

David & Jonathan

The Life of David

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Well, we continue our studies in the life of David. That's where we've been for a couple of months, I guess, it must be now, and we have reached this moment where we see friendship of the most special, the rarest kind. We read 1 Samuel 20 or the best part of that chapter, though were we to just go a few chapters back to 1 Samuel 18 to verse 3, we would see the beginning of this friendship which is spoken of there, that after the defeat of Goliath by David, then we read this, "Then Jonathan," he, of course, is Saul's son, oldest son, the one who would be expected and expecting to inherit the throne, but look, verse 3, 1 Samuel 18, "Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. Jonathan," we carry on, "took off the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his armor, even to his sword and his bow and his belt."

Well, we move around in the chronology, the narrative, and stop a little here and go back a little there and pick up themes and sort of make some of these threads that run through this fascinating narrative. A blow-by-blow account, isn't it, at times, and we're right, right in the mix of what's happening and feeling the stress and the burden upon David as a fugitive. Last time we saw just how difficult it had become and how Saul's enmity just boiled over again and again, this instability, irrationality that went with it, violence that came erupting out of him. Well, God's judgment on him, the distressing spirit that in that way enabled Saul to just gravitate downwards, his character breaking apart, suspicions and evil thoughts filling his mind, hanging on to office even though somewhere, somewhere in his heart he knows that David is the man that Samuel the prophet had spoken of, a better neighbor than he who would be the one to inherit the kingdom.

So David is in a difficult place facing persecution, but part of the great encouragement to him at that time, at that time of acute difficulty was his friendship with Jonathan. It started there in 1 Samuel 18 under happier times, but by the time we get to chapter 20, David is knowing very clearly now, it has become something he can't dismiss from his mind that Saul intends him harm, that that is now a settled opinion of Saul, that this is a course of action that he's not going to turn back from. Of course, David in that is right though he has to persuade Jonathan that that is, in fact, the intention of Saul, Jonathan's father. But what a remarkable friendship that it is, so close and yet there is Jonathan, the son of Saul, there would be so many things that would make this friendship impossible you would have thought, that your own father is trying to kill your best friend. Well,

that's perplexing. That's complicated and yet we find Jonathan beautifully uncomplicated, loving with such devotion, such zeal, with such clear-headedness as well that he could see perhaps even further at times than David could see what precisely was destined to happen.

And Jonathan shows this to us because, in a way, he sets the tone for the friendship. You notice he initiates it and he gives to David his robe and his armor which is a sign of great respect. That's what you do for a most special friend. He does it for David. So he begins, initiates it and sets the context for it, but he shows us that, well, in fact, in the end one good friend is enough, that that makes all the difference in a difficult world, troubles around us, one good friend can make all the difference, and most especially when we know that that one good friend has actually been sent into our life by our best friend of all and that is our Lord Jesus Christ. What a friend we have in Jesus. Yes. And he knows that we benefit actually from human sympathy and kindness from people that will get alongside us and share our woes and burdens and joys.

So here is Jonathan, sent of God to David, that this friendship the Lord Jesus Christ as we read in John 15, he speaks of friendship and speaks of what he is and how he regards those who are, well, no longer his servants he calls them. Remarkable, isn't it, they're friends, "If you do what I command." And those are terms that really are very very striking, aren't they? Who would have dared to believe that? I talked to a Muslim that we are called friends by our God, a holy God, a high God, but he calls us friends. They would be shocked. They think that's highly irreverent, highly blasphemous, I daresay. But we have the authority of scripture and something perhaps here modeled in the friendship of Jonathan and David. That is instructive to us as to the basis of that true friendship.

First heading: what brought them together? What brought them together? It's interesting, isn't it, friends look back over the years where they first met, how this started. Sometimes it can be quite a humorous beginning or some strange quirky situation, you know, thrust together maybe by some event but that out of that their friendship grew and stood the test of time. Well, it wasn't that they were of similar social standing. That wasn't the bonding, if you like. That, well, people were and mix with people like themselves and the rest of it. You get invited to events or you get invited at all by people often of similar social standing and the rest of that.

