

SAUL DESCENDS; DAVID ASCENDS

United Kingdom

1 Samuel 18-31

STRUCTURE

Key-persons: Saul, Jonathan, David

Key-locations: The house of Saul at Gibeah, David's hideouts

Key-repetitions:

- Saul was afraid: of David (18:12, 29); of the Philistines (28:5); because of Samuel's words (28:20).
- David was loved: by Jonathan (18:1, 3; 20:17); by Israel and Judah (18:16); by Michal (18:20, 28).
- Saul's violent anger: when he tried to kill David (18:11, 25; 19:1, 10, 12, 18), toward his son Jonathan (20:33).
- The song: Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands (18:6-9; 21:11; 29:5).
- David escaped from Saul (18:11; 19:10, 12, 18; 23:26-28).
- David and Jonathan made covenants (18:3; 20:16, 42; 23:18).
- David would not harm Saul, the Lord's anointed (1 Sm 24:6, 10; 26:9-11, 23; 2 Sm 1:14).
- Actions that resulted in Saul's self-destruction: impatience (13:12-13); disobedience (15:19-23); the Spirit of the Lord left him (16:14); dominated by jealousy (18:8-9); tried to kill David (18:10-11); killed priests (22:6-23); acted like a fool (26:21); sought counsel from a medium (28:6-20); suicide (31:4).
- Events that raised up David: developed a friendship with Jonathan (18:1-5); women sang praises about David (18:6-16); he married Michal, Saul's daughter (18:17-29); the Lord was with David (18:28); he escaped

when Saul tried to kill him (19:1-24); he spared Saul's life (24:3-22; 26:1-25).

Key-attitudes:

- Expressed by Saul: Arrogance, jealousy of David, fear/terror, violent temper, shame when David spared his life, and hatred.
- Saul's obsession with killing David.
- David felt confidence in God, courage, and commitment to do right.
- Love felt for David.
- Friendship between Jonathan and David.
- Conflict.

Initial-situation:

After David killed Goliath, Saul kept David with him. Jonathan, Saul's son, loved David as much as he loved himself. David was so successful in different battles that Saul gave him a high rank in the army. This pleased all the people.

Initial-problem:

The women greeted the returning soldiers with the song, "Saul has killed thousands, and David has killed tens of thousands!"

Final-situation:

The Philistines made war on Israel and archers wounded Saul. Saul took his own sword and fell on it. Saul died because he disobeyed the Lord.

BIBLE STORY

Saul Attempts to Kill David

After David killed Goliath, Saul gave him a high rank in the army (18:5).

As the soldiers returned home after David had killed Goliath, women from all the villages of Israel greeted King Saul with singing and dancing. As they danced, they sang, "Saul has killed thousands, and David has killed tens of thousands!"

Saul became angry; he thought, "They credit David with tens of thousands, but me with only thousands. What more can he get but the kingdom?" From then on Saul kept a jealous eye on David (18:6-9).

The next day, Saul was in his house and an evil spirit seized him. David was playing his harp. Saul had a spear in his hand; he threw it to nail David to the wall. But David eluded him twice.

Saul was afraid of David. It was clear that the Lord was with David, but had left Saul. Saul was afraid of David, but all the Israelites in Saul's kingdom loved him (18:10-16).

Saul's daughter Michal was in love with David. This pleased Saul because he planned to get the Philistines to kill David. Saul sent a message to David, "The king is pleased with you; now become his son-in-law. The king wants no other price for the bride than proof that you have killed a hundred Philistines."

David and his men went out, killed two hundred Philistines, and brought back proof to the king. Saul then gave his daughter Michal to David in marriage (18:17-27).

Saul realized that the Lord was with David and that his daughter Michal loved David. Saul's fear of David increased. As long as Saul lived, he tried to kill David. Whenever the Philistine warlords came out to battle, David had more success than the rest of Saul's officers (18:28-30).

David, Fleeing from Saul

Saul told his son Jonathan and all his servants to kill David. But Jonathan warned David that Saul was looking for a chance to kill him (19:1-10).

Saul sent men to David's house to watch it and to kill him in the morning. But Michal, David's wife, let him down through a window, and David escaped (19:11-17).

David sought Jonathan. David and Jonathan reaffirmed their pledge of love and friendship for each other. Jonathan loved David as he loved himself (20:1-17).

At the dinner table, Saul exploded in anger at Jonathan and screamed, "You son of a slut! I know that you have sided with David. You bring disgrace both on yourself and your mother! As long as David lives, you will never be king nor have a kingdom. Bring David here; he must die!"

Jonathan stood up to his father, "Why should he be put to death? What has he done?"

Saul threw his spear at Jonathan, trying to kill him. Jonathan stormed from the table in fierce anger. He was grieved at his father's shameful treatment of David (20:18-43).

David left, fleeing from Saul and running for his life (21:10-15).

David, a Fugitive Living in Hideouts

David escaped to the cave of Adullam. His father's household joined him. Misfits who were distressed, in debt, or discontented joined him, and he became their leader (22:1-2).

