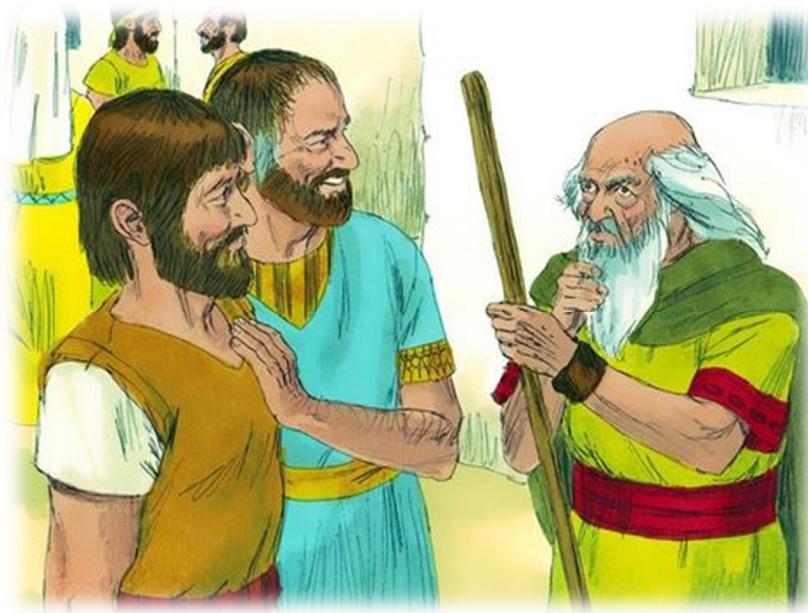
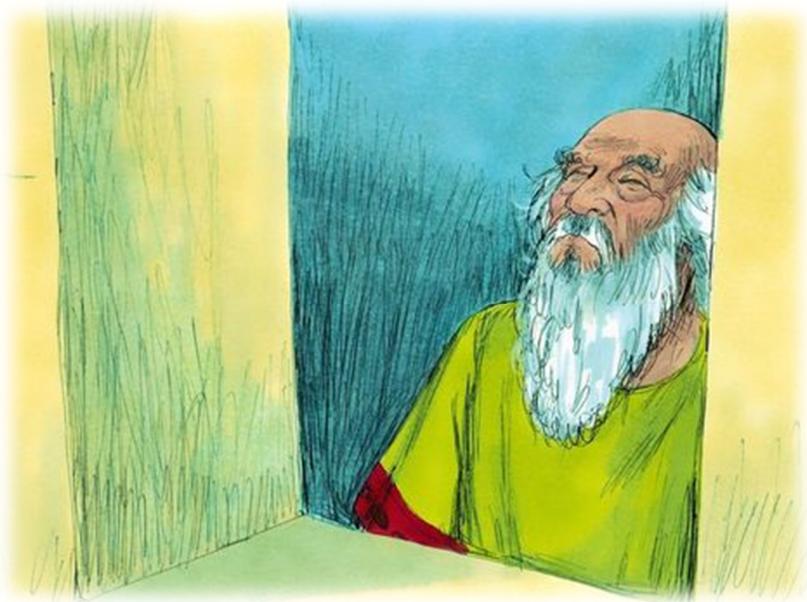


The LORD Looks at the Heart

1 Samuel 16

Saul was king over Israel, but instead of leading the people to God their True King, he rebelled and disobeyed God.

