

## 20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning

### Week 18 (April 24-30, 2016)

David's life is about to get more challenging. His tranquil life as a shepherd is over and his new life as the future king of Israel is beginning. We will follow his journey in this week's devotions.

**Sunday**, April 24 (read 1 Samuel 18:5-9)

*Whatever Saul sent him to do, David did it so successfully that Saul gave him a high rank in the army. (1 Samuel 18:5a)*

In today's printed verse, David models an important concept found in God's Word: If we are faithful to God in the mundane activities of life, He will trust us with more significant duties. David's men respect him for his humble leadership qualities, but Saul's jealousy is aroused when the women honor this new young leader more than they honor their current king (v. 5-8). Instantly, Saul's trust and respect for David turns into deadly jealousy. We are warned in 1 Corinthians 4:6-7 not to respect one man's work over another. Like David, Saul is God's chosen vessel, but the king is about to destroy all of his good accomplishments because of his jealousy of David (v. 9). We will follow this story in tomorrow's devotion.

**Monday**, April 25 (read 1 Samuel 18:10-16)

*The next day an evil spirit from God came forcefully upon Saul. (1 Samuel 18:10a)*

The printed verse reminds us that God controls all the spirits, both the good and the evil. When, through our disobedience, we reject the good that God has assigned to us, the evil spirits march right in to control our thoughts and our actions. This is still just as true today as it was back in Saul's time. The king is so distraught that he tries to kill David twice, but God will not allow that to happen to His chosen vessel (v. 10-11). The people's love and respect for David grows as he goes about doing the tasks assigned to him (v. 14-16). Those whom God calls, He sends to the "battlegrounds" where He is about to work! As I review my entire ministry, I see this concept clearly. It is humbling, but it sets us free from allowing **pride** to infiltrate our lives.

**Tuesday**, April 26 (read 1 Samuel 18:17-30)

*But David said to Saul, "Who am I, and what is my family or my father's clan in Israel, that I should become the king's son-in-law?" (1 Samuel 18:18)*

Saul's next attempt to bring David under his control is through his two daughters, Merab and Michal (v. 17, 20-21). Note the humility of David when he rejects the honor of becoming the king's son-in-law (v. 18, 23). Saul finally sets a price for his young leader to pay in exchange for his daughter's hand in marriage (v. 25). David doubles the price by killing two hundred men from the enemy's army (v. 26-27). This only makes matters worse for the jealous King Saul and his fears increase (v. 28-29). What a tangled web Saul is weaving by trying to take matters into his own hands. If you struggle with jealousy, learn a lesson from this wayward king!

**Wednesday**, April 27 (read 1 Samuel 19:1-7)

*Saul listened to Jonathan and took this oath: "As surely as the Lord lives, David will not be put to death." (1 Samuel 19:6)*

I hope that you have developed a close friend who will stick up for you against all odds. In today's text, Saul's son, Jonathan, warns David to stay away from his father (v. 1-3). Next he rebukes Saul for his attitude toward the one who killed Goliath and saved the entire Israelite army (v. 4-5). The aging king listens to his son's request and utters an oath that he will do no harm to David (v. 6). This allows the future king to re-enter the king's service both as a military leader and a harp player whenever the evil spirit from God settled on Saul (v. 7). The story is too long to share, but I once had such a friend in a young crippled man named Cliff. He stood by my side when the entire company for which I worked turned against me. Had he not been with me during that time, I would not be in the ministry today!

**Thursday**, April 28 (read 1 Samuel 19:8-17)

*But an evil spirit from the Lord came upon Saul as he was sitting in his house with his spear in his hand. (1 Samuel 19:9a)*

Some of you may still be in shock, because you realize that God controls the evil spirits as well as the good ones. Saul truly felt that he could control his jealousy toward David when he took the oath (v. 6). His sin nature is no match for the evil spirit that God sends, however, so he tries unsuccessfully to kill his musician with his spear (v. 9-10). Saul's daughter Michal becomes the second family member to save David's life as she helps her husband to escape through a window (v. 11-12). She deceives Saul's men by placing an idol in David's bed and covering it with goat's hair before telling them that her husband is ill (v. 13-14). The king is furious with his daughter until she tells him a second lie to cover up the first (v. 17). In the meantime, David escapes to Ramah, but that will be the topic of tomorrow's devotion.

**Friday**, April 29 (read 1 Samuel 19:18-24)

*So Saul went to Naioth at Ramah. But the Spirit of God came even upon him, and he walked along prophesying until he came to Naioth. (1 Samuel 19:23)*

I'm quite sure that the angels in heaven laugh out loud at some of the methods God uses to protect His chosen leaders. Today's text must provide them with a few chuckles! David escapes to the land of Samuel, the prophet who anointed him king some years back (v. 18). Saul sends his men to capture David, but when they come close to the worship service led by Samuel, the Spirit comes on them and they prophesy too (v. 19-20). Saul sends two more groups of men, but the same thing happens to them (v. 21). Finally, the angry king goes to the land of Ramah to witness the event for himself (v. 22). The evil king led by the evil spirit is no match for the Spirit of God flowing through Samuel, however, so Saul begins to prophesy in the prophet's presence, stripping off his own kingly robe in the process (v. 24a). The amazed people began to ask, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" This proves that God can use anyone He chooses to do His will, regardless of the nature of the person before he receives the Holy Spirit.

**Saturday**, April 30 (read 1 Samuel 20:1-42)

*Then Jonathan said to David: "Tomorrow is the New Moon festival. You will be missed, because your seat will be empty." (1 Samuel 20:18)*

Take the time to read this entire chapter as Jonathan once again intercedes with Saul on behalf of his dear friend, David. The story is self-explanatory, so I will not go through it verse by verse. However, I do want to minister to anyone who has recently lost a loved one. Each new day starts with you staring at an empty chair at your breakfast table (v. 18). Some days are so lonely that you feel like you cannot bear another moment. Hold on my child! Joy comes in the morning! Bill Gaither wrote these words, but they come from Psalm 30:5. Heaven waits to bring about a wonderful reunion! Trust Him to ease the pain you are feeling in your heart today. Keep looking up! Fully rely on God! (KLUFROG)