Saul wept when he heard David's voice. "You are more righteous than I," he said. You have treated me well, but I have treated you badly. May Yahweh reward you well for the way you treated me today. I know that you will surely be king and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hands" (1Sam 24:6-11, 17-20).

Saul returned home, and David and his men stayed in their hiding places in Judah. Saul tried again to track him down, and again David spared his life. Finally, Saul stopped trying. During these years, David did nothing to harm the king. He believed that God had anointed him to become king after Saul, but he did nothing to hurt Saul.

This story is **important** because it shows us that the first king of the Israelite tribes was not a good man. He was quick-tempered and moody. He loved David and he hated David. He knew that God had chosen David to succeed him as king. He was angry and jealous.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that Saul proved to be half-hearted in his commitment to God. His bad decisions led God to reject him and his clan as the royal family. He spent more time chasing David than defeating the true enemies of Israel.

Let's **review** this lesson—

1. Why did God reject Saul as king and choose David instead? [Pause]
 - A. If you said, "Saul proved that his faithfulness to God was half-hearted and changeable," you are correct.
2. Why was Saul jealous of David? [Pause]
 - A. If you said, "David became more popular than Saul as a military leader, for God was with him," you are right.
3. Why was David successful in escaping from Saul? [Pause]
 - A. If you said, "David had friends that warned him when Saul was coming, and God protected him through these friends," you are correct.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to listen to it at least three times. As you hear the story each time, imagine how it happened. See the events in your own mind. Then tell the story in your own words as you remember it to a group of fellow believers.

David's path to the leadership of Israel was neither quick nor easy, though God had called him and anointed him. He was loyal to his king, but received only suspicion and hatred in return. Jesus warned his followers of something similar. "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). Memorize these words of Jesus and teach this verse to some of your fellow believers who may be going through trials.