There we have it and people kind of flock together, but not here. This is the king's son and he is reaching out to and clasping to himself and overwhelming, really, by the kindness he shows, "There's my sword, there's my robe, there's my armor." A shepherd boy, in effect, this young man, obscure family, nothing particularly notable about him except now, of course, he's slain this giant but really in terms of social standing they are miles apart, and yet that makes no difference whatsoever to Jonathan because he sees something in David that is very very appealing. He's joined to him, joined in heart and soul to David because he's seen something and he's kind of worked it all out there in an instant and it's just been something, something about the way that he dealt with Goliath. Not just that he's a soldier like me, it is the whole way in which David went about it. Such faith in God.

So he sees something here, something appealing, something good, something very worthy, worth respecting. He sees a common aim of the glory of God, a kindred spirit. There is David, the man after God's own heart, and Jonathan in a lesser way, he also loves God and he meets somebody who he recognizes loves God and that draws him to him, that we are birds of a feather here, that we are kindred spirits, and this brings them into this friendship which survives even the facts that Jonathan's father, as we see, is trying to kill him. So Jonathan can obviously recognize God is with this young man, God is with this young man. That victory over Goliath and the way in which David conducted himself and carried himself in that, what he had said, this uncircumcised Philistine, he's trusting that God who by this giant, well, so he was, but not in God's eyes, that he defied the armies of the living God and David was affronted for the sake of God's honor and Jonathan loved that. He loved that. He loved the sense of David's faith, David's humility, that he hadn't sort of come out of that great victory there just full of himself, talking of what he did, how he thought it all through and, "Ah, that sling, that was going to be the way." That there was something modest about him, something good about his character. All of this drew Jonathan to him.

Now Jonathan himself we read only, in a way, of an episode in his life but it tells us a lot about him in 1 Samuel 14, that earlier before David probably comes on the scene, Jonathan had distinguished himself, taken initiative and attacked the garrison of the Philistines, and there had been about him there something noble again, something that reminds us of David or will remind us of David. So 1 Samuel 14:6, "Then Jonathan said to the young man who bore his armor, 'Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; it may be that the LORD will work for us. For nothing restrains the LORD from saving by many or by few.'" Well, that's saying it, isn't it there? That's saying it, that he's trusting in God and he's worked something out important here that if God is with you, then it doesn't matter what enemies you might have, they're going to melt away. And indeed they do and it is a great victory that is secured. So we read of that in verses 13 and 14 of that particular chapter. He expected great things of God and attempted great things for God, and there he was, the Philistines fled.

So Jonathan himself was a man of faith, a man of courage who believes in God and God's ability to win through great battles against the odds. So it's quite natural, I suppose, in that way that he would see it in David, a kindred spirit, and be drawn to him. So that's where we are, what brought them together. In fact, Jonathan couldn't stay away from him and was gravitating toward this man, just drawn to him. Second heading: covenant friendship. Covenant friendship. You hear, don't you, on more than one occasion that there's a covenant, that there are promises and engagements between the one and the other, that they give each other the most solemn vow and word. So that trust there, you see, there's trust and they can speak such things to each other and know that their promises are not going to be abused or be turned back and used against them. But here there can be openness and transparency, covenant friendship.

And there is something there, isn't there, the essence of true true friendship, a sharing of things, deep things, the most important things, being who we really are with our concerns

and our burdens, with our anxieties, with our hopes, a freedom of communication. You get the sense of it in 1 Samuel 20, don't you, that the freedom with which they communicate even when they have a difference of opinion, and yet they're listening to each other, carefully reasoning with each other, sharing their life in the most profound way as they are knit together in covenant friendship, till death us do part. And that, of course, was to be literally fulfilled when Jonathan tragically dies in battle alongside his father fighting the Philistines on Mount Gilboa.

But now this happier phase for them. Jonathan is always there, always available, always ready, ready to hear the concerns of his young friend, and there probably was a considerable difference in age between them, sharing their lives together, forwarding each other's best interests and doing it in a way that was so selfless, so remarkably unselfish. This interest in Jonathan in that way, he's a remarkable, remarkable man. Who in the world today would do what he does and bow to David's greater calling than he had? And Saul wouldn't and didn't. No, of Jonathan we might say what we find in Proverbs 18, and there in verse 24, "A man who has friends must himself be friendly, But there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother." That's Jonathan to David and at a time when David really needed it, really could value that, when he was oppressed and a fugitive. He must have felt very very alone and there was Jonathan at his side to strengthen him.

