

Description

The story of Jonathan is one of covenant faithfulness. God has promised to be the king of his people – the challenge is whether or not we'll believe it. The deep challenge is to consider what our other options are. We could trust ourselves to be king of our world – which leads only to murderous rants and crazy making behavior. We end up like Saul, enraged and provoked at every corner. Or we can trust that God has a plan and it is for our good... even if we can't see it.

Jonathan is a figure much like John the Baptist who realized that he "must decrease so that Christ may increase". God had provided a savior for his people, a champion to fight on their behalf, and it was David, not Jonathan. We don't know exactly why he was so faithful – except that he was a true believer, banking on God's good plan and trusting God rather than politics, position or even himself.

This passage is all about confidence... not in self, but in Covenant (Faith) in God. Security is found in Covenant... which Dispatches fear... Demands commitment... and Delivers Peace...

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Sermon and Notes

I'll never forget getting a text message from Robert Fink one Sunday morning... It said, simply, "I've got your back"

- A great encouragement... especially when you realize who Fink was.
- He was the center lineman for the Citadel's football team.
- He is huge, with biceps as big as my head... and a killer instinct on the field of battle...
- We called him "Finker-belle" ...
 - yes... we were friends...
- But that one text message was emboldening... I realized that when you have Fink behind you... then you can be a bit more courageous!

Last week, David won a huge battle

- The runt of the litter... had faith in God that was head and shoulders above the rest...
 - And he proved that God is the Champion Giant for his people...
 - And that God's Covenant can be trusted.
- Remember what happened when Goliath came on the stage... for 40 days (twice a day) he threatened to feed them to the birds...
 - Friends... that's what life is like a lot of the time... Giants threaten to beat us down and feed us to the birds...
 - But God provides a champion to lead us...
- Why? Because God has a covenant with his people... that He will be our God and we will be His people.
 - We can bank on it!
 - When fearful situations come about... we can have faith in the COVENANT of GOD
 - Imagine if you had Fink with you all the time... CONFIDENCE

This passage is all about confidence... not in self, but in Covenant (Faith) in God. Security is found in Covenant... which Dispatches fear... Demands commitment... and Delivers Peace...

A covenant is a promise,

a trust, a determined course of action, faith,
that holds firm when the world is falling apart..

- God had a covenant with Israel...
 - Genesis 17 -- I will establish My covenant between me and you... I will be your God
 - Exodus 6:7 - I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God and you shall know that I am the Lord your God who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians
- When David fights Goliath, David trusts that covenant...
 - He doesn't fight with self-confidence...
 - but God Confidence...

C-17 "that all the earth may know there is a God in Israel - and that all may know that the LORD saves not with sword and spear... He will give you into our hand.

- When we get to chapter 18, Jonathan is a true believer...
 - He's seen David's faith
 - He realizes the theological significance ...
 - David is God's Champion (!!)
 - Puts faith in God's man
 - To his own detriment

1 Sam 18 v. 3 Jonathan made a covenant with David... v. 4 give robe, armor, bow, belt...

- Symbols of Jonathan's position...
 - humbling himself to what God is doing
- Saul? Father's reaction? Utter disbelief...
 - 1 Sam 18:6-8

6 As they were coming home, [from battle], the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, ... 7 And [they] ... , "Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands." 8 And Saul was very angry, ... eyed David from that day on.

- Saul has shown that he's all about size,
 - outward appearance, and power...
 - not listening to the Lord as the True King
- So, Saul's kingdom is ending...
- It's a common pattern in the OT...
 - God uses the weak not the strong to bring deliverance

(Keller) He favors Abel, not Cain; Isaac, not Ishmael; Jacob, not Esau. ... you begin to realize that the Bible is subverting, not supporting, those ancient institutions at every turn.

- God is going to be the king
 - He is going to save them...
 - God isn't about saving Saul's destiny...
 - God is about saving Israel
 - Saul chooses to fight... God!
 - begins in jealousy and ends in rage...
 - Jonathan chooses a better path...
 - it's not a rosy path... it's a hard path.
 - And that's why the covenant is so important...
 - Clear boundaries on a rocky road.
 - Shows what our faith is ultimately in
- Jonathan's faith?? God's covenant to be King of Israel

Security is found in Covenant... which Dispatches fear... Demands commitment... and Delivers Peace...

#1 Covenant Dispatches Fear

- There's a lot to fear, for David

18:12 Saul was afraid of David because the Lord was with him but had departed from Saul

Saul's jealousy leads to multiple attempts on David's life

- He tries to attach him to a wall with a spear
- He tries to have men kill him while sleeping
- He tries to have the Philistines kill him
- David doesn't die... he realizes Saul's hatred
 - Why's he mad, again? "because the Lord was with" David.

God's plan... when it doesn't accord with our own plan... can make us crazy

- Covenant, from God, is His hesed... one way never giving up always for us kind of love
- God promises to bring good to His people who will just trust him...
 - David is fearless... even in face of death...
- He travels on a path that takes him towards Saul...
 - ...not away from him
- He's going from North... towards where Jonathan is...
 - David and Jonathan fear the Living God... and put their trust in God alone...

Look at 1 Samuel C 20... page 243 in pew Bibles

20 Then David fled from Naioth in Ramah and came and said before Jonathan, "What have I done? What is my guilt? And what is my sin before your father, that he seeks my life?" 2 And he said to him, "Far from it!

You shall not die. Behold, my father does nothing either great or small without disclosing it to me. And why should my father hide this from me? It is not so.” 3 But David vowed again, saying, “Your father knows well that I have found favor in your eyes, and he thinks, ‘Do not let Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved.’ But truly, as the LORD lives and as your soul lives, there is but a step between me and death.” 4 Then Jonathan said to David, “Whatever you say, I will do for you.”

- Why would David dare turn to Saul’s son when under Saul’s attack?
 - Because Jonathan in 18:3-4 made a covenant of YHWH (asking God to be the one who knit them together... and judges between them)
- It doesn’t take a master’s degree to figure out why Saul is upset... (He’s being ousted by God...)
 - But in that chaos David and Jonathan can trust God’s Covenant... a “bastion of certainty” in dangerous times
 - Hence... Jonathan says, “Whatever you say, I will do for you”

Love gives itself in covenant that brings rest and security

- David’s world is disintegrating
- But there is a refuge... Jonathan’s Faith.
- Covenant brings hesed. (loyal love)
- v. 4 Jonathan is committed to the covenant (**WHATEVER YOU SAY I WILL DO**)
 - Jonathan may have to take sides... culturally and familial expectation = the next King...
 - But he must serve the King of Kings first...
 - who selected David to be King
 - It reminds me of John the Baptist with Jesus, “I must decrease so He may increase”

If we are following God’s plan... not our own... then we must be willing to cede control and power and prestige to God’s plan...

