

Last week in considering chapter 19, I pointed out the repetition of the terms "fled" and "escaped"—in fact, if you recall, David fled from Saul four times—chapter 20:1, recounts the last of these escapes, v1—"Then David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and went and said to Jonathan." In other words, David fled from Saul who was in Naioth in Ramah, and returned to Jonathan.

David knew that Jonathan would assist him, because they had previously made a covenant together (18:1-4). And so the covenant described in chapter 20, is not a second covenant between David and Jonathan, but an expansion of the first covenant. David took refuge in Jonathan, because Jonathan and David had already made a covenant together.

Now, before I go any further, let me say at the outset, that covenant is the key to chapter 20. Though it's only found twice in our English translation, the elements of a covenant (oath, promises, and peace), are found throughout the chapter.

Most of you know that the Bible is a book of covenants—it's divided into two halves called the Old and New Testaments (or covenants). The Christian religion is built upon a covenant between God and man in Christ. This covenant find's its origin in eternity past in what's called the covenant of redemption—it's shadowed in the OC made with physical Israel, and it's fulfilled in the NC made with true Israel.

Now, the covenant made between Jonathan and David isn't to be confused with any of these divine covenants, but it illustrates our covenant with God in many ways. Perhaps put another way, the covenant between Jonathan and David sheds insight into our covenant with God in Christ. Thus, in coming to our theme, David's Covenant with Jonathan, I want to point out five things about this covenant, and show how this shed's light upon our covenant with God in Christ.

- I. Its Nature
- II. Its Comfort
- III. Its Promises
- IV. Its Cost
- V. Its Peace

I. Its Nature

1. As I said, the actual Hebrew word for covenant is only found once in chapter 20 in v8—"Therefore you shall deal kindly with your servant, for you have brought your servant into a covenant of the LORD with you."
2. Our English translations use it again in v16, and the related concepts of a covenant (oath and promise) are found throughout the chapter.
3. It becomes very evident that the covenant between Jonathan and David, is the dominant theme of chapter 20.
4. Now, as I have already said, the covenant described in chapter 20, was originally made back in chapter 18:1-4.
5. These are not two distinct covenants, but a single covenant that is here expanded upon—additional promises are made.
6. Simply put, a covenant is a relationship built upon promise—it's a relationship between two parties, wherein each party makes promises.
7. Now, as I have already said, the covenant made between Jonathan and David was a man-made covenant between two people.
8. But this doesn't mean that God was not involved—all covenants were made before God as the "covenant Guardian."
9. This is actually a phrase that Dale Ralph Davis uses in his commentary on 1Samuel—God is very much involved in this covenant (thus, it's called, v8—'a covenant of the LORD').

10. V23—"And as for the matter which you and I have spoken of, indeed the LORD be between you and me forever."
11. These are the words of Jonathan to David—by "matter" is meant the promises of the covenant (which we will look at in a moment).
12. Jonathan says—"the LORD be between you and me forever"—that is, may the LORD act as Guardian of the covenant.
13. May the LORD serve as Judge of the covenant—may the LORD be Witness of the covenant and our specific promises.
14. V42—"Then Jonathan said to David, 'Go in peace, since we have both sworn in the name of the LORD, saying, 'May the LORD be between you and me, and between your defendants and my descendants, forever.'"
15. Notice the phrase "we have both sworn in the name of the LORD"—this is covenantal language—they swore an oath.
16. And this oath or solemn promise was made "in the name of the LORD"—this means, with the LORD as witness (v12—"the LORD God of Israel is witness").
17. It's for this reason, covenants were binding upon each party, and there would be serious consequences, if either party failed to fulfil their promises.
18. In fact, covenants were so serious, that oftentimes, people invoked the curse of God upon them, if they broke the covenant.
19. Thus, the very Hebrew word translated "covenant" literally means "to cut" and implies, the party that breaks covenant would be cut off from life.
20. And so, having briefly considered the covenant between David and Jonathan, let me remind you God has made a covenant with us.
21. Historically, we refer to this covenant as the covenant of grace (though admittedly this phrase isn't found in Scripture).
22. It's called the covenant of grace because it's a gracious covenant that fulfills the covenant of works made with Adam.
23. God made a covenant with Adam as the federal head of humanity—if Adam obeyed, he and his posterity would have had eternal life—if he disobeyed, he and his posterity would deserve eternal death.
24. Thus, I want to take a few minutes and remind you three things about the COG, and then make a few applications.
25. (1) The COG is founded on the eternal covenant—this refers to the covenant between the Father and Son in eternity past.
26. From eternity past, the Father promised the Son, in reward of His humiliation, a name above every name as the GodMan.
27. The Son in turn promised to become flesh and pay the penalty our sin deserved—these promises were made in a covenant.
28. And it's this covenant, often referred to as the covenant of redemption, that serves as the foundation for the COG.
29. In other words, the Covenant of Grace that's promised in time, was built upon the Covenant of Redemption in eternity.
30. From eternity the Son committed to become a Man, live a perfect life and die a sacrificial death, to provide redemption.
31. And when this promise is revealed in time, within the pages of Scripture, it's revealed as the promised Covenant of Grace.
32. (2) The COG is shadowed in the OC—by OC is meant the covenant God made with physical and literal Israel.
33. After Adam sinned and broke his covenant, God promised, in Genesis 3:15, He would make another covenant.
34. This one would concern the seed of the woman who would crush the head of the serpent—He would reverse the fall.
35. This promise, which is the COG, is then shadowed in a string of historical covenants with Abraham, Moses, and David.

