

1 Samuel 20:1-42 **Covenant between David and Jonathan**

David asked Jonathan why Saul was so determined to kill him - one step between me and death

1 Then David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and went and said to Jonathan, "What have I done? What *is* my iniquity, and what *is* my sin before your father, that he seeks my life?"

2 So Jonathan said to him, "By no means! You shall not die! Indeed, my father will do nothing either great or small without first telling me. And why should my father hide this thing from me? It *is* not *so*!"

3 Then David took an oath again, and said, "Your father certainly knows that I have found favor in your eyes, and he has said, 'Do not let Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved.' But truly, *as* the LORD lives and *as* your soul lives, *there is* but a step between me and death."

4 So Jonathan said to David, "Whatever you yourself desire, I will do *it* for you."

Test to discern the truth

5 And David said to Jonathan, "Indeed tomorrow *is* the New Moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king to eat. But let me go, that I may hide in the field until the third *day* at evening. **6** If your father misses me at all, then say, 'David earnestly asked *permission* of me that he might run over to Bethlehem, his city, for *there is* a yearly sacrifice there for all the family.' **7** If he says thus: '*It is* well,' your servant will be safe. But if he is very angry, be sure that evil is determined by him. **8** Therefore you shall deal kindly with your servant, for you have brought your servant into a covenant of the LORD with you. Nevertheless, if there is iniquity in me, kill me yourself, for why should you bring me to your father?"

9 But Jonathan said, "Far be it from you! For if I knew certainly that evil was determined by my father to come upon you, then would I not tell you?"

10 Then David said to Jonathan, "Who will tell me, or what *if* your father answers you roughly?"

Covenant between Jonathan and David

11 And Jonathan said to David, "Come, let us go out into the field." So both of them went out into the field. **12** 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, **13** 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. **14** And you shall not only show me the kindness of the LORD while I still live, that I may not die; **15** 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." **16** So Jonathan made *a covenant* with the house of David, *saying*, "Let the LORD require *it* at the hand of David's enemies."

17 Now Jonathan again caused David to vow, because he loved him; for he loved him as he loved his own soul. **18** Then Jonathan said to David, "Tomorrow *is* the New Moon; and you will be missed, because your seat will be empty. **19** And *when* you have stayed three days, go down quickly and come to the place where you hid on the day of the deed; and remain by the stone Ezel. **20** Then I will shoot three arrows to the side, as though I shot at a target; **21** and there I will send a lad, *saying*, 'Go, find the arrows.' If I expressly say to the lad, 'Look, the arrows *are* on

this side of you; get them and come' — then, as the LORD lives, *there is* safety for you and no harm. **22** But if I say thus to the young man, 'Look, the arrows *are* beyond you' — go your way, for the LORD has sent you away. **23** And as for the matter which you and I have spoken of, indeed the LORD *be* between you and me forever."

24 Then David hid in the field. And when the New Moon had come, the king sat down to eat the feast. **25** Now the king sat on his seat, as at other times, on a seat by the wall. And Jonathan arose,* and Abner sat by Saul's side, but David's place was empty. **26** Nevertheless Saul did not say anything that day, for he thought, "Something has happened to him; he *is* unclean, surely he *is* unclean." **27** And it happened the next day, the second *day* of the month, that David's place was empty. And Saul said to Jonathan his son, "Why has the son of Jesse not come to eat, either yesterday or today?"

28 So Jonathan answered Saul, "David earnestly asked *permission* of me *to go* to Bethlehem. **29** And he said, 'Please let me go, for our family has a sacrifice in the city, and my brother has commanded me *to be there*. And now, if I have found favor in your eyes, please let me get away and see my brothers.' Therefore he has not come to the king's table."

30 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? **31** 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."

32 And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said to him, "Why should he be killed? What has he done?" **33** Then Saul cast a spear at him to kill him, by which Jonathan knew that it was determined by his father to kill David.

34 So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and ate no food the second day of the month, for he was grieved for David, because his father had treated him shamefully.

35 And so it was, in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little lad *was* with him. **36** Then he said to his lad, "Now run, find the arrows which I shoot." As the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him. **37** When the lad had come to the place where the arrow was which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried out after the lad and said, "*Is* not the arrow beyond you?" **38** And Jonathan cried out after the lad, "Make haste, hurry, do not delay!" So Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows and came back to his master. **39** But the lad did not know anything. Only Jonathan and David knew of the matter. **40** Then Jonathan gave his weapons to his lad, and said to him, "Go, carry *them* to the city."