5 David said to Jonathan, “Behold, tomorrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit at table with the king. But let me go, that I may hide myself in the field till the third day at evening. 6 If your father misses me at all, then say, ‘David earnestly asked leave of me to run to Bethlehem his city, for there is a yearly sacrifice there for all the clan.’ 7 If he says, ‘Good!’ it will be well with your servant, but if he is angry, then know that harm is determined by him.

- The New Moon Festival would be an expected feast
 - an easy time for Saul to dispatch David
- And a clear indication of Saul’s rage against God...
- So David trusts Jonathan
 - In uncertain times... trusting in God is the only thing that will keep us sane...
- And... they trust God’s justice through it all!

He says to Jonathan in v. 8 Therefore deal kindly with your servant, for you have brought your servant into a covenant of the LORD with you. But if there is guilt in me, kill me yourself, for why should you bring me to your father?

- His question is one of honesty... he wants to know if he’s done anything wrong... and if he has, he’s ready for justice.
 - Both Jonathan and David trust the Promises of God.
 - David is equally under those PROMISES / COVENANT with Jonathan
- In the same way, we are under the Word of God. We Trust God with our lives... and act in faithful obedience to that Covenant even in scary times!
- And that covenant is “Kindly” or Loving-kindness the Hebrew Word for Hesed
 - rich in hesed and fidelity
 - hesed is not merely love, but loyal love;
 - not merely kindness, but dependable kindness;
 - not merely affection, but affection that has committed itself. (FOBC)
 - Hesed flows not from humans but a covenant God, Yahweh, who is **“rich in hesed and fidelity”** (Exod. 34:6) You will never perish when you fall into the abyss of God’s lovingkindness. (FOBC)
 - **“full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).**
 - You seek hesed and simply find yourself in the arms of Jesus Christ.
 - Jesus is the only covenant to trust in fearful times!

Security is found in Covenant... which Dispatches fear... Demands commitment... and Delivers Peace...

#2 Covenant Demands Commitment

- The Covenant leads to Uncommon Faithfulness

12 And Jonathan said to David, “The LORD, the God of Israel, be witness! When I have sounded out my father, about this time tomorrow, or the third day, behold, if he is well disposed toward David, shall I not then send and disclose it to you? 13 But should it please my father to do you harm, the LORD do so to Jonathan and more also if I do not disclose it to you and send you away, that you may go in safety. May the LORD be with you, as he has been with my father.

- If Jonathan were “normal,” he would dispose of David.
- THAT’s what angers Saul so (vv. 30–31)
 - Jonathan’s covenant commitment to David flies smack in the face of all political sense.
- Jonathan really did “seek first” another kingdom; it didn’t make sense. One of the strange things covenant accomplishes. (FOBC)

14 If I am still alive, show me the steadfast love of the LORD, that I may not die; 15 and do not cut off your steadfast love from my house forever, when the LORD cuts off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth.”

- The new king always needed to solidify his position.
- solidification by liquidation.
- Everybody knew it; everybody believed it; everybody practiced it. (FOBC)
- Jonathan and David made commitments to each other
- Both of them are bound in God’s Covenant...
- Covenant demands commitment... which isn’t easy!

16 And Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, “May the LORD take vengeance on David’s enemies.” 17 And Jonathan made David swear again by his love for him, for he loved him as he loved his own soul.

- It is close to becoming a battle to the death for the kingship, between Saul and David.
- Jonathan recognizes—again—that David, and not he himself will be the next king of Israel. (EBC)
 - The LORD is who/what David and Jonathan share.
 - Because Jonathan puts the one Lord above king and kin he can abdicate

(His father is God’s enemy... as he will soon confirm!)

- What enabled him to accomplish this?
 - Faithfulness
 - He relies on God to save him... not his own power or might or position!
 - Jonathan trusts the Word of God...
- We aren’t told how he learned God had appointed David as the new King.
 - We simply see a man ready to put God’s glory ahead of his own

There has seldom, if ever, been exhibited a finer instance of triumphant faith,” writes William Blaikie, **“than when the prince, with all the resources of his kingdom at his beck, made this request of the helpless outlaw.”** (REC)

- It’s the same covenant that Jesus has ... relinquishing the resources of his throne in heaven... he comes and says “Come to me all who labor and are heavy laden... and I will give you rest”
- And this covenant keeping is costly!
- husbands remaining faithful to difficult wives,
- Christians keeping an unprofitable business going to provide jobs to long-serving employees,
- church members pulling together during a pastoral transition,
- Christians taking a costly stand for God’s Word despite the scorn of church leaders and friends.

The scene moves forward with a signal (18 -22) and a promise v. 23 ... the LORD is between you and me forever.”

- The Covenant May Demand Costly Commitment
(Jonathan explains that David isn’t coming to the feast) **30 Then Saul’s anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said to him, “You son of a perverse, rebellious woman, do I not know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame, and to the shame of your mother’s nakedness? 31 For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, neither you nor your kingdom shall be established. Therefore send and bring him to me, for he shall surely die.” 32 Then Jonathan answered Saul his father, “Why should he be put to death? What has he done?” 33 But Saul hurled his spear at him to strike him. So Jonathan knew that his father was determined to put David to death. 34 And Jonathan rose from the table in fierce anger and ate no food the second day of the month, for he was grieved for David, because his father had disgraced him.**
 - when David was absent the second day,
 - the fireworks begin. (FOBC)
- Saul’s reaction shows that, for him, Jonathan has become a traitor to the family dynasty: (BRAZOS)

- Saul saw one thing clearly: unless David were killed, Jonathan would never succeed to the throne (31).
- Jonathan accepted this fact, but Saul won't...
- So... Saul can only see Jonathan and David as one
 - they were indistinguishable to Saul explodes
 - It begins with David's place empty
 - It ends with Jonathan's place empty

Saul seeks HIS Kingdom /// Jonathan seeks God's

Matthew 6:33 Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you"