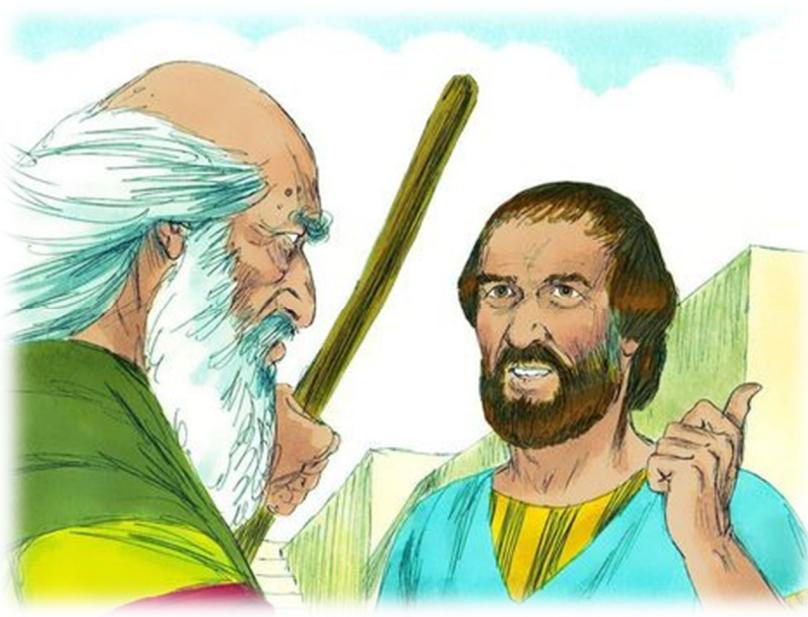
God wanted a king who would lead His people in the right way—to lead God's people to serve God as King. God wanted a man after His own heart to be Israel's king.



“Samuel,” God said, “Fill your horn with oil. I am sending you to the house of Jesse the Bethlehemite. I have provided Myself a king from among his sons.”

Samuel did as God had said. He made a sacrifice to God at Bethlehem, and invited Jesse and his sons to the sacrifice.

Eliab, Jesse's firstborn, looked tall and strong like a king. When Samuel saw him he thought, “Surely, here is the one God has chosen to be king!”



But God spoke to Samuel, "Don't look at his appearance or his height. I have not chosen this one. I don't see things the way that man sees them. Man looks on the outside, but I look at the heart."

One by one, seven of Jesse's sons passed before Samuel. And one by one, Samuel told Jesse, "God has not chosen this son."

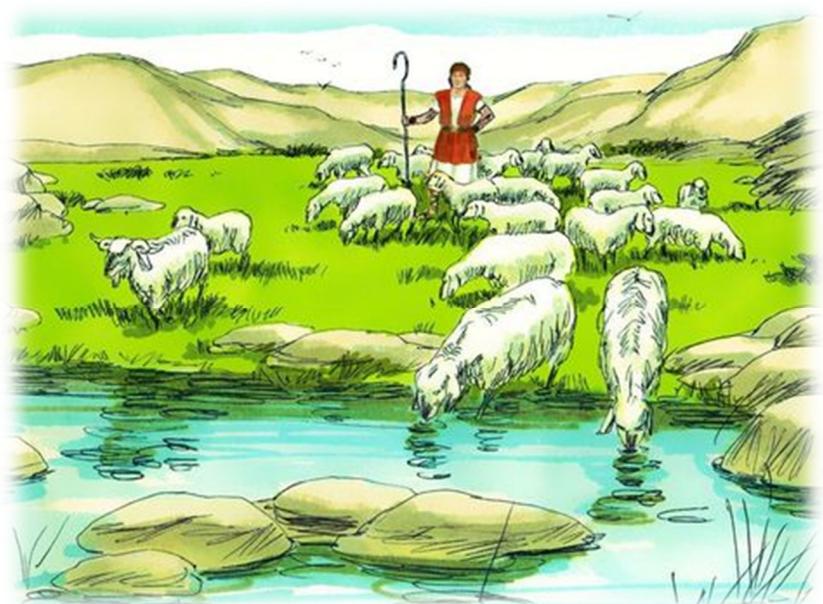
"Are these all your sons?" Samuel asked Jesse.

"The youngest son is not here—he is keeping the sheep." Jesse said.

Being a shepherd may not have been a very exciting job. It was often a job for servants, or daughters... or the youngest son in a family of strong boys.

But David learned a lot about God while he took care of the sheep. When he led the sheep to green pastures and still waters, he thought about how God was like a shepherd, leading him and providing for him. David wrote a beautiful Psalm about how God was his Shepherd.

David probably didn't realize it at the time, but as he led and provided for the sheep, God was preparing him to lead and provide for God's own people.



"Send for the shepherd-boy and bring him here!" Samuel said to Jesse, "We will not sit down until he comes." So Jesse sent and brought David in.

"This is the one!" God said to Samuel, "Arise, anoint him!"