And the depth of that friendship one can gauge from David's side when Jonathan did die and in 2 Samuel 1:26, the composition of this lamentation both of the death of Saul as well as Jonathan and the words that David says there, "I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; You have been very pleasant to me; Your love to me was wonderful, Surpassing the love of women." Well, that was friendship. That was felt and the absence of his good friend now slain in battle fighting bravely to the last, moves David to this and we can hardly imagine he said these words or wrote them without emotion in his voice, without some trembling as he recalled that this brother, this man who had been very pleasant to me. All our friendship, the things we shared, what you were to me just leaves me with such a deep lasting impression, that your love was wonderful, it says, than the love of women. There was something so deep about it, something so understanding, so sympathetic to me, understood me and this left this deep deep impression upon David.

Well, this covenant, this promise that they made that they felt comfortable making because they knew each other's hearts and had this same common objective of bringing glory to God. I've spoken of it many times there in chapter 20, verse 17. You'll find it again in chapter 13 of 1 Samuel, verse 18, and what a rare and wonderful friendship this is. No doubt against the backdrop of persecution, remarkable. Well, we'd have to say sometimes here, what David felt in his particular lamentation, that often our best friend, of course, is our husband or our wife. That is where we share these thoughts, these common aims, these desires, these longings. And sad we are, aren't we, when we lose our life's partner in that way, but that can often be, people say, don't they, "That was my best friend." Well, I know somebody who said that only last year, and that's beautiful and that is so often perfect marriage, isn't it, to be like that, to have that sharing, that freedom,

what each is feeling and within us that common love for God, that we're looking for his glory and wanting his name to be lifted up.

But moving to Jonathan, to say this selflessness, this lack of any care for himself, and such friendships can be established when we think beyond the marriage at its best, they can be as with Jonathan and David, somebody older than us and considerable age difference and yet it makes no difference because that bringing together, love for God, that earnestness and sincerity of desire, well, transcends any difference of age, makes us all very much stand on the same ground with each other. It can transcend different backgrounds, racial backgrounds, cultural backgrounds if we can talk about it, class backgrounds. They melt away, they have no place, they have no relevance. There's something far more important that brings us together and that true Christians feel that, and that cements them. They feel, "We're together in this. We share in perspectives here." And our love for God burns through in your life and in my life and we mutually encourage each other in that.

It's beautiful, isn't it? That's church life at its best, what it should be at its best, that within that, that covenant relationship, that commitment to each other and common aims that we have, the glory of God, the proclamation of the gospel, pursuit of holiness, that all of these things, we're in it all together. And in it for the long haul, to bear with each other the ups, the downs, the difficulties that inevitably come in church life. And we pray for each other, don't we? We pray for each other, pray as we learn of each other's burdens and woes or joys, opportunities. And we rejoice with each other in that and pray earnestly for each other.

It is beautiful, isn't it, that covenant friendship? Beautiful though this is between Jonathan and David, but the best is yet to come, it's our Lord Jesus Christ and his friendship. What a remarkable thing that sinners like us are called his friends, that is, if we're living as he would have us live and looking to him and following his commandments. And he calls us friends, he shares with us this whole thought of servants, well, they don't know their master's business but you do, and I share my joy with you, that your joy may be full. And beyond it, this covenant love, this covenant friendship as he unburdens himself to his disciples, this most meaningful, this deepest of unburdenings just ups the moments when he's going to lay down his life. Well, his disciples there in many ways aren't comprehending, not quite responding as might be needed and asking some pretty foolish questions at times, but yet our Lord wanted them to come nearer, wanted to bring them into all of his experience, what was to come and to tell them what it was all about, that he was actually laying down his life for them. That must have been something to hear, musn't it, that that from his lips this great teacher, this great master, miracle worker, Son of God, is now going to bring this all to a point of death and for their sakes, and to say that he does things like this for those who are his friends. Remarkable and so many truths and thoughts that there must have been going through their minds, they scarcely could have really want it and needed the help of the Holy Spirit, I'm sure, later to recollect it all and to be able to write it down, so amazing are these things.

That's his covenant love, isn't it? That's his promise. That's his promise to us, laying down his life and that life stays effective in that being laid down for us, how it cleanses of sin, blood that still still, always still effective to help us and cleanse us that we might obey him and love his commandments and abide in his love. And know that we're his friends, that he calls us friends. Not feel so totally ashamed at that but just feel astonished and amazed at it, over-awed really that that should be his word that he would have spoken to us. And we fail him, don't we, there as John Newton's hymn puts it as we read it earlier, "The good we render ill, He accounts us brethren still." Remarkable. Remarkable and that should be a great encouragement and comfort to us, that we're in a friendship, enjoying the friendship of God. What a friend we have in Jesus, as we quoted it a while back.