36. These three historical covenants (Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic), are all made with Abraham and his physical seed.
37. In fact, it's not wrong to few all things together as the OC, or the national covenant made with Israel, as a type of the church.
38. (3) The COG is fulfilled in the NC—perhaps another way of saying this would be, the NC is the COG realized.
39. Or else, another way of saying this would be—the COG was nothing more than the promise of the NC to come.
40. It's for this reason, every person ever saved, regardless when they lived, was saved by virtue of the NC (as they anticipated this covenant).
41. The OC had Moses as its mediator and promised temporal blessings, whereas the NC has Christ as its Mediator and promises eternal blessings.
42. This is the covenant that every Christian has entered into with God in Christ—we are members of the new and better covenant.
43. Thus, Christ describes His blood as the blood of the NC, and Paul describes ministers as ministers of the NC.
44. (a) Privileges of the NC—the privileges or benefits of the NC are regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification.
45. Every single member of the NC, has the benefits of the that covenant—they have a new heart, forgiveness, and the Holy Spirit.
46. Perhaps I can put it like this—every covenant member has Christ who is the Mediator of the New and better covenant.
47. Jer.31:34—"They all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.
48. (b) Entrance into the NC—people enter the NC in a similar way people entered the OC—they are born into that covenant.
49. People entered the OC through physical birth and people enter the NC through spiritual birth—people are born into covenant.
50. Perhaps another way of saying this would be—just as every OC member was circumcised (at least the males), so every NC member is spiritually circumcised.

II. Its Comfort

1. By this I refer to the comfort this covenant brought to David—it's the reason he sought out Jonathan as he did.
2. V8—"Therefore you shall deal kindly with your servant, for you have brought your servant into a covenant of the LORD with you."
3. This is in many ways a key text in this chapter, and it contains a key word with regards to a covenant—it's here rendered "kindly."
4. The Hebrew word is *hesed* and as with many Hebrew words no single English word captures its meaning (thus it's variously translated).
5. For example, throughout the OT this single Hebrew word is rendered "lovingkindness, mercy, and steadfast love."
6. Fundamental to its meaning are the related concepts of "love and loyalty"—perhaps we could render it "loyal love."
7. It does not merely refer to loyalty nor does it merely refer to love—but it refers to loyal love within a covenant.
8. It refers to loyal love built upon solemn promises—it refers to a covenant faithfulness expressed by loving loyalty.
9. Jeff Smith—"Hesed is more than just love. It's loyal love. It's more than just kindness. It's dependably kindness."
10. Thus, David left Samuel and went to Jonathan because he knew Jonathan would show him love as the result of his promise.