So Samuel took his horn of oil, and anointed David to be the future king over Israel.

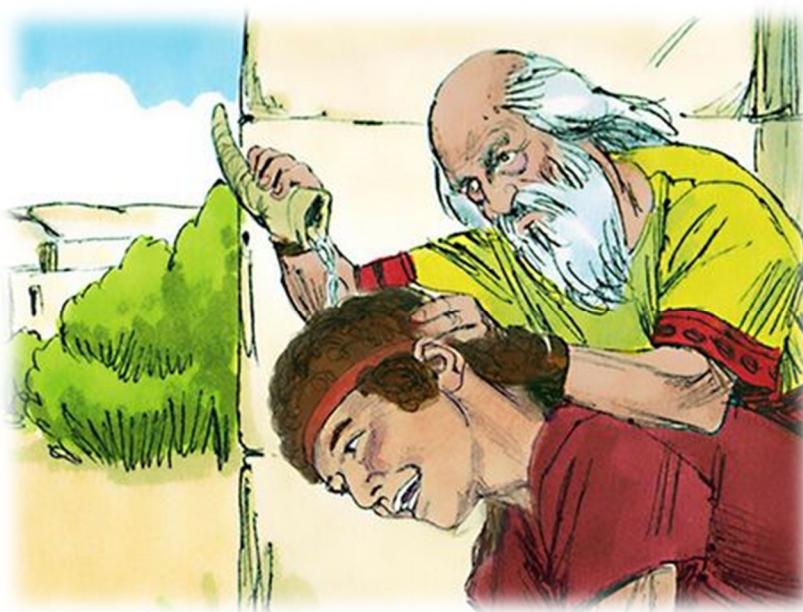


David may not have looked as tall or kingly on the outside like some of his brothers, but God could see David's heart and knew that THIS was the one who would lead and shepherd His people in paths of righteousness.

God wants us to learn to see the way that He sees things! The children of Israel wanted a king that they could see instead of God who they could not see. They wanted a king that looked tall and looked strong.

Sometimes things that look attractive on the outside are rotten on the inside. Sadly, this was the case with king Saul.

God wants us to remember that it is what is on the inside that counts. God looks at our heart and is pleased to see when our heart loves and desires to serve Him, just like David's heart.

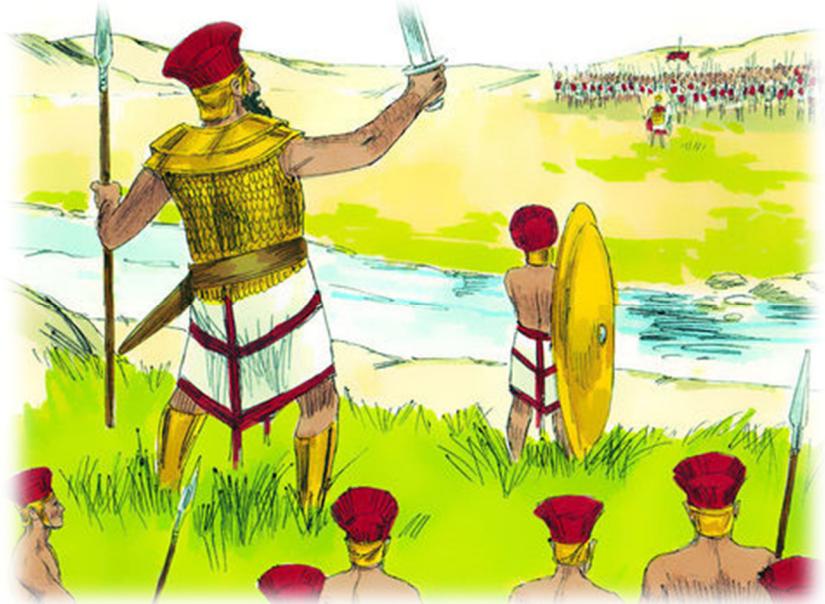


Five Smooth Stones

1 Samuel 17

The Philistines had gathered together to battle against Israel again. The Philistines camped on a mountain, and Saul and the Israelite army camped another mountain with a great valley between them.