So as Jonathan and David's love shows us something why this relationship that our Lord establishes with us shows this covenant love again, something deeper, something further, and something wonderful. Do you treasure it? Do you step back and allow the wonder of that to seep in? Do you read the words and think, "What is that saying? What is God saying here to me? Really, such daring language that I could be called a friend of his?" Yet dear friends, that is what he says and so as we live, we live, do we, in absolute fear and trembling but that's the context of our relationship, that's the promise that he's made not to visit judgment upon us and display his great distress so that we're cast away from him. Though he might be entitled to do it, you might think strictly speaking by the law, but the law he has answered on our behalf and bears with us patiently. That's what friends do, isn't it, and well, he is a friend indeed. He bears with us so so patiently. Not that we should tax his patience by just simply sinning that grace should abound, as we might falsely think, but we should cherish that friendship because what could be better than for him to express that friendship to us and for us to be more certain and sure of it. That's precious. That's the heartbeat of assurance, isn't it? So often we lack assurance and feel ourselves somehow outside of the scope of God's love and we need truth like this to speak to us more deeply. How can we sin, then, in that way?

So we see covenant friendship, see Jonathan and David, we see it all the more in our Lord Jesus Christ. If we were to just go back a step or two to where we were, well, if we value, cherish the friendship Christ has for us, do we cherish the friendship that as believers under the Lord Jesus Christ that we have, do we value that? Would we be very unhappy at the thought of fracturing it, breaking it, being responsible for introducing hurt or harm into it? Well, like Jonathan and David together there, do we see it as such such things we have in common, so much more that unites us here that is valuable and precious and that we would do everything to serve and maintain that bond of friendship and that bond of peace? Is that in our hearts? Do we have that kind of affection, covenant love, toward each other fellow believers?

Final heading: friend for all seasons. Friend for all seasons. That is Jonathan, isn't it? That is he just as our Lord is friend for all seasons. In our persecutions and woes and griefs, he sticks close to us. But then as God appoints for us people to be helps, he stays close to David and the strain that it is upon Jonathan in the other important relationships, in other words, to his father, remarkable how he bears himself here and behaves himself toward his father in 1 Samuel 20. There is David, a marked man, and he makes that clear to

Jonathan that's what he thinks. "Your father is trying to kill me." And Jonathan is reluctant to believe that. He's reluctant to think such ill of his father, and in that way we can applaud him for wanting to defend the honor of his father. But see how reasonable he is, that if there is evidence that David is right and that actually his father does intend ill, then Jonathan is ready to change his mind. And the two of them, don't they, they have this plan that David will absent himself from the meal, this will be the diagnostic. If Saul, putting it in modern parlance, goes ballistic, then we will know that he intends me harm. If on the other hand, he is more relaxed and calm about David's absence, then that will be a happy diagnostic. Jonathan might therefore be right, that Saul does not intend harm. And the feast comes and Jonathan is there and Saul notices David's absence or kind of comes up with his own explanation. This works for a while but then the continued absence then he breaks cover and he's then asking, "Where is this son of Jesse?" And when Jonathan gives the explanation that they'd agreed to give, then Saul's anger we read in verse 30 of 1 Samuel 20, "was aroused against Jonathan," and what he says to him, his own son, "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? For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, you shall not be established, nor your kingdom. Now therefore, send and bring him to me, for he shall surely die."

Well, that's the evidence, isn't it, and the evidence is now in and Jonathan is unable to deny it, his own father saying these things and they're insulting him and painting him as a person who's bringing disgrace upon his family by siding with this rebel David and trying to make Jonathan feel guilty about having David as his friend, painting him as Saul does in the most unfavorable light. Now a lesser man might have crumbled under that and might have dismissed David, again in modern parlance, thrown him under the proverbial bus. But he doesn't and even though here is his own father insulting him and also giving himself away because he's more interested in hanging onto the throne and, "Jonathan, don't you care that's your throne, it's vanishing away and you are helping to destroy your own prospects." That's what's motivating Saul, hanging onto power. Jonathan isn't interested in that. That's not going to work on him because that honor that he has for David means he will stand up for him and vindicate David even before his father when he knows that his father is in the wrong.