- Jonathan put Yahweh's servant (David), Yahweh's word (the rejection of Saul's line and the promise of kingship to David), and Yahweh's kingdom first,
- Jonathan "emptied himself" (Phil. 2:7); he was willing to suffer the "loss of all things" and to count them rubbish (Phil. 3:8). (FOBC)
 - rulers of this age dismiss the wisdom and power of God (FOBC)
- Saul thought his son a shameful fool for suffering the loss of a kingdom in order to be faithful to God's plans.
 - "you and your kingdom" did not move Jonathan.
 - He was bound to God's Covenant even if it cost his own father.
- Jonathan would have understood Jesus: "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters— yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26 NIV). (FOBC)
 - true life does not consist in securing "you and your kingdom" but in reflecting Yahweh's
- Jonathan knows the kingdom is Yahweh's and therefore David's,
 - His life doesn't need to be the center
 - His ambition isn't important
 - Not "what can I get"
 - but "what has God given"
 - Life does not consist in achieving your goals but in fulfilling your promises. (FOBC)

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#3 Covenant Delivers Peace

35 - 40 Jonathan goes to the field to signal the result to David...

41 And as soon as the boy had gone, David rose from beside the stone heap and fell on his face to the ground and bowed three times. And they kissed one another and wept with one another, David weeping the most. 42 Then Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, because we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD, saying, 'The LORD shall be between me and you, and between my offspring and your offspring, forever.' " ***And he rose and departed, and Jonathan went into the city***

- Anyone who is put off by this show of affection between godly men knows nothing of the close bond of wartime comrades, childhood friends, or covenant brothers in the Lord. ...
- Men ... will exhibit emotion not only over their victories and losses, but also over lost and parted comrades. (REC)
- The final words in this bitter chapter are spoken by Jonathan: "Go in peace." What a ludicrous statement, outwardly speaking! (REC) Laughable, in fact...
 - David was about to flee in panic and would live for years as a fugitive,
 - Jonathan was returning to the distress of his deranged father. (REC)

How could Jonathan speak of their going in peace?

- His answer = Covenant established peace between them:
"Go in peace, because ... 'The LORD shall be between me and you, and between my offspring and your offspring, forever' " (1 Sam. 20:42). (REC)
- Jonathan is not claiming that all is peaceful
 - or that David will not meet danger
- Jonathan is saying that David can go in peace because there is peace between the two of them.
 - Everything else may be shaking... but there is at least peace between me and you...
 - And... it's a peace that's lasting... because it's built on God's Word
- Their peace rested on God's covenant promises and the faithfulness of God (REC)

Biblical peace is not often a general tranquility but rather a rightness at the center in the midst of much turmoil. (FOBC)

This is where our souls find peace as well:

- Jesus told his disciples, “In me you may have peace; in the world you have affliction” (John 16:33; emphasis in Greek) (FOBC)
- The Christian doesn’t have peace because things are peaceful.
- He has peace because a greater one than Jonathan has pledged his friendship to him.
- In communion we find a covenant SEALD IN JESUS BLOOD... for OUR GOOD
- Friend that speaks peace in our disappointments, dangers, and even disasters
- In his grace, God offers us peace with himself through Christ. What greater news can we share with a shaken world? (FOBC)

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When I became a priest, I made a promise... covenant. We call it our “1st Promise”. It’s in BCP

- The Bishop says to the ordinand
Will you be loyal to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of Christ as this Church has received them? And will you, in accordance with the canons of this Church, obey your bishop and other ministers who may have authority over you and your work?
- Answer
I am willing and ready to do so; and I solemnly declare that I do believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and to contain all things necessary to salvation; and I do solemnly engage to conform to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of The Church.
- When Leaders, Culture and even Friends began to go contrary to the Holy Scriptures and change the doctrine, disciple and worship of the church... it became clear what needed to happen.
 - We (priests and Bishop of this diocese) had to stand firm...
 - Loyal... not to an institution...
 - but to the God of the institution...
- And, it’s difficult... crazy... and it may get crazier still...
 - ***But, faithfulness to God comes first over every human institution be they kings or lawyers or even the whole world***
- Friends... this is a question for all of us...
 - When the world shakes around us:

What code / covenant / promises will we follow?

- Will the individual conscience of the autonomy of our selves be the guide... or is there something bigger?
- Will we follow what God is doing? Will we follow the Scriptures? Will we follow the doctrine and discipline...
- Or... will we do our own thing??

The question for all of us, first and foremost, is: What covenant is guiding you?

- For those of you who are Christians...
 - you made a promise as well.
 - Do you remember it?

Baptism: Do you promise to follow [Jesus] as Lord

- “I do”.
- For those of you who aren’t yet Christians... what do you follow? Is it sufficient to guide you to truth, loyalty, love? Is it sufficient for the rocky road... to deliver peace and dispatch fear??
 - If not... let’s talk! Don’t go the way of Saul... follow Jonathan’s lead instead!

1 My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness; I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus’ name. On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand; all other ground is sinking sand.

3 His oath, His covenant, His blood support me in the ‘whelming flood; when all around my soul gives way He then is all my hope and stay. On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand; all other ground is sinking sand.

18:1–9 Saul's jealousy

- The popular song that angered him was never intended to make him inferior to David; the numbers were not meant to be exact! Rather, the song was meant to declare what a fine team David and Saul made. Even so, it can readily be seen that David's successes and popularity gave him the potential to become a rival of Saul, if he wished to do so. Saul's fears were misplaced but not irrational. (NBC)

18:10–30 Saul attempts to kill David.

- The reason given in v 12 for Saul's fear of David is interesting. Saul saw that the LORD was with David, in other words, he saw that he was successful in all that he undertook. He saw David's success, and realized that it was God-given, but he thought he could put an end to it, as if he had the power to defeat God's plans (NBC)
 - Saul was David's enemy (29), but David was never Saul's enemy. (NBC)

19:1–10 David's escape

- Saul's hopes that David would die in battle had failed, so he now invited his own courtiers to kill David. (NBC)
- Jonathan had a choice: he could carry out his father's wishes and help to kill David, or he could try to change Saul's mind and attitude. The fact that he took the second course of action proves that Jonathan was convinced that David was no enemy to him or to Saul. (NBC)

19:11–24 David's flight.