But the battle had not begun. As the Israelites watched a soldier walked out from the Philistine army. This wasn't just any Philistine soldier—he was a giant!



"WHO WILL COME AND FIGHT ME!" Goliath the giant shouted. "IF YOU CAN KILL ME, THE PHILISTINES WILL BE YOUR SERVANTS. BUT IF I KILL HIM, THEN YOU WILL BE OUR SERVANTS!"

Daily, Goliath appeared from the army and shouted the same thing to the Israelites. Who would fight him? All the men in the Israelite army were very afraid. They felt like grasshoppers next to a giant like Goliath.

One day, David travelled to the army to bring his older brothers food from home.



He arrived to his brothers in the army just in time to hear Goliath's daily shout, "WHO WILL COME AND FIGHT ME?!"

David watched as brothers and all the men of Israel, ran away terribly afraid.

"Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God, like this?!" David angrily asked.

David's words were told to king Saul, who called for David. So David said to Saul, "Let no one be afraid because of this giant; I will go and fight him!"

"You can't fight the giant!" Saul exclaimed. "You are just a boy!"

Respectfully, David replied, "I keep my father's sheep, and when a lion or bear took a lamb, I killed it and saved the lamb. The same God who saved me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear, will save me from this giant."

"Go, and may the LORD be with you!" Saul said to David.

Saul gave David his helmet, armor and sword. But David could not walk, and he took them off. "The LORD is my strength and my shield," thought David.*

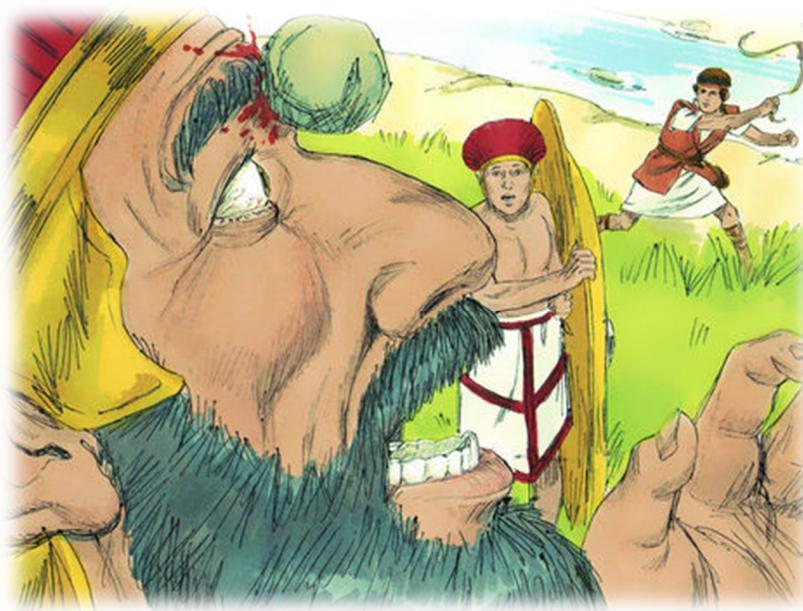
*Psa. 28:7



David took his shepherd's staff. He descended down the mountain into the shadows of the valley. In the stream, at the bottom he chose five smooth stones, then began to climb up towards Goliath.

When Goliath saw that it was only a boy coming against him, he grew angrier: "Am I dog that you come at me with sticks? Come closer and I will give your flesh for the birds of the air and the beasts of the field to eat!"

"You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of armies." David replied. His God was bigger than any giant!



As David ran towards Goliath, he slung a stone - right into the forehead of the giant! Goliath, the giant Philistine was dead.

The Philistines watched in horror as David took Goliath's own sword and cut off the giant's head. He took the head to the city Jerusalem, as a witness that God is able to defeat the biggest enemies.

David was just a boy—not even old enough to be in the army. But David knew that His God was bigger than any giant.

