–Save This Page as a PDF–

Sha’ul Tries to Kill David
First Samuel 19: 1-24

Sha’ul tries to kill David 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 Jonathan 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 Jonathan, 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?

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? 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?

Knowing the evil intentions of his heart,
God treated Sha’ul like Pharaoh and hardened his heart.

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 seemingly have had no chance. But **he** had an ally in the court, **his friend Jonathan**. **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 in **his** early

twenties at the time, was half **Jonathan’s** age **(18:3)**.[368]



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 Jonathan 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 Jonathan 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” (19:13 CJB).**

Jonathan 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 Jonathan and took this oath, “As surely as ADONAI lives, David will not be put to death.” So Jonathan called David and told him the whole conversation. He brought him to Sha’ul, and David was with Sha’ul as before (19:4-7).** It’s remarkable that such a magnificent **son** could belong to such a wicked **father**! Had **Jonathan** been selfish, **he** could have helped to eliminate **David** and secure the crown for **himself**, but **he** submitted to **ADONAI** and assisted **David**.[369]

Sha'ul Tries to Kill David by the Spear Again: After an initial and successful attempt by **Jonathan** 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 **Jonathan'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 (19:8-10). David** was then a hunted man, sought by **the king**. Thus far in the narrative **David** is 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.[370]

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 Cu – 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' (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**.[371]

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** tried to take matters into **his** own hands by going to **Ramah and went to the great cistern at Seku.**

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 Ha'Kodesh 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 **Dj – 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 **(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 pitiful and powerless.

But this wasn't the first time **he** had **prophecied**. When **Samuel** anointed **Sha'ul** as the first king of **Isra'el**, **he** predicted that **Sha'ul** would **prophecy**, saying: **The Spirit of ADONAI will fall on you, and you will prohesy . . . and be turned into a different man (10:6)!** This came true on the same day. **When they arrived at the hill, and there in front of him was a group of prophets, the Spirit of God fell on Sha'ul and he prophesied along with them. When those who knew him from before saw him there, prophesying with the prophets, they asked each other, "What's happened to Kish's son? Is Sha'ul a prophet, too?" (10:10-11). This is why people ask, "Is Sha'ul also among the prophets" (19:24b)?**

These two events, one in **Chapter 10** and one in **Chapter 19**, 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 taking **his** own life (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.[372]

Even though the people asked: **Is Sha'ul also among the prophets? –** 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.[373]

While **Sha'ul** was occupied at **the school of the prophets**, **David** slipped away from **Ramah** and went to meet **Jonathan** somewhere near Gibeah. **David** and **Jonathan** would make one final attempt to reconcile with **the king**, and it would almost cost **Jonathan his** life. **Sha'ul was double-minded and unstable in all**

his ways (James 1:8). He would try to rule Judah 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 (see **Dk – Sha'ul Take His Own Life**), rejecting the help of the **One** who could have given **him** victory.[374]

*Dear heavenly **Father**, praise **You** that **You** hold my life in **Your** hands. When **King Sha'ul** tried to kill **David**, **Your** hand of protection was upon **David** and so in no way would **Sha'ul** ever be able to do what was against **Your** will. How wonderful that those who have faith in **You** have no fear of death, but wait in eager expectation of a glorious life with **You** in **Your** marvelous heaven. **They shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them and be their God. He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more. Nor shall there be mourning or crying or pain any longer, for the former things have passed away (Revelation 21:3b-4).** When the time has come that **You** have decided to take me home with **You**. Nothing can separate me from **You**. **For I am convinced that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Messiah Yeshua our Lord (Romans 8:38-39).** Thank **You** for the great future joy of living with you eternally! In **Messiah Yeshua's** holy **Name** and power of **His** Resurrection. Amen*