- Jonathan had saved David's life earlier in the chapter, and now Saul's daughter Michal saved it. She used lies and deceit to do so, but the passage does not rebuke her in any way; the narrator is more concerned to show how narrow an escape David had. The passage also shows that Saul's own family were prepared to take any necessary steps to protect David from their own father (NBC)

to demonstrate beyond any doubt that the man whom David displaced from succeeding to the throne was his best friend. (NBC)

- Jonathan himself would acknowledge David as the future king over Israel (23:16–18). (NBC)
- One way into this episode is to think of it as one that does not intend to take the plot on further. It's like a sleeper episode in a long series, where the plot stills and the writers let the characters show themselves without involving them in thrilling action. (Brazos)
- we start from the false premise, that the episode is about Jonathan helping David to escape his father, whereas it is really about David helping Jonathan to escape his father. (Brazos)
- Seeing David at the beginning of this chapter, it is hard to remember that this is the young champion who boldly faced Goliath in the name of the Lord. Different threats take differing tolls on people, and while David could fearlessly face an uncircumcised warrior such as Goliath, he was unnerved by the open hostility of the king of God's own covenant people. (REC)

How Do You Spell Security? 1 Samuel 20 The answer is simple: C-O-V-E-N-A-N-T. That is what this chapter is about: covenant, and the security it gives (FOBC)

- Their friendship has been formalized in a covenant (18:1–5), and that covenant, reaffirmed and extended, is the focus of this chapter. (FOBC)
- Knowing a killer's motives doesn't increase safety but may reduce the apparent irrationality of it all. In fact, it seems David may have been more concerned to make Saul's intentions clear to an incredibly naive Jonathan (FOBC)
- Certainly David and Jonathan couldn't bank on a personal meeting. That's why they needed the signal system. That provision did not exclude a personal parting should the coast be clear; they simply couldn't depend on a face-to-face departure. (FOBC)

The Covenant Provides Recourse in Uncertainty (20:1–9)

- David knows it doesn't take a master's degree to figure that out. Who would expect Saul to keep Jonathan posted, pro-David as he clearly is (v. 3a)? Saul lost the Spirit of Yahweh but not his political sense. David knows the true score; on oath he asserts there is "only a step between me and death" (v. 3b) (FOBC)
- Why would David dare turn to Saul's son when under Saul's attack? Only because Jonathan had concluded a "covenant of Yahweh" with David, that is, a covenant in which Yahweh was witness to and guardian of its promises. He refers to the covenant of 18:3–4. The covenant involves firm promises and solemn commitments. That is why in his uncertainty and in his pillar-to-post flight David turned to Jonathan. There was a covenant, a bastion of certainty, a safe haven, in both a dangerous and a helter-skelter time. (FOBC)
- hesed often has that flavor: it is not merely love, but loyal love; not merely kindness, but dependable kindness; not merely affection, but affection that has committed itself. (FOBC)
- love gives itself in covenant and gladly promises devoted love in that covenant; the covenant partner then rests in the security of that promise and may appeal to it, as David does here. (FOBC)
- In confusion and trouble, you take yourself to the one person who has made a covenant with you. In David's disintegrating world there was yet one space of sanity, one refuge still intact— Jonathan. There was covenant; there David could expect hesed. (FOBC)

- hesed ultimately flows not from a formal covenant promise but from the very nature of the covenant God, Yahweh, who is “rich in hesed and fidelity” (Exod. 34:6) You will never perish when you fall into the abyss of God’s lovingkindness. (FOBC)
- rich in hesed and fidelity
 - full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). You seek hesed and simply find yourself in the arms of Jesus Christ. Don’t forget what David has taught you: in confusion and trouble, you take yourself to the one who has made a covenant with you. He is the only recourse in uncertainty. (FOBC)

20 Then David fled from Naioth in Ramah and came and said before Jonathan, “What have I done? What is my guilt? And what is my sin before your father, that he seeks my life?”

- 20:1–7 David consults Jonathan.
 - It is clear that David’s absence from court on a festival occasion would cause public comment and possible embarrassment (5–7). (NBC)
 - he had the right to demand justice: what crime had he committed? (NBC)
 - Jonathan saw things rather differently, wishing to believe the best about his father, and apparently convinced that David was in no immediate danger. (NBC)
- The Jonathan who led a two-man assault against the Philistine watch at Michmash Pass without telling his father (14:1–14) and the boy who cheerfully handed his patrimony over to David in the symbolic surrender of his robe (18:1–5) has a carefree impulsiveness that has yet to be earned. He is a daredevil, but he doesn’t yet fully appreciate what the stakes are. He has faced death, but he has not faced up to human murderousness. He is what Saul once called David, a “stripling” and a “youth” (17:33, 56). David has learned what the stakes are; Prince Jonathan is an innocent. (Brazos)
- Jonathan must put his law-abiding “covenant” above his lawless family, and that means more than psychologically transcending his allegiance to his father, because this allegiance is not a matter for the tribesman of subjective, personal devotion, but of quasiobjective sacrality. (Brazos)
- David does not need to make a trial of Jonathan’s good will or generosity. Nonetheless, David cannot yet know where he really stands with his friend, for Jonathan has not made an existential decision between David and Saul. Jonathan still inhabits a prepolitical world in which the deviousness that comes naturally to David is unknown. (Brazos)

2 And he said to him, “Far from it! You shall not die. Behold, my father does nothing either great or small without disclosing it to me. And why should my father hide this from me? It is not so.” 3 But David vowed again, saying, “Your father knows well that I have found favor in your eyes, and he thinks, ‘Do not let Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved.’ But truly, as the LORD lives and as your soul lives, there is but a step between me and death.” 4 Then Jonathan said to David, “Whatever you say, I will do for you.”

