FIRST SAMUEL

Chapter 19

*Saul Tries to Kill David*

**Saul told his son Jonathan and all the attendants to kill David. But Jonathan was very fond of David 2 and warned him, “My father Saul is looking for a chance to kill you. Be on your guard tomorrow morning; go into hiding and stay there. 3 I will go out and stand with my father in the field where you are. I’ll speak to him about you and will tell you what I find out.” 4 Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father and said to him, “Let not the king do wrong to his servant David; he has not wronged you, and what he has done has benefited you greatly. 5 He took his life in his hands when he killed the Philistine. The Lord won a great victory for all Israel, and you saw it and were glad. Why then would you do wrong to an innocent man like David by killing him for no reason?” 6 Saul listened to Jonathan and took this oath: “As surely as the Lord lives, David will not be put to death.” 7 So Jonathan called David and told him the whole conversation. He brought him to Saul, and David was with Saul as before. 8 Once more war broke out, and David went out and fought the Philistines. He struck them with such force that they fled before him. 9 But an evil spirit from the Lord came upon Saul as he was sitting in his house with his spear in his hand. While David was playing the harp, 10 Saul tried to pin him to the wall with his spear, but David eluded him as Saul drove the spear into the wall. That night David made good his escape. 11 Saul sent men to David’s house to watch it and to kill him in the morning. But Michal, David’s wife, warned him, “If you don’t run for your life tonight, tomorrow you’ll be killed.” 12 So Michal let David down through a window, and he fled and escaped. 13 Then Michal took an idol and laid it on the bed, covering it with a garment and putting some goats’ hair at the head. 14 When Saul sent the men to capture David, Michal said, “He is ill.” 15 Then Saul sent the men back to see David and told them, “Bring him up to me in his bed so that I may kill him.” 16 But when the men entered, there was the idol in the bed, and at the head was some goats’ hair. 17 Saul said to Michal, “Why did you deceive me like this and send my enemy away so that he escaped?” Michal told him, “He said to me, ‘Let me get away. Why should I kill you?’ ” 18 When David had fled and made his escape, he went to Samuel at Ramah and told him all that Saul had done to him. Then he and Samuel went to Naioth and stayed there. 19 Word came to Saul: “David is in Naioth at Ramah”; 20 so he sent men to capture him. But when they saw a group of prophets prophesying, with Samuel standing there as their leader, the Spirit of God came upon Saul’s men and they also prophesied. 21 Saul was told about it, and he sent more men, and they prophesied too. Saul sent men a third time, and they also prophesied. 22 Finally, he himself left for Ramah and went to the great cistern at Secu. And he asked, “Where are Samuel and David?” “Over in Naioth at Ramah,” they said. 23 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. 24 He stripped off his robes and also prophesied in Samuel’s presence. He lay that way all that day and night. This is why people say, “Is Saul also among the prophets?”**

**19:1** *Saul told his son … to kill David.* Saul now abandons his indirect attempts on David’s life (see 18:13, 17, 25) and adopts a more direct approach, leading to David’s departure from the court and from service to Saul (see vv. 12, 18; 20:42). (CSB)

Saul’s attendants, not Jonathan’s. Saul plots to kill David. (TLSB)

*delighted*. Describes laughter, pleasure, and enjoyment. (TLSB)

**19:2–7** Here we see the strength of Jonathan’s devotion to David, a friendship free of all selfish motives. (TLSB)

**19:4** *Jonathan spoke well of David.* Jonathan does not let his own personal ambition distort his perception of David’s true theocratic spirit (see v. 5 and notes on 14:6; 17:11; 18:1). (CSB)

True friends speak well of each other and put the best construction on the other’s actions, as Jonathan does concerning David to his father. (TLSB)

**19:5** *the Lord* *worked*. Jonathan’s faith in God shines forth in the words of this verse. He saw the blessings God brought to all Israel through David’s victory over Goliath. (TLSB)

*innocent blood*. To kill an innocent person such as David is to be guilty of a terrible sin (Dt 21:8–9). (TLSB)

**19:6** *As the Lord* *lives*. Saul makes another religious oath he has no intention of keeping (cf 14:24–44). (TLSB)

*Saul listened to Jonathan and took this oath.* See 14:24, 44 for previous oaths that Saul did not keep (see note on 14:39). (CSB)

**19:8–10** Repeats events of 18:10–11. (TLSB)

**19:9** *evil spirit from the Lord*. See note on 16:14; cf. 18:10–11. (CSB)

**19:10** *with his spear.* See 18:10–11; 20:33. (CSB)

**19:11** *messengers*. Sometimes assigned to do evil tasks, like assassinate a ruler’s rival. (TLSB)

*morning*. Ps 59 gives insight on how David felt at the time. Saul sought to kill David at dawn; God’s love preserved David in the morning (Ps 59:16). (TLSB)

*Michal* … *told him*. Her first allegiance is to her husband, David, not to her father. (TLSB)

**19:12** *through a window.* For similar escapes see Jos 2:15; Ac 9:25. (CSB)

**19:13** *idol.* See NIV text note and note on Ge 31:19. (CSB)

In this case, the image appears life-sized. (TLSB)

**19:14** Michal engages in this deception so her husband cannot be caught by Saul’s henchmen. Her deception is reported matter-of-factly, without praise or censure. It is part of the drama of the story and does not endorse lying. (TLSB)

**19:17** *enemy*. Saul has been employing an escalation of negative terms for David; first time he refers to him as his enemy. (TLSB)

**19:18** David goes to Samuel for sanctuary, strength, and courage to face threats to his life. (TLSB)

*Ramah.* Samuel’s home (see 7:17 and note on 1:1). (CSB)

In Ephraim. (TLSB)

*Naioth.* Means “habitations” or “dwellings.” The term appears to designate a complex of houses in a certain section of Ramah where a company of prophets resided (see vv. 19–20, 22–23). (CSB)

Near Ramah, short distance north of Jerusalem. (TLSB)

**19:20** *group of prophets.* See 10:5 and note. (CSB)

Prophets often lodged together with fellow prophets. The Spirit of God protects David by causing Saul’s messengers to prophesy under a divinely induced trance. (TLSB)

*prophesying.* See notes on 10:5; 18:10. (CSB)

**19:22** *Secu*. C 3 mi N of Ramah. (TLSB)

**19:23–24** *stripped off*. In contrast to his messengers (vv 20–21), Saul behaves esp strangely. He takes off his royal robes as though casting aside his royal office. He has lost all control of himself. (TLSB)

*Is Saul also among the prophets?* Demands a negative reply. To question Saul’s behavior as a prophet is to question his legitimacy as king. (TLSB)

**19:24** *He lay that way all that day and night.* Saul was so overwhelmed by the power of the Spirit of God that he was prevented from carrying out his intention to take David’s life. His frustrated attempts to kill David—his own inability to harm David and the thwarting of his plans by Jonathan’s loyalty, by Michal’s deception and by David’s own cleverness—all reach their climax here. (CSB)

*Is Saul also among the prophets?* This second occasion reinforced the first (see 10:11 and note). Its repetition underscores how alien Saul’s spirit was from that of these zealous servants of the Lord. (CSB)

**Ch 19** Saul’s hatred for David results in his attempts to murder him, but the Lord intervenes through Saul’s own children. “Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer” (1Jn 3:15). Ask God to remove hatred from your heart and cleanse it by His gift of forgiveness. “Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered” (Ps 32:1). • Thank You, Lord, that You forgive my sins and remember them no more. Amen. (TLSB)