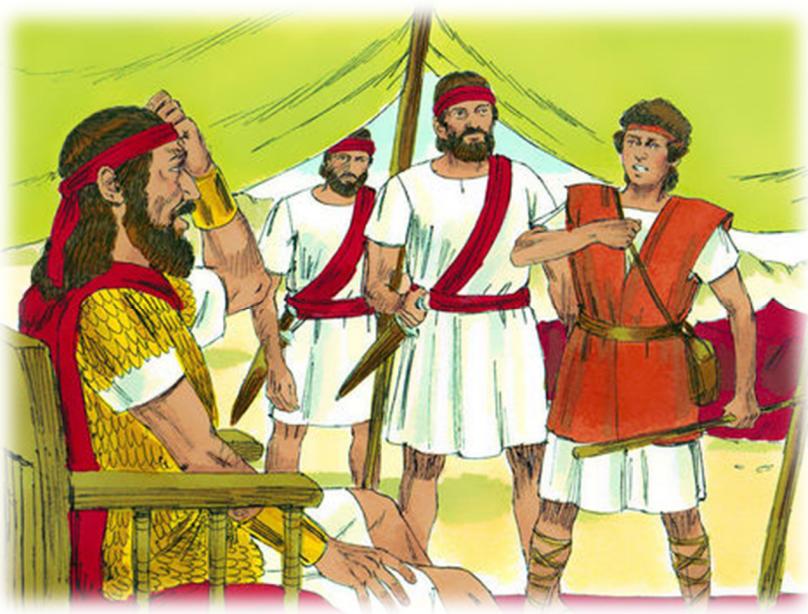
Sometimes you may feel that you have BIG problems that make us worried or afraid. But no matter how big your problem might be, always remember that your God is BIGGER.

Faithful Friends

1 Samuel 18-20

When David returned, Saul's captain brought David to Saul. "Whose son are you, young man?" Saul asked David. "I am the son of your servant Jesse, a Bethlehemite." David replied.

Jonathan, Saul's son was also there. Jonathan loved David because he could see David's love and trust in God. Jonathan gave David his special robe, his armor, sword, bow, and belt.

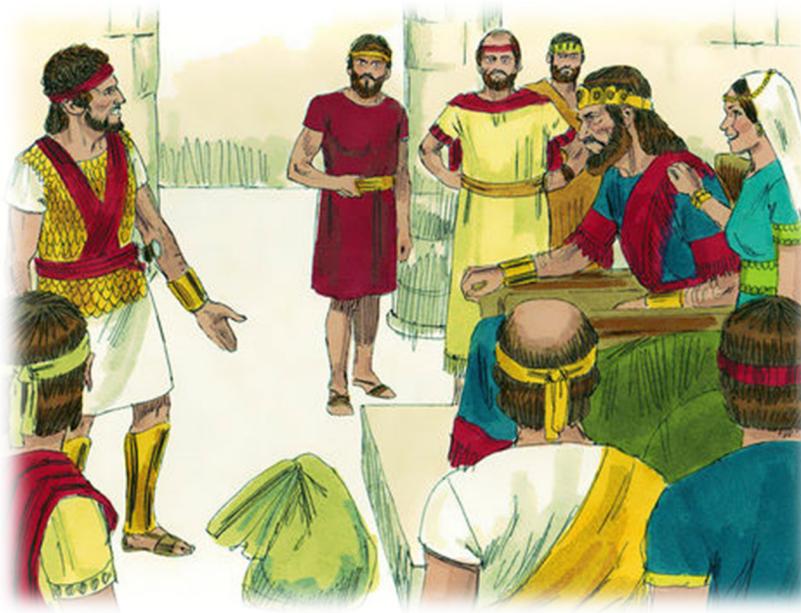


Saul made David a captain in his army, and all the soldiers and Saul's servants loved David.

But soon Saul began to get jealous of David's popularity. Saul began to worry that David would steal the kingdom away from him.

Twice, while David played music for King Saul, Saul picked up a spear and tried to spear David to the wall!

Finally, Saul spoke to his servants and to Jonathan and commanded them that they should kill David. But Jonathan loved David!



"David!" Jonathan said, "I need to talk to you! My father Saul wants to kill you. Go and hide, and I will talk to my father and try to change his mind."