11. The fact that David and Jonathan had made a covenant together, assured David he would find love from Jonathan.
12. And this is the entire point about covenants—they underscore the unfailing commitment between two parties.
13. Perhaps put another way—while a covenant may not ensure the intensity of love it does ensure the certainty of love.
14. And this is, in part, the problem with people who want an intimate relationship without a formal binding covenant.
15. Perhaps you've heard people say—what need is there for formal marriage—what is marriage put a piece of paper!
16. But they fail to understand, marriage is a formal commitment to faithfully love a person until death separates you.
17. And this is why David returned to Jonathan at this point—he returned to Jonathan because he promised to love him.
18. V8—"Therefore you shall deal kindly with your servant, for you have brought your servant into a covenant of the LORD with you."
19. Perhaps I can put it this way—David found comfort in Jonathan's loyal love as promised to him in the form of a covenant.
20. And thus, we are taught, that Christians too must find comfort and safety in God's loyal love as found in His covenant.
21. It's for this reason we find David, throughout the Psalms, not running to the loyal love of Jonathan but to God (the word is found more than 150 times in the Psalms).
22. Remember, although David was unique in ways, he was a man who loved God, in a world filled with God-haters.
23. And thus, time and time again, throughout the Psalms, David runs to the Lord to find refuge in His *hesed* love.
24. Thus, if we were to examine these passages throughout the Psalm, there's at least three reasons David fled to God.
25. (1) The covenant provides stability, Ps.21:7—"For the king trusts in the LORD, and through the mercy (*hesed*) of the Most High he shall not be moved."
26. It was because of His loyal love that David would not be moved—that is, he shall not be moved from his throne.
27. Here's the reason—the certainty of David's throne was built upon the covenant faithfulness and loyalty of God.
28. But what does this say to us? Well, remember brethren, we too have been anointed as kings and await our crown.
29. (2) The covenant promotes confidence, Ps.6:3-4—"My soul also is greatly troubled; but You, O LORD—how long? Return, O LORD, deliver me! Oh, save me for Your mercies' sake (for your *hesed's* sake)!"
30. David's soul was greatly troubled, and it felt as if God had departed from him—"Return, O LORD, deliver me!"
31. David needed salvation—salvation from his enemies who surrounded him, and it seemed God was nowhere to be found.
32. What gave David confidence to cry to God for help—what gave David the assurance to cry to God to return and save him—"Oh, save me for Your mercies sake."
33. Save me for the sake of your covenant faithfulness—save me for the sake of your loving loyalty, your covenant love.
34. (3) The covenant breeds adoration, Ps.13:5-6—"But I have trusted in Your mercy (*hesed*); my heart shall rejoice in Your salvation. I will sing to the LORD, because He has dealt bountifully with me."

III. Its Promises

1. As I have already said, promises and/or oaths are essential to a covenant—a covenant is an oath bound promise.

2. And so, it's for this reason, we should not be surprised that chapter 20, is largely a description of covenant promises.
3. The promises are basically twofold—Jonathan promises to protect David, and David promises to remember Jonathan.
4. (1) Jonathan promised to protect David—in short, Jonathan promises to find out Saul's disposition towards David.
5. Either way, whether Saul was still seeking to kill David or not, Jonathan would let David know of Saul's intentions.
6. Verses 12-13—"Then Jonathan said to David; 'The LORD God of Israel is witness! When I have sounded out my father sometime tomorrow, or the third day, and indeed there is good toward David, and I do not send to you and tell you, may the LORD do so and much more to Jonathan. But if it pleases my father to do you evil, then I will report it to you and send you away, that you may go in safety. And the LORD be with you as He has been with my father.'"
7. This is the heart of Jonathan's promise to David—he would find out his father's disposition toward David and inform him either way.
8. (2) David promised to remember Jonathan, v14—"And you shall not only show me the kindness of the LORD while I still love, that I may not die; but you shall not cut off your kindness from my house forever, no, not when the LORD has cut off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth."
9. In other words, Jonathan knew in order for him to fulfill his promises David, he would face the wrath of his father.
10. And so, Jonathan makes David promise, that he would not only show kindness to him, but also to his descendants.
11. Now, as we are going to see in 2Samuel, David is going to uphold his promise as he shows mercy to Mephibosheth (Jonathan's distant relative).
12. Thus, both Jonathan and David uphold their covenant promises—they both make good on their promised loyalty.
13. (a) God makes promises to us, Heb.6:17-18—"Thus, God determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath."
14. God confirmed His covenant promises with an oath—put another way, God, in the covenant, promises to be our God.
15. (b) We make promises to God—what promises do we make to God? Simply put, we promise to remain His people.
16. Isa.46:23-24—"I have sworn by Myself; the word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that to Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall take an oath. He shall say, Surely in the LORD I have righteousness and strength."