Notice Jonathan doesn't insult his father, note that he doesn't sort of reply in kind, and the poor man, the son has a spear thrown at him by his own father. Perhaps some of our fathers, we might say, have been to us, imagine picked up a spear to hurl it at us but that's what Jonathan has. And yet still he is respectful, still does not answer in kind, but he's not going to stand there and take anymore and he then absents himself. We learn he's very angry, very angry at what his father had said and the reason being for the way that it spoke so ill of David, a man that Jonathan knew who was a man after God's own heart, and his own father had maligned him, spoken ill of him, and to Jonathan that was what gave him grief.

Look in verse 34, he rises from the table in fierce anger but in control of that anger and goes away and eats no food for he was grieved for David because his father had treated him shamefully. Grieved. David is a good man. Jonathan knows it and whatever false

construction his father put upon David, it wouldn't work and instead all that it shows is what a dreadful place Jonathan's own father had got to. And Jonathan can't hide from it, can't excuse it, he can't now go back to David and say, "Well, it's not true at all." He knows it is true and he's had to change his mind sadly, painfully, but how noble he is to stand up for David even when his own father, a relationship so important to him, is now under huge strain and will never be the same again. That's real friendship, isn't it? Take the knocks, we may even lose other friends, even family because we know that, no, this man is in the right, that he, God is with him and we will side with him to our own hurt if necessary because we know that's where the truth is.

And finally this, that Jonathan gives place to David. Jonathan knows that David is destined to be king, not him. Though he was trained from childhood to expect to be inheriting the crown but, no, he knows it's not going to happen and that David, what he's seeing in his friend proves it to him that David is the man that God has his hand upon, not him, Jonathan, but his family now will not be those royalty and treated as such. And it's very beautiful, isn't it, how Jonathan asks of David anticipating his own death here, that after Jonathan has gone, that David would be kind to his family. David promises most loyally to do, which he does, and we come to that in a future sermon, how he fulfills that promise. Like John Baptist realizing and happy to accept that the Lord Jesus Christ must increase, I must decrease, so here's Jonathan, what a friend that this is who knows that his own friend, a younger man of such humble origins is actually destined for greater things than himself and moves out of the way to allow it to happen, encourages his friend in it and furthers, as it were, and strengthens his friend's hand in what is the future prospect for him as the king.

That is something. Saul couldn't manage that, did the opposite. He was hanging onto the title there for all it was worth but Jonathan was of a different cut, a different sort of man, cut from a different cloth and beautiful it is, we used that word, use it again, beautiful it is, such a noble virtuous character. And sometimes that place comes to us all, doesn't it, to have to concede a place to others, to make room for others with their gift, to step back a little bit when age or whatever else it is has begun to play a bit of a part and we have to now concede a place or two to others, and recognize in others they've got greater gifts, recognize in others that they've got more to offer, and to make room for those people. That is Jonathan there, isn't it? No jealousy, no clinging to office, something so noble and unselfish.

Well, there it is, what has been written and said about this friendship but we do admire and here we say Jonathan, just putting the focus on him, admire him in the way that he behaved towards David, all of the actions that he took. Well, if something of that could be in us, then we would be all the better people for it in all things, all our relationships. So may we learn from this friendship that stands out in scripture so wonderfully for our instruction.

DAVID AND JONATHAN

(Sermon Summary)

Reading: 1 Samuel 18:1-4 / 1 Samuel 20:1-42

David is now a fugitive, enduring persecution at the hands of Saul. His life is constantly in danger. But of great help and encouragement to him at this time is his special friendship with Jonathan, the eldest son of Saul. This is obviously going to be a complex friendship, since Jonathan's father is trying to kill his best friend. This will place Jonathan in some difficult positions at times, as we see in 1 Samuel 20. This, and more besides, makes this a remarkable friendship, a friendship which actually Jonathan initiates and sets the tone for. He shows that, sometimes, one good friend is all we need. Our Lord Jesus is a Friend to us, but He also gives us human friends who play a valuable part in our lives.