- The brief interchange between David and Jonathan recorded in vv. 1–4 is bracketed by David’s question, “What have I done ... that he is trying to take my life [lit., ‘soul’]?” (v. 1), and Jonathan’s words of assurance, “Whatever you [lit., ‘your soul’] want me to do, I’ll do for you” (v. 4) (EBC)
- to Jonathan, trusting son as well as loyal friend, it was incredible to think that Saul really intended to harm David (vv. 2, 9; cf. also Saul’s oath in 19:6)—until it became painfully obvious to him (v. 33). (EBC)
- One major emphasis of the chapter concerns who knows (or does not know) this or that matter—and therefore, as Polzin observes, in chapter 20 “words using the root YD ‘to know,’ occur more often (twelve times) than in any other chapter in the book” (Samuel and the Deuteronomist, p. 194). (EBC)
- three-act drama structured around ten “if-then” statements (vv. 6, 7a, 7b, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 21, 22; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 192, 264 n. 16, who discerns an eleventh [v. 14]). The acts are arranged in chiasmic order: A. David’s plan to help Jonathan know (vv. 5–7) B. David and Jonathan’s mutual covenant (vv. 8–17) A’. Jonathan’s plan to tell David that he now knows (vv. 18–23) (EBC)
- David “vowed,” trying to get his friend to look evil in the face: “As the LORD lives and your soul lives, there is but a step between me and death” (20:3 ESV). David wants to get his friend to do what most men avoid: to accept that some people, even beloved family members, are evil, and he needs to arrange that fast, because he is inches from death. (Brazos)
- Jonathan is admitting that he may have to take sides between, on the one hand, the authority of his father, a crucial moral and cultural benchmark for a people that called its ancestors “the fathers” and that made honor to “father and mother” its fifth commandment (Exod. 20:12), and, on the other hand, fidelity to his covenant with a friend. (Brazos)
- 20:1–7 David consults Jonathan.
 - It is clear that David’s absence from court on a festival occasion would cause public comment and possible embarrassment (5–7). (NBC)
 - he had the right to demand justice: what crime had he committed? (NBC)

- Jonathan saw things rather differently, wishing to believe the best about his father, and apparently convinced that David was in no immediate danger. (NBC)

5 David said to Jonathan, “Behold, tomorrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit at table with the king. But let me go, that I may hide myself in the field till the third day at evening. 6 If your father misses me at all, then say, ‘David earnestly asked leave of me to run to Bethlehem his city, for there is a yearly sacrifice there for all the clan.’ 7 If he says, ‘Good!’ it will be well with your servant, but if he is angry, then know that harm is determined by him. 8 Therefore deal kindly with your servant, for you have brought your servant into a covenant of the LORD with you. But if there is guilt in me, kill me yourself, for why should you bring me to your father?”

- 20:5. New Moon festival. Keyed to its use of a lunar calendar, ancient Israel marked the first day of the month, with its “new moon” phase, as a festival day (IVPBBC)
 - As on the Sabbath all work was to cease (see Amos 8:5), and there were sacrifices to be made (Num 28:11–15). (IVPBBC)
 - the king became a prominent figure in these celebrations (see Ezek 45:17), and this may explain the political importance of Saul’s feast. (IVPBBC)
- 20:6. annual family sacrifice.
 - In David’s time this meant an ingathering of the family at the clan site, Bethlehem. Since it represented a higher level of obligation and familial loyalty, the annual sacrifice could easily serve as a valid excuse for David to absent himself from Saul’s monthly celebration of the new moon (IVPBBC)
- By David’s time, however, Shiloh had been destroyed (see comment on 4:11), and the tabernacle had no fixed location. Thus it was only to be expected that annual sacrifices would be offered in the celebrants’ hometowns. (EBC)
- David knew that Saul was determined to kill him (v.7); and although Jonathan had not yet brought himself to admit that cold fact (vv.9, 13), he soon would (v.33). (EBC)
- 8–17 Covenant terminology (“show kindness,” vv.8, 14; “brought him into a covenant,” v.8; “do not ever cut off your kindness,” v.15; “made a covenant,” v.16; “reaffirm his oath,” v.17; “love[d],” v.17), used by both David and Jonathan, links together vv.8–17. Reminding Jonathan of the covenant that they had made (18:3) (EBC)
- If there is guilt in me, kill me yourself” (20:8). David knew that he would find justice in a covenant friend, just as believers who have appealed to the blood of the new covenant in Christ may confidently seek justification in the presence of God. (REC)
- 20:5. New Moon festival. Keyed to its use of a lunar calendar, ancient Israel marked the first day of the month, with its “new moon” phase, as a festival day (IVPBBC)
 - As on the Sabbath all work was to cease (see Amos 8:5), and there were sacrifices to be made (Num 28:11–15). (IVPBBC)
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9 And Jonathan said, “Far be it from you! If I knew that it was determined by my father that harm should come to you, would I not tell you?” 10 Then David said to Jonathan, “Who will tell me if your father answers you roughly?” 11 And Jonathan said to David, “Come, let us go out into the field.” So they both went out into the field.

- David voiced his preference for dying at the hand of his covenanted friend Jonathan (“yourself” is emphatic) instead of his sworn enemy Saul. But Jonathan avowed that if he “had the least inkling” (v.9; lit., “knew at all”) that his father intended to harm David, he would surely “tell” his friend. David, still wary, wants to know whether Jonathan would really “tell” (v.10) him (EBC)

The Covenant Proves a Vehicle for Uncommon Faithfulness (20:12–17)

- If Jonathan were “normal,” he would dispose of David. In fact, that is what angers Saul so (vv. 30–31)—Jonathan’s covenant commitment to David flies smack in the face of all political sense. Jonathan really did “seek first” another kingdom; it didn’t make sense. One of the strange things covenant accomplishes. (FOBC)
- (v. 17)
- The new king always needed to solidify his position. It was conventional political policy: solidification by liquidation. Everybody knew it; everybody believed it; everybody practiced it. (FOBC)
- Jonathan and David made commitments to each other that trample on customary human standards. Covenant has become the vehicle for uncommon faithfulness. (FOBC)

