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Sha'ul Tries to Kill David

First Samuel 19: 1-24

DIG: Why is Sha'ul so eager to kill David? How did David respond to Sha'ul's hatred of him? What did that say about David? How is Sha'ul fighting God's will? Why would a person knowingly do this? Why do you think Y'honatan seems more loyal to David than to his own father? Why did David seem to trust Sha'ul's vow at this point? Why did YHVH send an evil spirit to Sha'ul again? What is the LORD trying to do? Why did David play the lyre again, after all he and Sha'ul had been through? Like Y'honatan, does it surprise you that Michal, David's wife, was more loyal to him than to her father? The prophesying here was probably singing and praising ADONAI. Why did this seem to keep Sha'ul's men from capturing David? Why is it ironic that Sha'ul ends up prophesying also? How might this have been God showing His mercy toward Sha'ul?

REFLECT: Has someone ever hated you for no good reason? How did you react? How has your loyalty to friends been tested recently? Did you pass the loyalty test? How so? Is there any situation in your life right now in which you feel like "the enemy is closing in?" Have you devised a plan of escape? Have you had to make good on it yet? Do you have any less than loyal plans that ADONAI might be frustrating? What would it take for you to submit to the Lord's stronger and wiser will? How can praise and worship help you in your times of trouble?

1017 BC

Sha'ul - ever fearful and threatened, as well as aware that **his** dynasty was cursed and **his** kingdom would not last - soon grew suspicious of **the young champion**, saw **him** as **his** rival, and sought to murder **him**. Under this deadly threat, **David** would have had no chance. But **he** had an ally in the court, **his friend** and **brother-in-law**, **Y'honatan**. **Their** lives had been **knit together** in such a way that **they** made **a covenant** of loyalty to each other even though **David**, who was about 23 years old at the time, was half **Y'honatan's** age (**First Samuel 18:3**).⁵⁹



Sha'ul Tries to Kill David by His Servants: **Sha'ul** was tired of behind-the-scenes plots and was out to destroy his **son-in-law** in the quickest way possible, so **he told his son Y'honatan and all his servants to kill David**. Apparently **Sha'ul** was not aware of the deep friendship between **his son** and **David**. When this happened **the prince** warned **David** of **his father's** intention. **But Y'honatan was very fond of David, and told him, "My father Sha'ul is out to have you killed. Therefore you must be very cautious tomorrow morning. Find a well-concealed place to hide in.** The conspiracy was well planned. **I will go out and stand next to my father in the countryside where you're hiding. I will talk with my father about you; and if I learn anything, I'll tell you"** (First Samuel 19:13 CJB).

Y'honatan even interceded with **his father** and **spoke well of David**, **"Let not the king do wrong to his servant David; he has not wronged you, and what he has done has benefited you greatly. He took his life in his hands when he killed the Philistine. YHVH won a great victory for all Isra'el, 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? Sha'ul, enjoying a sane moment, listened to Y'honatan and took this oath, "As surely as ADONAI lives, David will not be put to death."** So **Y'honatan** called **David** and **told him the whole conversation. He brought him to Sha'ul, and David was with Sha'ul as before (First Samuel 19:4-7).** It's remarkable that such a magnificent **son** could belong to such a wicked **father!** Had **Y'honatan** been selfish, **he** could have helped to eliminate **David** and secure the crown for **himself**, but **he** submitted to **ADONAI** and assisted **David**.⁶⁰

Sha'ul Tries to Kill David by the Spear Again: After an initial and successful attempt by **Y'honatan** to smooth **his father's** feelings toward **David**, **Sha'ul** continued **his** jealous attack against **Isra'el's** future **king**. **Once more war broke out, and David** again **went out and fought the Philistines** and again **he** was extremely successful. **He struck them with such force that they fled before him. Sha'ul** was elected **king** to free the nation

from **the Philistines**, but **David** was more successful than **Sha'ul** ever thought of being. Therefore, all of **Y'honatan's** efforts left **Sha'ul** unmoved and murderous in **his** resolve. So **YHVH** treated **Sha'ul** like Pharaoh and hardened **his** heart, and knowing the evil intentions of **his** heart, gave **him** over to **an evil spirit as he was sitting in his house with his spear** (scepter) **in his hand. The Adversary is a liar and murderer (John 8:44)**, and because the **Evil One** controlled **Sha'ul**, **he tried to pin David to the wall with his spear while he was playing the lyre. But David eluded him as Sha'ul drove the spear into the wall. That night David made good his escape (First Samuel 19:8-10).**

David was then a hunted man, sought by **the king. David** was thus far in the narrative completely passive. **He** took no initiative, nor are we told of **his** responses to **Sha'ul**. The story simply gives room for the venom of **Sha'ul** to have its full, self-destructive play.⁶¹

Sha'ul Tries to Kill David by the His Messengers: **Sha'ul** can now think of nothing except the threat of **David**. So **he sent men to David's house to watch it and to kill him in the morning. But Michal, David's wife**, knowing **her father's** thought processes, **warned him, "If you don't run for your life tonight, tomorrow you'll be killed."** So **Michal let David down through a window** (evidently an unguarded position with **the messengers** watching only the doors), **and he fled and escaped.** While **Michal** was scheming, **David** was praying (**to see link click [Ag - Sha'ul Sent Men to Kill David](#)**). **Then Michal took one of her own idols** (the house of **Sha'ul** was not totally free of idolatry) **and laid it on the bed, covering it with a garment and putting some goat's hair at the head.** Apparently **the men** went **back** to **Sha'ul** and told **him** that **David** never came out. But **when Sha'ul sent the men back a second time to capture David, Michal said, "He is ill."** They did not enter **the house** to check out **Michal's** story so **Sha'ul sent the men back** a third time **to see David and told them, "Bring him up to me in his bed so I may kill him."** But **when the men entered**, they discovered what the reader already knows: **David** was not there. **There was the idol in the bed, and at the head was some goat's hair.** Only then does **the father** speak to **his daughter**. Only then do we hear the anguish in **Sha'ul's** voice: **Why did you deceive me like this and send my enemy away so he escaped?"** **Sha'ul's** sadness, however, wasn't enough to compel **Michal's** honest respect. **She told him, "He said to me, 'Let me get away. Why should I kill you' (First Samuel 19:11-17)?"**