1. What brought them together?

We learn of the beginning of their friendship in 1 Samuel 18:1-4. It is not their similar social standing that brings them together. Jonathan is the son of the King. David is a shepherd by profession. Jonathan sees something very appealing in David that draws his respect, his admiration, a recognition that they are kindred spirits, knowing the same God and having a desire for His glory and honour. David's exploits in fighting Goliath, the evidence that showed His faith in and love for God, as well as the knowledge that the Lord was very much with this young man, drew Jonathan to David, and caused him to initiate this friendship.

We do not know a great deal about Jonathan, but we gain some insight into the sort of man he was by the way he boldly trusted in God and attacked the Philistine garrison (1 Samuel 14:1-14). He obviously has great faith in God and great courage. It is then perhaps no wonder that he sees something he likes and respects in David.

2. Covenant friendship.

Their friendship is one where they have pledged together in a covenant of faithfulness and mutual support. They are able to share the burdens and deepest concerns of each other. There is present this element of friendship of 'till death do us part.' They are always there for each other. They are always looking to forward the best interests of each other. We see the fulfillment of Proverbs 18:24 and the depth of it is seen in David's lament when Jonathan dies in 2 Samuel 1:26. The covenant is cemented by the

giving of gifts by Jonathan to David in 1 Samuel 18:4. It is further seen in 1 Samuel 20:17 and 1 Samuel 23:18. It is a rare and special friendship, lived out against the backdrop of the persecution David was suffering at the hands of Jonathan's father.

It is good to have a best friend like this. The strongest marriages are often those where the partners are to each other the best of friends. Other friendships can be equally strong and valuable, working so well where there is an element of selflessness, unselfishness, and where each is given over to the prosperity of each other. Such friends are able to freely share thoughts and ideas, disappointments, and burdens.

Such friends might be older than us or younger than us. They can be across races, classes, or cultures. In such covenant friendship we are there for the long-haul, looking out for each other, praying for each other.

It is very touching that the Lord Jesus called His disciples friends and would call us friends too if we are believers (John 15:11-15). He had in view, when He first spoke it, His dying for His people. His friendship for us means that He shares with us the things that He loves and the things that He hates. He shares with us the intensity of His affection for us and His covenant commitment to us. We fail as His friends, but He remains a Friend to us still. Our friendships are sealed in the common experience of salvation, our desire for the proclamation of the gospel, our love for Christ, our pursuit of holiness, and the advancement of the glory of God. It attracts us to each other, helps us to overcome differences and difficulties when they arise, and brings and then holds people together irrespective of background. This relationship between David and Jonathan makes us look at the kind of people we are and whether we have the kinds of relationships that we see modeled by them.

3. Friends for all seasons.

Our Lord is certainly a Friend for all seasons. Jonathan, in a lesser way, is too. This comes through especially when David is a marked man and to be associated with him is to attract suspicion. Jonathan stays close to David and does not abandon him when the going gets tough. He is a man of principle and is willing to side with David against his own father. If the evidence is there that his father, Saul, means harm to David, Jonathan will be prepared to justify David and go against his father.

Jonathan comes through as a very wise and loyal man. He is willing to be loyal to his father too and to treat him with respect. He shows himself prepared to defend the honour of his father (1 Samuel 20:1-2) but is then willing to change his mind if further evidence should emerge which proves that his father does indeed intend to kill David (v4). In an act of great courage, he stands up for David before his father, despite his father's rage and the strain that it puts on their relationship. (v32). He is grieved for David's sake that his father should bear such hostility toward him (v34) but he is not willing to allow something untrue to be said against his friend. This is real friendship

where there is a willingness to take knocks from others and even jeopardize other important relationships to stay loyal to that friend when they have been wronged.

What is also very remarkable about Jonathan's relationship with David is that this elder son of the king, who would be expected to inherit his father's throne, is prepared to concede that title to his friend, recognizing in him someone greater whom God has raised up to be the king of Israel (See 1 Samuel 20:13 and 1 Samuel 23:13). Like John the Baptist at a later time, Jonathan realizes that David must increase and that he, Jonathan, must decrease. This tells us what a noble and good character Jonathan has that he does not cling to office, like his father Saul does, but humbly accepts the will of God for his friend and is genuinely pleased for the purposes that God has for him. Jonathan lays down his future prospects and humbly asks that David would be kind to his family after him, something David honours. Jonathan shows that there is no hint of jealousy, but he moves out of the way that the Lord's plan for his friend, and for Israel, might be accomplished.