- I have seen it in my own family: in my mother's care of my father in his last years as his health but particularly his mind began to slip. Nine months after my father died my mother died, perhaps because she felt she could. She had accomplished her mission: taking care of her husband. Not sensational or glamorous—just covenantal. It had something to do with “in sickness and in health”—something about a covenant. (FOBC)
- 12 And Jonathan said to David, “The LORD, the God of Israel, be witness! When I have sounded out my father, about this time tomorrow, or the third day, behold, if he is well disposed toward David, shall I not then send and disclose it to you? 13 But should it please my father to do you harm, the LORD do so to Jonathan and more also if I do not disclose it to you and send you away, that you may go in safety. May the LORD be with you, as he has been with my father. 14 If I am still alive, show me the steadfast love of the LORD, that I may not die; 15 and do not cut off your steadfast love from my house forever, when the LORD cuts off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth.” 16 And Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, “May the LORD take vengeance on David's enemies.” 17 And Jonathan made David swear again by his love for him, for he loved him as he loved his own soul.**
- The emphasis of the passage is to be found in vs 14–17. (NBC)
 - A simple friendship needs no formal covenant. However, both Jonathan and David were men of importance in Israel, and there would be political rivalry between their families, i.e. the house of Saul and the house of David (16). (NBC)
 - Jonathan now adds his own prayer to the same end (v.13). In so doing he parallels David's divine calling with that of Saul and thus recognizes—again (see comment on 18:4)—that David, and not he himself (Saul's disobedience had long since forfeited an enduring kingdom for himself and his descendants, 13:13–14), will be the next king of Israel. (EBC)
 - Norman H. Snaith suggests that since the divine name is sometimes used to denote the superlative, *hesed* YHWH in v.14 perhaps means “the greatest possible loyalty.” In any case, “the word *chesed* plus the Sacred Name is used in 1 Sam 20:14 to express the close bond between David and Jonathan, the Hebrew equivalent of Roland and Oliver, Aeneas and Achates, Orestes and Pylades, the ‘faithful friends’ of history and romance and legend” (“The Meanings of a Word,” Bible Translator 16 [1965]: 47). (EBC)
 - Since covenants by nature and definition involve reciprocal obligations (v.42), Jonathan also has David reaffirm his side of the agreement (v.17), in context with the covenant language of 18:1, 3: “He loved him as [he loved] himself.” (EBC)
 - The sustained and still undented quality of Jonathan's self-delusion about his father is perhaps exhibited in his expressed hope, that, if David gets away in safety, “may the LORD be with you, as he has been with my father” (ESV). This might be an extraordinary piece of authorial irony at Jonathan's expense, for the Lord has not been with Saul for some time. An alternate interpretation is that Jonathan means, “May the Lord elevate you to the kingship, as he raised my father” (ESV). (Brazos)
 - It is close to becoming a battle to the death for the kingship, between Saul and David. Jonathan perhaps recognizes this for the first time, when he articulates the thought in renewing his covenant with David. (Brazos)
 - The Lord is the same truth that David and Jonathan share. It is because he puts the one Lord above king and kin that Jonathan is able to put his friend before his father. Jonathan wittingly abdicates as prince-in-waiting, when he says, “May the LORD take vengeance on David's enemies” (20:16 ESV). Jonathan makes David swear, in turn, “for he loved him as he loved his own soul” (20:17 ESV): he insists on the reciprocity of the covenant, not out of self-interest, but out of love. What holds David and Jonathan together, the true covenant binding them, is their God: “Behold, the LORD is between you and me forever” (20:23 ESV). (Brazos)
 - Many people have been completely overthrown by the kind of dilemma Jonathan was in (REC)
 - What enabled him to accomplish this? The answer is faithfulness. Jonathan's duty was to be faithful in all his relationships and to the covenant into which he had entered. He relied on God to save him, however the Lord might ordain the events of his life. For his own part, he sought his duty and resolved to live faithfully. (REC)
 - Jonathan took counsel of God's revealed Word so far as he knew it. We are never told how Jonathan learned that God had appointed David to succeed Saul as king, but it is clear that Jonathan was aware of God's arrangement. This, of course, meant that Jonathan would not follow his father to the throne. Instead of resisting God's will, Jonathan put God's glory before his own and determined to serve on the side of the Lord. Knowing God's will for David's kingdom, he dutifully served that cause, accepting that his higher duty to God overrode any lesser obligation to obey his father. (REC)
 - There has seldom, if ever, been exhibited a finer instance of triumphant faith,” writes William Blaikie, “than when the prince, with all the resources of his kingdom at his beck, made this request of the helpless outlaw.” (REC)
 - husbands remaining faithful to difficult wives, Christians keeping an unprofitable business going to provide jobs to long-serving employees, church members pulling together during a pastoral transition, or in other cases Christians taking a costly stand for God's Word despite the scorn of church leaders and friends. (REC)

- Jesus calls us into his covenant embrace, promising to give us rest (Matt. 11:28), relieve our thirsty souls (John 7:37), and grant us light in the darkness (8:12), and offering us forgiveness (3:36) and resurrection into everlasting life (11:25–26). Jesus covenants with all who will come: “Whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life” (5:24). (REC)
- 18 Then Jonathan said to him, “Tomorrow is the new moon, and you will be missed, because your seat will be empty. 19 On the third day go down quickly to the place where you hid yourself when the matter was in hand, and remain beside the stone heap. 20 And I will shoot three arrows to the side of it, as though I shot at a mark. 21 And behold, I will send the boy, saying, ‘Go, find the arrows.’ If I say to the boy, ‘Look, the arrows are on this side of you, take them,’ then you are to come, for, as the LORD lives, it is safe for you and there is no danger. 22 But if I say to the youth, ‘Look, the arrows are beyond you,’ then go, for the LORD has sent you away. 23 And as for the matter of which you and I have spoken, behold, the LORD is between you and me forever.”**

- The first literary half of the chapter closes with Jonathan’s reminder to David of the eternal nature of the covenant of friendship that bound them (v.23; cf. also v.42). (EBC)
- the unduly complicated system of signals, designed by Jonathan (Brazos)
- The emphasis of the passage is to be found in vs 14–17. (NBC)
 - A simple friendship needs no formal covenant. However, both Jonathan and David were men of importance in Israel, and there would be political rivalry between their families, i.e. the house of Saul and the house of David (16). (NBC)

The Covenant May Demand Costly Commitment (20:24–34)

- It is mostly a typical monthly occasion—Saul is there in his seat by the wall (v. 25), Abner is there, Jonathan is there. David’s place is empty. That’s different. (FOBC)
- when David was absent the second day, the fireworks began. (FOBC)
- vv. 24–34) begins with David’s place empty and ends with Jonathan’s place empty
- counterpoint: Saul’s question, 27b Jonathan’s “revelation,” 28–29 Saul’s anger, 30–31 Jonathan’s question, 32 Saul’s “revelation,” 33 Jonathan’s anger, 34 (FOBC)
- vv. 30–31):
- rulers of this age understand neither the wisdom nor the power of God (FOBC)
- Jonathan put Yahweh’s servant (David), Yahweh’s word (the rejection of Saul’s line and the promise of kingship to David), and Yahweh’s kingdom first, even though he was officially and normally the one in line for the throne. One could say Jonathan “emptied himself” (Phil. 2:7); he was willing to suffer the “loss of all things” and to count them rubbish (Phil. 3:8). (FOBC)
- “you and your kingdom” did not move Jonathan. He was bound and committed by covenant to David. He would remain faithful to the covenant even if it cost him the good-will of his father. Jonathan would have understood Jesus: “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters— yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:26 NIV). (FOBC)
- true life does not consist in securing “you and your kingdom” but in reflecting Yahweh’s faithfulness in covenant relationships (FOBC)
- Jonathan had acknowledged that the kingdom was Yahweh’s and therefore David’s, so his life did not need to be centered in his ambition (what can I get) but in God’s providence (what Yahweh has given) (FOBC)
- Life does not consist in achieving your goals but in fulfilling your promises. That (previous) sentence is only cold print. But watch it; it’s dynamite. Handle with care. (FOBC)

