

David and Jonathan

The son of King Saul becomes David's closest friend, protecting him from his own father's jealous rage.

1 Samuel 18:1-4 • 1 Samuel 20:1-42

CHARACTERS: David, Jonathan, Saul

THEMES: Friendship, Loyalty, Sacrifice

AFTER DAVID KILLED Goliath, Jonathan the son of Saul became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself. Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him, and he gave David his robe, tunic, sword, bow, and belt—a prince giving his royal garments to a shepherd.

But as David's fame grew, so did Saul's jealousy. 'Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands,' the women sang. Saul was furious. From that time on, Saul kept a jealous eye on David, and twice tried to kill him with a spear.

David fled and found Jonathan. 'What have I done? What is my crime? Why is your father trying to kill me?'

'Never!' Jonathan protested. 'My father doesn't do anything without telling me. He wouldn't hide this from me.'

'Your father knows very well that I have found favor in your eyes,' David replied. 'He said to himself, "Jonathan must not know this or he will be grieved." As surely as the Lord lives, there is only a step between me and death.'

Jonathan agreed to find out his father's intentions. They made a plan involving arrows as signals. Jonathan would shoot arrows near where

David was hiding; his words to the servant boy retrieving them would tell David whether it was safe or not.

At the new moon feast, Saul noticed David's absence and grew suspicious. When Jonathan defended David, Saul hurled his spear at his own son. Now Jonathan knew—his father was determined to kill David.

In the morning, Jonathan went out to the field with a young boy. He shot an arrow beyond the boy and called out, 'Isn't the arrow beyond you? Hurry! Go quickly! Don't stop!' These were the words that meant danger.

After the boy left, David came out from hiding. He bowed before Jonathan three times with his face to the ground. Then they kissed each other and wept together—but David wept the most.

Jonathan said to David, 'Go in peace, for we have sworn friendship with each other in the name of the Lord, saying, "The Lord is witness between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants forever."'

David left, and Jonathan went back to town. Their friendship would endure beyond death itself.