

Escaping Saul's fury, David, now a fugitive, seeks divine refuge as Saul's obsession fuels conflict. David, aided by Michal, flees to Samuel and the prophets, experiencing God's protection. However, he realizes his separation from the court, Jonathan, and home is inevitable.

Exiled from Saul's kingdom, David heads towards the wilderness, evading Saul's pursuit. Once a hero, now an outlaw, David relies on his faith, intelligence and allies, with his future kingship seeming distant.

Despite this, divine providence guides David's path. As Saul's jealousy and tyranny grow, David's hardships refine him, preparing him to lead Israel. The contrasting destinies of the two flawed leaders deepen, with a nation and throne at stake.

### DIVINE PROTECTION AT NAIOTH: 1 SAMUEL 19:18-24

At a critical point, David, with no safe place in Saul's kingdom, turns to the spiritual leader Samuel, reflecting his faith in God's guidance. He shares all of Saul's actions with Samuel in Ramah, showing his trust in Samuel's wisdom.

When Saul learns of David's location, he sends his men to Naioth. There, they encounter prophets led by Samuel and begin to prophesy themselves. Saul sends more messengers, who also prophesy, before going himself and prophesying too.

Intriguingly, upon reaching Naioth, Saul "stripped off his clothes also, and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all that night," implying that the prophets may have also been naked. The term "naked" appears 16 times in the Hebrew scriptures, commonly in a literal sense. Some suggest Saul only removed his royal armor, others speculate it may be a spiritual practice, but these interpretations lack strong evidence.

Our modern Western perspectives might not fully comprehend the nuances of the ancient Near East. Even with explanations, understanding their significance in their historical context could still be challenging.

### JONATHAN AND DAVID'S PLAN: 1 SAMUEL 20:1-23

#### DAVID'S FEAR AND JONATHAN'S ASSURANCE: 1 SAMUEL 20:1-4

When David leaves Naioth, he confides in his friend Jonathan, expressing his fear and confusion. He questions why his life is in danger. His trust in Jonathan is clear from his willingness to seek his help during this crisis.

Jonathan, unaware of his father's intent to kill David, denies it and reassures David, promising to help him as needed.

#### THE COVENANT RENEWED: 1 SAMUEL 20:5-9

David responds to Jonathan's promise by suggesting a plan. If Saul reacts negatively to his absence, it will confirm his harmful intentions. David requests Jonathan's peace if his life is threatened.

They renew their pact. Jonathan asks for kindness to his family when David is king, a promise David later honors (2 Samuel 9:1-13).

#### THE THREE ARROWS: 1 SAMUEL 20:10-23

David and Jonathan devise a signal involving three arrows to convey Saul's reaction. Jonathan's words to his servant will secretly inform David. If the arrows are near, David can return; if they are far, he must flee.

This illustrates their dangerous situation and the measures taken to safeguard their friendship. Their trust, commitment, and renewed covenant before the Lord are apparent.

#### SAUL'S ANGER AND JONATHAN'S INTERCESSION: 1 SAMUEL 20:24-34

David's consistent absence at the royal table raises Saul's suspicion. Jonathan uses their cover story about a family sacrifice in Bethlehem, but this doesn't convince Saul. Accusing Jonathan of betraying his family for David, Saul attempts to kill his son. Jonathan, furious and saddened at his father's behavior towards David, leaves. This event marks a shift in Jonathan's loyalty to David and sets the future course. Jonathan will now signal David into a life of exile.

#### THE COVENANT BETWEEN DAVID AND JONATHAN: 1 SAMUEL 20:35-42

Jonathan, with a servant, signals David to flee by shooting arrows beyond his servant. Alone in the field, Jonathan and David bid a heartbreaking farewell, displaying evident grief. Their separation, filled with sorrow, reaffirms their covenant. Jonathan assures David of his unending loyalty, with an oath that extends to their descendants, later honored by David's kindness to Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth.

David leaves, while Jonathan returns to the city, marking David's fugitive life and Jonathan's navigation of his father's volatile court. This narrative underscores their friendship, loyalty, the tragedy of Saul's jealousy, and the personal toll of political and familial conflict. Despite the farewell, they meet once more in 1 Samuel 23:16-18, further highlighting their bond.

In conclusion, the narrative of David and Jonathan serves as a powerful testament to friendship, loyalty, and faith in the midst of conflict and uncertainty. Their story remains a beacon of hope and a testament to God's guiding hand even in the darkest of times.

As we look ahead to 1 Samuel 21, we will follow David into a time of great test and trial. From fleeing to the city of Nob, to finding refuge in the Philistine city of Gath, David's faith and courage will be put to the ultimate test. Stay tuned as we delve into these riveting events in our next sermon.