24 So David hid himself in the field. And when the new moon came, the king sat down to eat food. 25 The king sat on his seat, as at other times, on the seat by the wall. Jonathan sat opposite, and Abner sat by Saul’s side, but David’s place was empty. 26 Yet Saul did not say anything that day, for he thought, “Something has happened to him. He is not clean; surely he is not clean.”

- When the celebrants gathered for the New Moon festival, Saul took his customary seat “by the wall” (v.25), where he could feel relatively secure from surprise attack. (EBC)
- 27 But on the second day, the day after the new moon, David’s place was empty. And Saul said to Jonathan his son, “Why has not the son of Jesse come to the meal, either yesterday or today?” 28 Jonathan answered Saul, “David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Bethlehem. 29 He said, ‘Let me go, for our clan holds a sacrifice in the city, and my brother has commanded me to be there. So now, if I have found favor in your eyes, let me get away and see my brothers.’ For this reason he has not come to the king’s table.”**
- In referring to David as the “son of Jesse” (vv.27, 30–31; cf. also 22:7–9, 13, and esp. 25:10), Saul probably intended at least a mild insult (see comment on 10:11). (EBC)
 - Though Saul’s grandson will always be welcome at King David’s “table” (2 Sam 9:7–13), David feels unwelcome at the “table” of King Saul (v.29). (EBC)

- David too had become a “son” to Saul, effectively from the time of his victory over Goliath, when he entered Saul’s family ambiance, and in fact from the time he married Michal, for marriage into a superior family could be a “form of adoption” (Flanagan 1988: 243). Three times here, Saul revokes that adoption, describing David in distancing terms as “the son of Jesse” (20:27, 30, 31). (Brazos)

30 Then Saul’s anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said to him, “You son of a perverse, rebellious woman, do I not know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame, and to the shame of your mother’s nakedness? 31 For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, neither you nor your kingdom shall be established. Therefore send and bring him to me, for he shall surely die.” 32 Then Jonathan answered Saul his father, “Why should he be put to death? What has he done?” 33 But Saul hurled his spear at him to strike him. So Jonathan knew that his father was determined to put David to death. 34 And Jonathan rose from the table in fierce anger and ate no food the second day of the month, for he was grieved for David, because his father had disgraced him.

- Saul saw one thing clearly: unless David were killed, Jonathan would never succeed to the throne (31). The difference was that Jonathan accepted this fact, but Saul’s hatred for David was by now intense. We can assume that Saul would have used the festival as an opportunity for another direct attack on David’s life. The festival was a state occasion, when the absence of an important court figure would be noticed by everyone, although absence for reasons of ceremonial uncleanness was always a possibility in ancient Israel. (NBC)
- For all intents and purposes, Jonathan and David were indistinguishable to Saul as he exploded in “foul-mouthed anger” (Hertzberg, p. 175) (EBC)
- He accuses Jonathan of having “sided with” (lit., “chosen”) David, and that not only to his own shame but also the shame of the “mother who bore you” (lit., “nakedness of your mother,” a phrase that elsewhere has sexual connotations; cf. the MT of Lev 18:7). (EBC)
- Saul, not having David as his target as on two previous occasions (18:10–11; 19:9–10), tried to pin David’s surrogate Jonathan to the wall with his spear (v.33). Jonathan needed no further convincing that Saul indeed intended to kill David (something David had obviously known much earlier; cf. v.7) and that the spear had really been meant for his covenanted friend. In Saul’s eyes, Jonathan and David had momentarily become one. (EBC)
- On the second day of the New Moon festival, neither David (v.27) nor Jonathan (v.34) ate at the king’s table (vv.29, 34). (EBC)
- Some readers are perplexed that Saul can’t imagine why David would not want to come to dinner with him. But we have to remember that, in Saul’s paranoid imagination, David is a threat to him, not vice versa. He doesn’t recognize himself as a threat. Although all his acquaintance know him to be a cold-blooded killer, Tony Soprano can ask, nonrhetorically, “Am I a toxic person?” (series three). The Sopranos is not difficult literature: it’s a television series and quite lucidly represents the idea that evil people don’t recognize themselves as such. (Brazos)
- Saul’s predicament is witnessed from the outside, not grasped internally by Saul himself (Brazos)
- Saul’s reaction shows that, for him, Jonathan has become a traitor to the Saulide dynasty: “You son of a perverse, rebellious woman, do I not know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame, and to the shame of your mother’s nakedness?” (20:30 ESV). Saul recalls him to his blood ties and tells him he disgraces the mother who gave birth to him by preferring a member of another family to his own clan. (Brazos)
- It betokened the change that was to come in the future in respect of the two covenants, the old and the new, and the transformation of priesthood and monarchy by the new and eternal priest-king, who is Christ Jesus” (Augustine, City of God 17.4). (Brazos)
- Jonathan’s naïveté about his father in this episode is not due either to its being an interpolation by another hand or to the candid quality of Jonathan’s personality. Jonathan’s grief at the shame brought upon him by his father’s actions suggests that he has not been open with himself and has repressed his own awareness of his father’s evil. The emergence of this recognition in the form of grief forces him to take the final step, out of his family. (Brazos)
- Jonathan was undoubtedly a very poor liar, and a savvy person such as Saul was able to see right through his falsehood. (REC)
- His hatred for David is seen in his referring to him as the “son of Jesse” (just as we show contempt today by referring to someone only by last name) (REC)
- Jonathan’s opposition to his will in any cause—even a righteous one—earned the forfeit of his status as son (REC)
- I wonder whether Saul would have followed that path then if he could have seen the man that sin would make him to be. How little he reckoned on the perverting power of sin once it is embraced or the curse of God’s judgment when the Lord should decide to deliver him over to iniquity! (REC)

- Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you” (Matt. 6:33). But the grief of his father’s malice burned in his heart. Saul could not accept Jonathan for the very reason that God’s Word praises him. Saul thought his son a shameful fool for suffering the loss of a kingdom in order to be faithful to the covenant of love. To suffer this misunderstanding and contempt has been the lot of many who walk with the Lord. Jesus declared that his followers must all be willing to suffer this very kind of abuse: “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:26–27). (REC)
- Saul saw one thing clearly: unless David were killed, Jonathan would never succeed to the throne (31). The difference was that Jonathan accepted this fact, but Saul’s hatred for David was by now intense. We can assume that Saul would have used the festival as an opportunity for another direct attack on David’s life. The festival was a state occasion, when the absence of an important court figure would be noticed by everyone, although absence for reasons of ceremonial uncleanness was always a possibility in ancient Israel. (NBC)
- Jonathan himself would acknowledge David as the future king over Israel (23:16–18). (NBC)

The Covenant Provides Peace in the Middle of Confusion (20:35–42)

- Given the circumstances Jonathan’s words could seem almost laughable. “Go in peace.” But we know he’s serious. Go in peace while Saul stalks your life? Jonathan, however, is not claiming that all is peaceful or that David will not meet danger on every hand. Jonathan is saying that David can go in peace because there is peace between the two of them. There is peace “because we two have sworn an oath.” Their covenant bond has established peace between them. It is as if Jonathan urges, “go in peace, because there is peace in this one item; in this one relation of ours there is safety. There is an anchor here; there is this one relation that holds fast when all else may be flux and confusion. There is this one area where peace is established and reigns.” (FOBC)
- Biblical peace is not often a general tranquillity but rather a rightness at the center in the midst of much turmoil. (FOBC)
- Jesus told his disciples, “In me you may have peace; in the world you have affliction” (John 16:33; emphasis in Greek) (FOBC)
- The Christian then does not have peace because things are peaceful. He has peace because a greater one than Jonathan has pledged his friendship to him. If you doubt that, you have not been listening at the Lord’s Supper: “This cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood.” It is the covenant bond of that unforsaking Friend that speaks peace in our disappointments, dangers, and even disasters.v
- Obviously, “security” is an eight-letter word. And when spelled out it looks like this: covenant (FOBC)
- In his grace, God offers us peace with himself through Christ. How can we communicate this wonderful aspect of the gospel to others? (FOBC)

35 In the morning Jonathan went out into the field to the appointment with David, and with him a little boy. 36 And he said to his boy, “Run and find the arrows that I shoot.” As the boy ran, he shot an arrow beyond him. 37 And when the boy came to the place of the arrow that Jonathan had shot, Jonathan called after the boy and said, “Is not the arrow beyond you?” 38 And Jonathan called after the boy, “Hurry! Be quick! Do not stay!” So Jonathan’s boy gathered up the arrows and came to his master. 39 But the boy knew nothing. Only Jonathan and David knew the matter. 40 And Jonathan gave his weapons to his boy and said to him, “Go and carry them to the city.”

- The boy Jonathan takes with him (vv.21–22) is here described as being “small” (v.35) and thus less likely to ask embarrassing questions about the orders he is given. (EBC)
 - The arrow’s landing beyond the running lad, loudly confirmed by Jonathan (v.37) so that David would be sure to hear it, was a signal to David that it was God’s will for him to remain a fugitive from Saul (v.22).
 - Jonathan’s urgent commands to the boy (v.38) were obviously intended for David instead, but the boy of course did not know the reason behind the shooting of the arrow(s) in the first place (v.39) (EBC)
 - reminiscent of the poignantly emotional scene involving Joseph and his brothers (Gen 45:14–15). (EBC)
- 41 And as soon as the boy had gone, David rose from beside the stone heap and fell on his face to the ground and bowed three times. And they kissed one another and wept with one another, David weeping the most. 42 Then Jonathan said to David, “Go in peace, because we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD, saying, ‘The LORD shall be between me and you, and between my offspring and your offspring, forever.’” And he rose and departed, and Jonathan went into the city**
- Anyone who is put off by this show of affection between godly men knows nothing of the close bond of wartime comrades, childhood friends, or covenant brothers in the Lord. Nor do we appreciate the gravity of their lamentable situation if we think their tears an unmanly display. On the eve of the American Civil War, Lewis Armistead and Winfield Scott Hancock spent a night weeping together as they departed for the war, one to assume command in the Southern army and the other in the North. Both would bitterly lament their parting,

especially on the day when, as Armistead died and Hancock lay bleeding, their respective commands clashed in the climactic assault of the Battle of Gettysburg. Men of great feeling will exhibit emotion not only over their victories and losses, but also over lost and parted comrades. (REC)

- The final words in this bitter chapter are spoken by Jonathan: "Go in peace." What a ludicrous statement, outwardly speaking! (REC)
- David was about to flee in panic and would live for years as a fugitive, and Jonathan was returning to what was probably the more distressing fate of continuing in service to his wicked and deranged father. (REC)
- How could Jonathan speak of their going in peace? His answer was the covenant they had made, which established peace between them: "Go in peace, because we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD, saying, 'The LORD shall be between me and you, and between my offspring and your offspring, forever' " (1 Sam. 20:42). (REC)
- Their peace rested on God's covenant promises and the faithfulness of God (REC)
- This is where our souls find peace as well: "His oath, his covenant, his blood / support me in the whelming flood." We gain peace with God through the covenant of grace, which says, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household" (Acts 16:31). (REC)
- we do not have the power to control the affairs of our times or restrain the sins of those around us. Nonetheless, like him, we may live in troubled times with the blessing of God's peace (REC)
- just as Jonathan responded to the evils of his day by calling David into covenant with himself, God calls us into covenant through faith in his Son, Jesus. Christ calls us to a life of covenant faithfulness, and for this he strengthens us with the divine blessing of peace (Luke 2:14). (REC)
- Jonathan and David separated in peace, having rested their hearts in a bond of covenant love, we rest our souls in the promised grace of our sovereign Savior and Lord. He promises to his covenant people: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid" (John 14:27). (REC)
- to demonstrate beyond any doubt that the man whom David displaced from succeeding to the throne was his best friend. (NBC)