We seem to be watching a soap opera. There is nothing here about **ADONAI, ADONAI's** will, or **ADONAI's** Kingdom. We are watching calculating humans that do not measure up to our expectations. **Michal** despised **David** in **her** heart so **she** chose to do wrong out of a selfish heart- just like **her father**. The hardened and selfish heart attitude of **Sha'ul** had

infected the whole scene. **David** had escaped and **Sha'ul** was left with **his evil spirit** and without the object of **his** intense hatred. As a result of **his** obsession to **kill David**, **Sha'ul** had lost a **son**, and then a **daughter**.⁶²

David Flees to Ramah: When David had fled and made his escape, he went to Samuel at his home in Ramah and told him all that Sha'ul had done to him. This was a logical place because it was Samuel who anointed David as the next king in place of Sha'ul. Then he and Samuel went to Naioth, a section of Ramah containing the school of the prophets, which would provide a measure of sanctuary, and stayed there.

But Sha'ul's spies were everywhere, and they reported to the king where he could find David. Word came to Sha'ul, "David is in Naioth at Ramah," so he sent men to capture him. But when they saw a group of prophets prophesying, with Samuel standing there as their leader, the Ruach Ha'Kodesh came upon Sha'ul's men, and they also prophesied. Keep in mind, this is not a blessing - but a judgment. They fell into a trance-like state that made it impossible for them to harm David. Sha'ul was told about it, and he sent more men a third time, and they also prophesied. Finally, in sheer exasperation, Sha'ul takes matters into his own hands by going to Ramah and went to the great cistern at Seku.

The Ruach Ha'Kodesh also came upon Balaam (Numbers 23:5 and 15). In that case the Spirit of God came upon (or, over) him. The same expression is used of the messengers of Sha'ul (First Samuel 19:20), and King Sha'ul himself (First Samuel 10:9-12). The prophecy of Caiaphas (John 11:46-52) affords another instance of the sovereign power of the Spirit as displayed through the medium of wicked men. **From this we can conclude that the Ruach Ha'Kodesh can use anyone whom He wants to for His purposes.**

And he asked, "Where are Samuel and David?" David's presence in Ramah was no secret because the people knew where they were. "Over in Naioth at Ramah," they said. So Sha'ul went to Naioth at Ramah. But the Ruach HaKodesh came even on him, which was a judgment because it made it impossible for Sha'ul to carry out his wicked plan. And he walked along prophesying until he came to Naioth. He stripped off his garments and he too prophesied in Samuel's presence. This would be their last meeting until that fateful night when Samuel came up from Sh'ol to pass judgment on the king (See [By - Sha'ul and the Medium at Endor](#)). Sha'ul lay naked (a person was called naked whose outer clothes were thrown aside, leaving nothing but a long tunic next to the skin) in judgment all that day and all that night. And this gave David ample time

to escape (**First Samuel 19:18-24a**). This pitifully embarrassing scene is that of this once great man, still tall but no longer great, prostrate on the ground, clearly not in control, shamed, now rendered powerless.

Sha'ul had a similar experience after **Samuel** had anointed **him king at Ramah (First Samuel 8:4)** and from it came the proverbial saying: **Is Sha'ul also among the prophets (First Samuel 10:9-13)**. These two events prove that a person can have a remarkable religious experience and yet have no change of heart. In **Sha'ul's** case, both experiences were actually sent by **Ha'Shem**, but **Sha'ul** didn't profit from either one. Judas preached sermons and even performed miracles (**Matthew 10:1-8**), yet was not a believer. **He** ended up betraying **the Lord** and ended up committing suicide (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Lm - Judas Hangs Himself**). **Sha'ul**, like Judas, had many opportunities to see **God's** hand at work, and yet he never had a life-changing experience.⁶³

Even though the people asked: **Is Sha'ul also among the prophets (First Samuel 19:24b)?** this question, however, can be asked in two very different tones of voice. In the first instance the question can be asked with expectancy, suggesting this surprising **king**, then powerfully energized by **the Ruach HaKodesh**, would rule in obedience to **YHVH**. But all that is left in the end is an empty shell of hate, no longer **a king**. **Sha'ul's** career will be winding down for a while, but the narrator wants us to see that **his** rule is, in fact, finished.⁶⁴

While **Sha'ul** was occupied at the school of the prophets, **David** slipped away from **Ramah** and went to meet **Y'honatan** somewhere near Gibeah. **David** and **Y'honatan** would make one final attempt to reconcile with **the king**, and it would almost cost **Y'honatan his** life. **Sha'ul was double-minded and unstable in all his ways (James 1:8)**. **He** would try to rule Y'hudah and defeat the Philistines while also chasing **David** all over the landscape trying to **kill him**. The longer **David** eluded **him**, the more fanatical **Sha'ul** became until **he** finally ended **his** own life on the battlefield, lacking the help of the one **man** who could give him victory.⁶⁵