David had about 600 men. They kept moving from place to place. David stayed in desert hideouts and in the back-country wilderness hills. Saul searched for him, but God protected David. Jonathan, Saul's son, visited David and helped David have stronger faith in God (23:1-29).

Saul was chasing David with three thousand men. Saul went into a cave to relieve himself. David and his men were hiding in the same cave. David crept near Saul and cut off a corner of Saul's robe. Saul left the cave and went on his way.

Then David went to the mouth of the cave and called to Saul, "My lord the king!" Today, the Lord delivered you into my hands in the cave. But I spared you; I said, 'I will not lift my hand against Lord's anointed.' Look at this corner of your robe that I cut off, but I did not kill you. My hand will not harm you!"

Saul wept in loud sobs and said, "You're right; I'm wrong. You've done me good; I've done

you bad. I know that you'll be king; the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hands. Now swear to me by the Lord that you will not kill off my descendants."

David gave his promise to Saul. Saul returned home, but David and his men went up to the hideout (24:1-22).

Samuel died, and all Israel assembled and mourned for him. He was buried at his home in Ramah (25:1).

Saul went down to the Wilderness of Ziph, with three thousand soldiers, to search for David. David went to the place where Saul had set up camp. He saw where Saul was sleeping. David entered the encampment by night, took the spear and water jug near Saul's head, and left. No one woke up to see him.

Then David crossed over to the top of the hill some distance away. He shouted out, "Here is the king's spear. The Lord delivered you into my hands today, but I would not lay a hand on the Lord's anointed."

Saul returned home (26:1-25).

David decided to leave Israel and go to the land of the Philistines. David and his six hundred men lived in Philistine territory a year and four months (27:1-12).

Saul's Defeat

The Philistines gathered their forces to fight against Israel (28:1-2).

Now Samuel was dead and buried. Saul had expelled mediums, who held seances with the dead.

When Saul saw the Philistine army, terror filled his heart. He prayed to the Lord, but the Lord did not answer. Saul ordered his attendants, "Find me a woman medium who calls up spirits, so I may go and inquire of her."

Saul disguised himself by putting on different clothes. Under the cover of night, Saul and two of his men went to the medium. Saul told her, "Bring up Samuel."

The woman saw Samuel and shouted, "You lied to me! You are Saul!"

Saul assured her, "Don't be afraid. What do you see?"

The woman said, "I see a spirit ascending from the underground."

Saul asked, "What does he look like?"

The medium replied, "An old man wearing a priest robe is coming up."

Samuel asked Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by calling me up?"

Saul replied, "I am in great trouble. The Philistines are making war against me and God has deserted me, so I called on you to tell me what to do."

Samuel said, "Why ask me? The Lord left you and became your enemy. The Lord ripped the kingdom out of your hands and gave it to David. The Lord will hand over both Israel and you to the Philistines. Tomorrow you and your sons will be with me."

Saul dropped to the ground, terrified by Samuel's words (28:3-25).

Next day, the Philistines killed three of Saul's sons, including Jonathan. The archers wounded Saul critically.

Saul pleaded with his armor-bearer, "Draw your sword and put me out of my misery!"

But his armor-bearer would not kill him; so Saul took his own sword and fell on it. When the armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell on his sword and died with him. So Saul, his three

sons, and his armor-bearer all died together that day (31:1-7).

Saul died because he disobeyed the Lord. He refused to obey the Word of the Lord. He consulted a medium to seek guidance. So the Lord took his life (1 Chron 10:13-14).

GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

1. What catches your attention in the story?
2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand?
3. Who are the main characters in the story?
4. What problems did the characters face?
5. How did the characters face their problems?
6. How have you faced similar problems?
7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you?
8. What does the story tell about God?

SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How did Saul express his fear and anger toward David?
2. When Saul intended evil for David, how did David react to Saul?
3. What were some of Saul's reactions that resulted in his self-destruction?
4. What kind of relationship did David and Jonathan have?
5. How do you react toward people who seek to harm you?

LIFE-LESSONS

1. The person who understands but disobeys the Word of God, risks being responsible for his self-destruction. That happened with Saul (15:17-19; 31:4). It also happened with Judas (Ac 1:17-18) and Ananias and Sapphira (Ac 5:1-10).

he was anointed king (16:13). But he lived as a fugitive, fleeing from Saul for many years, before he in fact became king.
2. The person who disobeys God may consider another person who faithfully serves God as his enemy. This happened to Saul when he became an enemy to David (18:29) and killed the priests (22:14-19).
3. It is necessary for God's servant to have patience to live with God's timing. David was a boy when
4. A dysfunctional home cannot prevent a family member from doing right and serving God. Saul's anger and foolish actions didn't keep Jonathan from being faithful to God and to David (20:42).
5. A person often responds to death the same way he responded to life. Saul confronted his death the same way he confronted life. He took things into his own hands without seeking God's guidance (31:4).