41 As soon as the lad had gone, David arose from *a place* toward the south, fell on his face to the ground, and bowed down three times. And they kissed one another; and they wept together, but David more so. **42** 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.'" So he arose and departed, and Jonathan went into the city.

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Facts Revealed:

David asked Jonathan why Saul was so determined to kill him - one step between me and death

- ✧ Saul has been attempting to have David killed from the day they came home and heard the women singing, "Saul has killed his thousands, and David his ten thousands." [1 Samuel 18:6-30, 19:1-24]
- ✧ After Saul attempted to have David killed in his own house, David fled to Samuel in Ramah and went with him to Naioth where Saul attempted to kill him and all who were sent for that purpose ended up prophesying including Saul himself. [1 Samuel 19:11-24]
- ✧ Now David went to Jonathan to learn why he is being hunted, why Saul is so determined to have David killed. [1 Samuel 20:1]
- ✧ Jonathan, because of his love for David can not believe that the threat to David's life is real since he had interceded for David earlier and Saul claimed to accept it. [1 Samuel 19:1-6, 20:2]
- ✧ David assured Jonathan that the threat is true to the point that there is only a step between David and death. [1 Samuel 20:3]
- ✧ Jonathan agreed to do anything David desires of him. [1 Samuel 20:4]

Test to discern the truth

- ✧ David desired to absent himself from his customary place for the feast of the New Moon to see if Saul missed him, and with the excuse of attending a sacrifice in his home town of Bethlehem. If Saul approves, David is safe, but if Saul is angry, then the threat is real, in which case Jonathan will so inform David. However, if there is iniquity in David, he asked Jonathan to kill him and not deliver him to Saul. [1 Samuel 20:5-8]
- ✧ Jonathan assured David that if Saul is determined to kill David that Jonathan will certainly let him know. David asked how he would learn the answer. [1 Samuel 20:9-10]

Covenant between Jonathan and David

- ✧ Jonathan took David out to the field and promised to sound out his father and let David know on the third day. Jonathan called God as witness to this agreement. [1 Samuel 20:11-13]
- ✧ Jonathan's request from David is that when the Lord gives David rest from all his enemies, that David will show kindness to Jonathan and his descendants forever, and he invoked the name of the Lord in this agreement. [1 Samuel 20:14-16]
 - ✧ Thus Jonathan demonstrated that he accepts the fact that David will be the next king of Israel.
- ✧ The bond of love between Jonathan and David was the bond of blood brothers who hold each other in high esteem out of respect for their mutual faith in the God of Israel. [1 Samuel 14:6, 17:45-47, 18:1-4, 20:17]
- ✧ Jonathan will sound out his father Saul at the feast of the New Moon, and inform David on the third day by shooting arrows out and sending a lad after them, If he tells the lad the arrow is on this side, David is safe, if he says the arrow is beyond you, David is in danger, and Jonathan will send David away in peace, and called for the Lord to be between Jonathan and David in this matter forever. [1 Samuel 20:18-23]
- ✧ David hid in the field during the feast of the New Moon and on the second day, Saul asked Jonathan about David. Jonathan answered according to the way David had suggested. [1 Samuel 20:24-29]
- ✧ Saul was extremely angry and cursed his son for his friendship with David. Saul told Jonathan that as long as David lived, the kingdom of Jonathan will not be established, therefore, David must die. [1 Samuel 20:30-31]
- ✧ Jonathan asked what David had done to deserve death, and Saul cast a spear at him to kill him, so Jonathan knew the certainty of Saul's determination to kill David. [1 Samuel 20:32-33]
- ✧ Jonathan left the table in fierce anger because of Saul's shameful attitude toward David. The next morning, the morning of the third day, Jonathan went out to the field where David was hiding, shot the arrows, and told the lad that the arrow is beyond you, thus notifying David of

Saul's intention as he had agreed with David to do. Jonathan gave his bow and arrows to the lad and sent him back to the city. [\[1 Samuel 20:34-40\]](#)

✧ When the lad was gone, David came out of hiding, Jonathan embraced David and sent him away in peace as he had promised, with a blessing, "May Yahweh be between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants, forever." [\[1 Samuel 20:41-42\]](#)