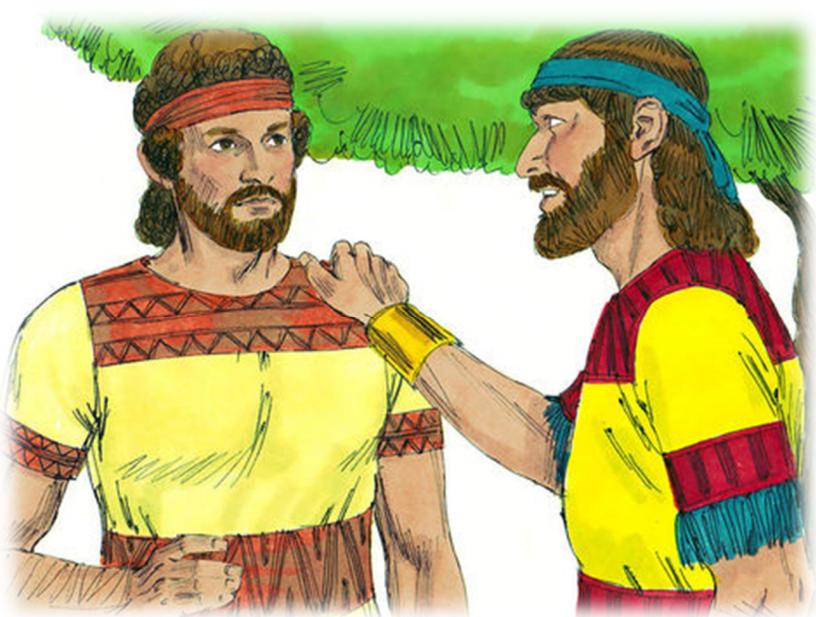
So David hid, and Jonathan went to Saul. "Father, don't sin against David! He has never done anything but good for you. He took his life in his hands when he killed Goliath and saved all Israel. Don't kill David for no reason!"

Saul listened to Jonathan, and promised that he would not kill David.

But it wasn't long before Saul changed his mind again. David ran to Jonathan. "Jonathan! What have I done wrong? Why does your father want to kill me again?"

"David, I think you're wrong. If my father wanted to kill you, he would have told me. But whatever you would like me to do, tell me and I will do it for you."

Together they decided that Jonathan would go back and find out whether Saul really did want to kill David. David would hide in the field until Jonathan returned with news.



Early in the morning a few days later, David could see Jonathan coming towards his hiding place with a servant boy. Jonathan brought his bow and arrows, and shot the arrows far away. This was Jonathan's secret signal to David that he would have to run far, far away from Saul.

After the servant boy collected Jonathan's arrows, Jonathan sent him home. David sadly crept out of his hiding place and together he and Jonathan cried and said goodbye.



David would spend many years running and hiding from Saul. At one point, Jonathan secretly found David to encourage him and strengthen him. That was the last time David saw Jonathan before Jonathan and Saul were killed by Philistines. David never forgot Jonathan's kindness though, and later when David became king he took special care of Jonathan's son Mephibosheth.

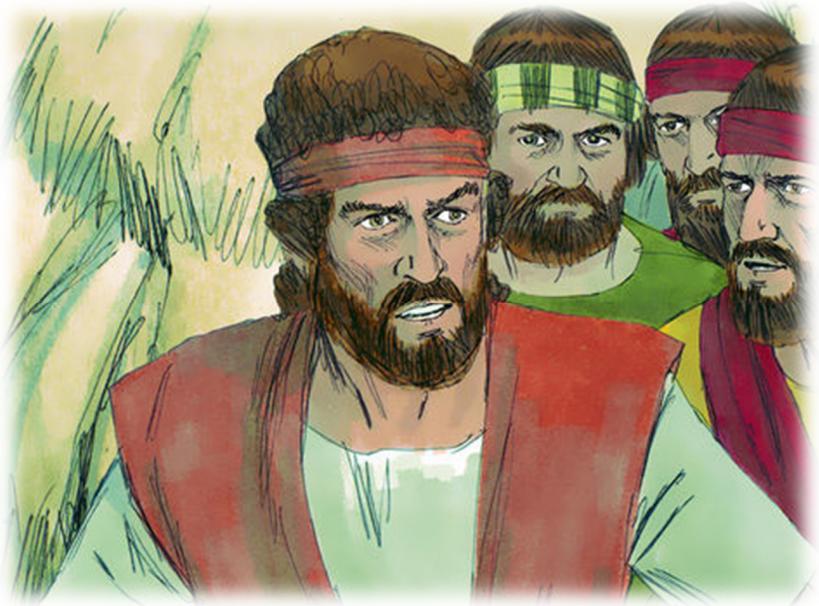
Jonathan and David were faithful, or loyal, friends. Jonathan loved David and gave him his best things—his robe, armor, sword, bow, and belt. Jonathan also risked his life to encourage David to keep trusting in God. David loved Jonathan, too, and took special care of his family after he had died.