IV. Its Cost

1. Because covenants contain promises, most covenants come with a cost—this is especially true in the case of Jonathan.
2. This is evident in the complex scheme Jonathan created to communicate to David, Saul's disposition toward him.
3. This is really the main point about this plan—Jonathan has David hide, in likely the same field he hid in, in the previous chapter.
4. Jonathan will shoot three arrows at a target, and if he shoots the arrows to the side of the target (and says to the lad, Look, the arrows are on this side of you; get them and come) all is well, but if he shoots them over the target (and says to the lad, Look, the arrows are beyond you), then your life is in danger and you must flee.
5. This underscores the fact that Jonathan assumed Saul was watching him and was suspicious of his love for David.
6. Obviously, Saul was aware of the relationship that existed between them, and Jonathan's commitment to David.

7. As a result, Jonathan developed this plan, that would allow him to communicate to David, without speaking to him.
8. As it turns out, as we learn from vv41-42, seemingly Saul was not watching Jonathan, and the entire plan wasn't necessary.
9. But my main point here is this—for Jonathan to keep his promises, it would cost him his relationship with his father.
10. This is seen in verses 24-34—the New Moon had come—which refers to the monthly festival which included two days of feasts.
11. Because David was living in the royal palace, his presence at these feasts would have been expected (if not necessary).
12. After he fails to show on the second day, Saul becomes suspicious, and sees through the explanation given by Jonathan.
13. As a result, Saul attempts to kill Jonathan (v33), and Jonathan refuses to partake of the feast (v34), and tells David the next day about Saul's plans (v35).
14. Thus, I want to suggest, for Jonathan to fulfill his covenant promises to David, necessitated two things from Jonathan.
15. (1) He had to openly align himself with David, v30—"Then Saul's anger was aroused against Jonathan, and he said to him, 'You son of a perverse, rebellious woman! Do I not know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of your mother's nakedness?'"
16. In other words, in helping David (that is, in fulfilling his covenant promises), Jonathan was openly choosing sides.
17. Perhaps I can put it like this—in order for Jonathan to covenant with David, he had to be willing to forsake family.
18. He knew to have David's love, meant he would have Saul's wrath—he knew this covenant would cost him greatly.
19. (2) He had to renounce his own rule and kingdom, v31—"For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, you shall not be established, nor your kingdom."
20. In other words, Jonathan knew that his covenant loyalty shown to David, removed any hopes of him being king.
21. (a) We must forsake our own merit and righteousness, Matt.16:24—"If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself."
22. That is, let him deny his own merit, his own glory, his own honor, his own purposes, his own priorities, his own life.
23. Perhaps I can put it like this—when we enter into covenant with God, we agree that we are no longer sovereign.
24. Remember what Jonathan gave David back in chapter 18—he gave to David his royal robe and his weapons (sword and bow).
25. (b) We must leave our father's house (Satan's house)—all men by nature, are a part of Satan's house or family.
26. In other words, when we come to Christ, we turn our backs on this world, and invite the wrath of Satan and his hosts.
27. (c) We must love Christ more than father and mother, Matt.10:37—"He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me."
28. It's important to remember, this isn't something we do to get into covenant with God, but what we do in covenant with God.
29. In other words, it would be a perversion of Scripture to suggest, we have to love Christ above all to enter this covenant.
30. The only thing a sinner can do to enter this covenant with God is to forsake their own merit and come to Christ.
31. But those who have come to Christ, must know, to be in covenant with Christ, will often cost you father and mother.
32. This is what, in part, it will cost you to enter into covenant with God—who no longer live for you but for Him.

33. Lk.14:26-27—"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. 27 And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple."

V. Its Peace

1. V42—"Then Jonathan said to David, 'Go in peace, since we have both sworn in the name of the LORD, saying, 'May the LORD be between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants, forever.'"
2. It seems a little strange that Jonathan sends David away in peace, knowing all of the outward distress he was in.
3. Remember, the peace Jonathan mentions, refers to an inward calm and rest—the peace of God or peace of conscience.
4. Here's the point—the fact that Jonathan made a covenant with David and promised to protect, should have given David peace.
5. We find something similar in the gospel of John—our Savior sent out His disciples with a similar statement (Jn.16:33).
6. Jn.16:33—"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."
7. This verse reminds me of David and Jonathan—Jonathan was able to say something similar to David as he left.
8. "David—you are going to have more tribulation in this world, but you can have peace knowing I am for you."
9. Brethren, if Jonathan's promise brought peace to David, then how much more should Christ's promise bring us peace!
10. Christ has covenanted with His people! He has promised never to leave nor forsake them! His promise is sure! Amen.