

4.08 JONATHAN HELPS DAVID

1 SAMUEL 19, 20

David served King Saul in his kingdom of Israel as a commander of one of the armies. He was very successful. David became famous for all the battles he won. David also continued to play the harp for King Saul when a sad spirit attacked his mind. But, because of Saul's jealousy of David, Saul became like a madman and wanted to kill David.

Saul's son, Jonathan, was David's best friend. Jonathan tried talking to his father about how David had served him. "Please don't attack David," Jonathan said. "Look at all the good he has done for you. He has always helped you. Remember how he killed the giant Philistine and how the Lord brought such a great victory to Israel? You were happy about that."

Saul said, "You are right. I won't hurt David." But one day, an evil spirit attacked Saul's mind again. While David was playing the harp, once again Saul threw a spear at him. David ran away and escaped into the night.

When David found Jonathan again, he said to him, "What have I done? What is my crime? Why should your father want to kill me?" Jonathan asked, "What can I do to help you?" David replied, "Tomorrow there will be a celebration. I always eat with your father on special occasions, but tomorrow, I will hide in the field. If your father asks where I am, tell him I had to go back to my home in Bethlehem for a family visit. If he says, 'That's fine,' you will know all is well with him. But if he gets angry, you will know he is planning to kill me."

Jonathan agreed to help his friend and said to David, "Tomorrow, after we eat and you are hiding, I will go out and shoot three arrows. When I send a boy out to collect the arrows, if I say loudly, 'The arrows are on this side,' it will mean all is well, there is no trouble. But, if I say to the boy, 'Go farther. The arrows are still ahead of you,' then it means you must leave immediately, for the Lord is sending you away."

David stayed in the field the next night. The king sat down to eat at his table. David's place was empty. The first night of the celebration, Saul said nothing. However, the second night, Saul asked his son Jonathan where David was. Jonathan said, "David asked me if he could go to Bethlehem for a family visit. That is why he is not here."

King Saul was in a rage of anger! He got very angry with Jonathan and called him bad names. "I know what you're thinking!" he said to Jonathan. "You want David to be King! You know you will never be king as long as David is alive! Go and find him so I can destroy him!" Jonathan asked, "But what has he ever done to you?" Then King Saul hurled a spear at his own son!

Jonathan went out in the field the next day and shot three arrows. When the boy went to get the arrows, Jonathan shouted, "The arrows are still ahead of you!" David understood what that message meant. Jonathan told the boy to take his bow and arrows back home. David came out from where he had been hiding.

David bowed three times to Jonathan, with his face to the ground. They then hugged each other and said goodbye. Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace. The Lord knows there is a friendship between us and our children forever." Then, David left.

4.08 JONATHAN HELPS DAVID - TEACHER'S GUIDE

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HIGHLIGHTS:

- 1) David was successful in leading battles for Israel and was well known among the people. Because of this, King Saul had become jealous and wanted to kill David.
- 2) Jonathan, King Saul's son, asked his father to remember all the good things David had done for him. But the evil spirit would enter Saul's mind and cause him to be like a madman, and he would, once again, try to kill David.
- 3) David was expected to attend a celebration and to sit at King Saul's table to eat. He told Jonathan he didn't know why Saul wanted to kill him. Jonathan told David he would help him.
- 4) For two nights of the celebration, David hid in a field. King Saul did not ask where David was the first night. But, on the second night, King Saul did ask where David was. Jonathan told him David was with his family in Bethlehem. King Saul became very angry and threw his spear at his own son!
- 5) Jonathan and David had a plan. Jonathan would shoot three arrows. David would be listening to Jonathan when he sent a boy to collect the arrows. If Jonathan told the boy to go farther to find the arrows, David would know it meant that King Saul would be after him. That is what happened.
- 6) David had to leave. He and Jonathan had to say goodbye. But they knew that God would keep friendship between them and their children, too.

QUESTIONS:

- 1) Why was King Saul jealous of David?
- 2) What happened when an evil spirit came upon King Saul?
- 3) Where did David hide during the nights of the celebration?
- 4) What did Jonathan tell his father?
- 5) King Saul became angry the second night. What did he do?
- 6) When David and Jonathan said goodbye, what did they believe God would do for them?

ANSWERS:

- 1) King Saul was jealous of David because he was successful and well known.
- 2) When an evil spirit came upon Saul, he would become like a madman and want to kill David.
- 3) David hid in a field the nights of the celebration.
- 4) Jonathan told his father David had gone to be with his family in Bethlehem.
- 5) The second night, King Saul threw a spear at Jonathan, his own son.
- 6) Jonathan and David knew God would keep a friendship between them and their children.