God wants us to take care of our friends and encourage them, especially when they are having a hard time. God wants us to be faithful, loyal to our friends in the truth just like Jonathan and David.

David Spares Saul

1 Samuel 21-24

After Jonathan and David said good-bye, David ran and hid from Saul. Over time, others who were in distress joined David. Soon there were four hundred men with David—all running from king Saul. Saul and his army chased David and his men through forests and wilderness.



Once while David and his men were hiding in the wilderness of En Gedi, Saul brought an army of three thousand men to find David.

David and his men hid deep within a cave, when suddenly they looked up and Saul himself appeared all alone. “David,” his men whispered, “Kill him! God has delivered Saul into your hands!”

But David refused, and instead crept quietly behind Saul and cut off the corner of his robe.



After a while, Saul changed his mind again. Again, Saul gathered three thousand men and went out to capture David.

David saw where Saul and his men were camped. While Saul and his men were asleep, David and his friend Abishai crept quietly to where Saul slept. Next to Saul was a spear. "David," Abishai whispered, "God is delivering Saul into your hand! Please let me use his spear and pin him to the ground!"

"No, Abishai! You cannot kill God's anointed king! Let's take his spear and the jug of water, and go!"

When Saul left the cave, David followed him and called after him, "My lord, the king!" Surprised, Saul turned around.

There was David bowing down with his face to the earth. "Oh, king! Don't believe the people who say that I am trying to do harm to you. My father, see, I have your robe in my hand—I could have killed you, but I would never do that! You are God's anointed!"

"Is that you, my son David?" Saul cried. "You are more righteous than I am. You have rewarded me with good when I have rewarded you with evil." So Saul returned home from chasing David.



David and Abishai crept out of the camp of sleeping men, and up to the top of a hill. From there, David called out: "Abner!"

Abner answered, "Who are you?"

"Abner!" David shouted, "You have not guarded your king! Look, the king's spear and jug of water is missing!"

Saul recognized David's voice shouting to Abner. "Is that you, my son David?"

"Yes, it is my voice, my lord, O king." David replied. "Why are you chasing me? What have I done wrong?"



"I'm sorry, David! I was wrong to try to kill you." Saul said.

Once again Saul returned home, but sadly David knew he couldn't trust Saul. David and his men continued to hide until the day that Saul died in a battle with the Philistines.

Saul wanted to kill David, even though David had done nothing wrong. Over and over again David had the chance to get revenge and kill Saul, but he refused. David knew that vengeance belonged to God.

When we are mistreated, we should always respond with kindness and never revenge. When we act kindly towards someone who is mistreating us, we are overcoming evil with good, just like David did.

