

## **1 SAMUEL 20 – INTRO: Under God's Protective Wing, David's Period of *Flight* Begins**

**20:1-3**, David leaves Naioth, a suburb of Ramah, and the prophet Samuel to find Jonathan. Heavy on his heart is this question: 'Why is your father Saul so intent on my death'? Jonathan knew nothing of his father's continued attempts on David's life. A fact Saul had kept from him because of Jonathan's deep friendship with David. But Jonathan found David's words and deep concern hard to believe.

**20:4-9**, So a test was proposed to determine the certainty his father Saul's intentions and the danger David faced staying in the king's presence. Instead of being at the king's table for the 'new moon' monthly feast, David's place would be empty. If Saul inquired as to the whereabouts of David, Jonathan would explain the circumstances surrounding his absence (the planned excuse could have been true or partially so, or it could have been fabricated completely. In this case, it would have been a lie, yet simply recorded as narrative). Saul's reaction to David's absence would reveal the king's intentions toward David and whether his life is truly in peril.

**20:10-17**, A sign was prearranged to let David know the outcome of the test. From verses 14-17, Jonathan clearly knew that David was the LORD's anointed king and that the kingdom belonged to David and not to him. With *unselfish devotion*, Jonathan "reaffirmed his love to David even though he realized the throne rights, vested in him, would be David's" (Wm. MacDonald, p.312).

**20:18-23**, The sign, prearranged, is now detailed. Jonathan would come to a field, well known to them both, where David would hide behind a distant rock. On the third day, Jonathan would shoot 3 arrows in David's direction. The instruction he gives to the one retrieving his arrows will indicate to David whether it is safe to return or if he should flee (Jonathan knew he may not be alone at this time, thus this method of communication. As it turned out, he was able to speak freely with David).

**20:24-34**, On the night of the new moon, David's seat was empty. Saul reasoned that likely David was ceremonially unclean and therefore unable to be present. However, on the second night, Saul's suspicions arouse. So, he inquired of Jonathan the whereabouts of David. When Saul heard that David had gone to be with family in Bethlehem for the new moon sacrifice and feast, he flew into a rage, hurling his spear to take the life of his own son. Saul's intent is unmistakably clear.

**20:35-42**, On the morning of the third day, David is at his place behind the designated rock. Jonathan's arrows, along with his instruction for retrieving them, reveal to David he must flee. After Jonathan sends the boy away, he embraces David. Both men weep for they can no longer enjoy one another's companionship. David flight and hiding become a necessary part of God's plan to prepare him for the throne. Deeply conflicted, Jonathan returns to his father the king.

**Q:** "Should Jonathan have gone with David? Was he right in remaining loyal to his father, even though the LORD had rejected Saul from being king?" (Wm. MacDonald, p.313)