

David's Popularity Grows – 1 Samuel 18:1-30

Introduction:

There is a saying that goes like this: "If you are going some place and people follow you, you are a leader. If no one is following you, you are just going for a walk." In this chapter we see how David is getting quite a following: Saul's son and daughter, and the people of Israel. Meanwhile King Saul is losing ground, and he knows it. He starts to get nervous about his position and that of his family. There is quite the contrast between David and Saul. One seeks a following while the other seeks the will of God, and in that gains a following. In this chapter it is evident that the blessing of the Lord is on David, and he is being prepared for the role God has chosen for him - to be the king.

David's Fan Club – 1 Samuel 18:1-5

1. What event earned David the admiration and friendship of the son of the king, Jonathan? (cf. chapter 17) (It appears Jonathan was there at the battlefield!) How does scripture define their friendship (v. 1)?

Verses 1 & 3 use some interesting terms to describe the relationship of Jonathan and David. The first is the phrase "one in spirit" or "bound together" or "knit together." The message is clear that whatever will happen to David will affect Jonathan, and visa versa. The second phrase is "loved him as himself." Sadly, this has been misconstrued to be a romantic love, which it was not. The word used here is a political term referring to great respect, admiration and commitment. It was the word used in the formation of treaties between various parties.

2. What changes take place in the life of David according to verse 2?
3. In verse 3 we have find that Jonathan formalizes the relationship with David. How is it described? Explain what this looks like.

4. Why did Jonathan give David his coat, tunic, sword, belt and bow (v. 4)?
5. Describe the kind of man David was according to verse 5. What did this lead to in his life? We have seen Jonathan is one of David's fans. Who else has joined David's fan club (v. 5)?

David Loses a Fan – 1 Samuel 18:6-16

6. Verse 6 illustrates what was said in verse 5, a "for instance" moment. We are taken back to just after David's battle with Goliath, and as the king led his army through the towns, what happened? How would Saul feel about the crowds and the cheering?
7. In verse 8, however, Saul is suddenly very angry. What turned his mood from happy to angry? (cf. v. 7)
8. What is Saul's relationship to David from this point on (v. 9)?
9. Verses 10-11 describe a scene in Saul's house that shows what is happening to Saul, and how David responds. Describe what happened. (Interesting to note this captain of armies still plays the harp for the king)
10. King Saul realizes that he has lost God's favour and David had received it. What is King Saul's response to David because of this?
11. In verse 13 it tells us two things Saul does in response to the fear he has for David. What does he do? What is the purpose?
12. Did King Saul's plan work (cf. v. 14)?
13. Contrast the response of King Saul to that of the people (cf. vss 15-16). What seems to please the people the most (v. 16)? What seems to be Saul's role in the army at this time?

David's Latest Fan – A Wife! 1 Samuel 18:17-30

14. King Saul hatches a plan to get rid of David, and it is described in verse 17. What is the plan and how will it work?

15. What is David's response to the offer to be the King's son-in-law (v. 18)?
16. What does Saul do in response to what David says (v. 19)?
17. Saul gets one more shot at pulling off his plan. What fortuitous event happens that appears to be working in King Saul's favour (v. 20)?
18. King Saul announces to David his "second chance" (v. 21). This time King Saul is less direct and more careful. How does he plan to gain David's interest in his plan (v. 22)?
19. What is David's response and reasoning to the approach of the attendants (v. 23)?
20. When King Saul hears about David's refusal to marry the King's daughter because of his low status, he comes up with another way to pay the "bride's price." What is the plan (v. 25)? What was the real purpose?
21. How did David respond to this plan (v. 26)? What did David do in response to the plan of the King (v. 27)? What then did the King have to do? In the end, who gained the most in this scene?
22. Michal was another of David's fans, who was moved by his bravery and success. How did King Saul respond to the fact that his daughter was also on David's side (v. 29)?
23. The chapter ends telling the reader that David was the most successful leader of all Israel's officers (v. 30). Why do you think he was so successful?

Conclusion:

In this chapter two important things happen. The first is that David continues to grow in popularity and prominence. People across the nation have heard of David and his abilities as a warrior. This notoriety will be very important in the years to come when he will be called upon to unite this motley crew of tribes and make them into a nation. Though the people are all related through Abraham, they are anything but united. They will need a leader that holds the respect of the people from the north end of the kingdom to the south.

The second thing that happens is that we see the popularity of Saul declining, and in response he attempts to do away with his perceived opposition. King Saul tried to pin David to the wall with a spear, but David eluded him. He sent David to war as a leader, but he was not killed, but instead gained popularity with the people. When the King thought he could send David on a life-threatening quest against the nation's enemies and have him killed, David not only succeeds beyond expectation, but gains the hand of the King's daughter in marriage as well. This assured David a place of succession to the throne if there were no other heirs.

At every turn, King Saul met with failure as he tried to do away with David. The reason was simple: David had God's blessing. Saul was fighting God himself as he tried to destroy David. 1000 years later another man by the same name, Saul, would try to oppose the plans of God. God would appear to that Saul on the road to Damascus, and here is what happened:

“We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice say to me in Hebrew, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’” Acts 26:14

This Saul realized he was fighting against God, and submitted himself to following Jesus. He became the greatest missionary of the early church, and his name was changed from Saul to Paul.

The first Saul, King Saul, would not submit to God, and things only got worse for him. As the shepherd boy's popularity grew, Saul felt his grip on the kingdom slipping. Something had to be done. Sadly, Saul never learned that one cannot fight God's plans and win. Saul will live with failure after failure.