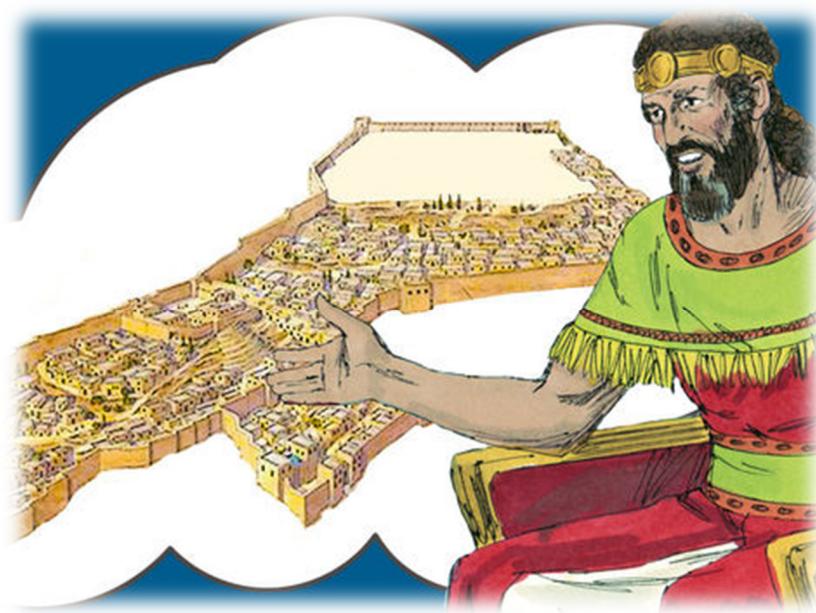


God Makes a Promise

2 Samuel 7

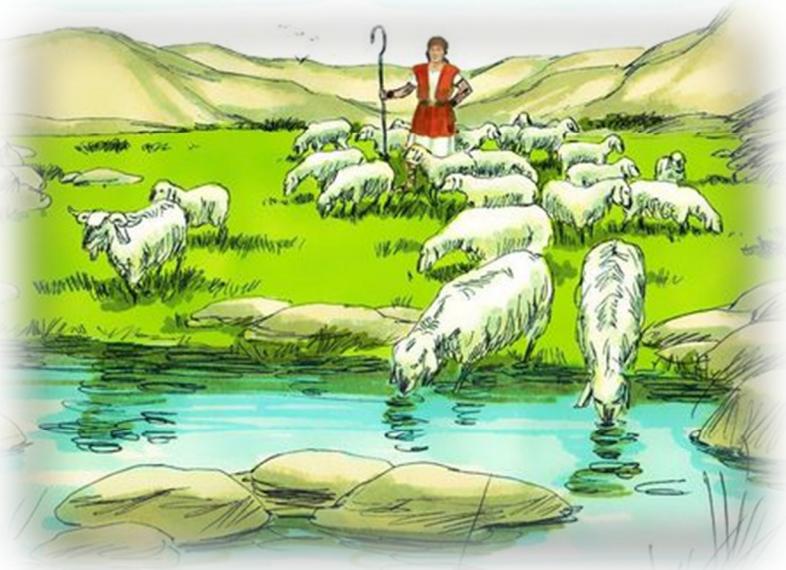
After Saul died in battle with the Philistines, David became king. David was a king after God's own heart, and led the people in God's ways. One of the first things that David wanted to do was bring God's ark to Jerusalem—the new capital city of Israel.

Rejoicing and happiness filled the air, as David danced in front of the procession of priests carrying the ark. David made a special tent for God's ark in Jerusalem.



But the tent for God's ark was not good enough for David. David wanted to build a house for the ark—a temple for God to dwell in.

David told Nathan the prophet of his idea. At first Nathan was pleased with the idea, but that night God spoke to Nathan the prophet with a different message for David.



“Go, and tell this to my servant David: ‘I took you from caring for sheep to be the ruler over my people. Where ever you have gone, I have been with you. I have slain your enemies before you. I have given you a great name, like the greatest men who are on the earth.

“Also tell David that I will plant Israel in a place of their own, so that they won’t move anymore or be oppressed by the wicked nations around them like before. I will give them rest from all of their enemies.

“And David, after you die, I am going to set up your descendant as the king of Israel. He will build a house for my name, and he will be king forever in your presence. I will be his Father, and he will be my son.”

Nathan told all of God’s words to David.



After Nathan told David the words from God, David turned to God in prayer: “Who am I, O Lord God, for you to have brought me this far! You have spoken of Your servants house for a great while to come.

“You are great, O Lord God, and there is none like You, and no God besides You!

“You have made Your people Israel Your very own people forever; and You, LORD, have become their God.



“And now, O Lord, Your words are true, and You have promised this goodness to Your servant. Now, let it please You to bless the house of Your servant, that it may continue before You forever.”

God promised David that many, many years later he would have a very important descendant. This descendant would be God’s own son. God’s own son would be a King FOREVER. God also promised that this special descendant would be a King forever in the presence of David—so David would be resurrected to live forever, too!

Any day now, Jesus—the great son of David – will return to the earth. He will sit on the throne of his father David, and reign as king... forever.