David is Protected from King Saul
1 Samuel 19

1 Samuel 19 - *"Now Saul spoke to Jonathan his son and to all his servants, that they should kill David; but Jonathan, Saul's son, delighted greatly in David. ² So Jonathan told David, saying, "My father Saul seeks to kill you. Therefore please be on your guard until morning, and stay in a secret place and hide. ³ And I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where you are, and I will speak with my father about you. Then what I observe, I will tell you." ⁴ Thus Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father, and said to him, "Let not the king sin against his servant, against David, because he has not sinned against you, and because his works have been very good toward you. ⁵ For he took his life in his hands and killed the Philistine, and the LORD brought about a great deliverance for all Israel. You saw it and rejoiced. Why then will you sin against innocent blood, to kill David without a cause?"*

⁶ So Saul heeded the voice of Jonathan, and Saul swore, "As the LORD lives, he shall not be killed." ⁷ Then Jonathan called David, and Jonathan told him all these things. So Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence as in times past. ⁸ And there was war again; and David went out and fought with the Philistines, and struck them with a mighty blow, and they fled from him.

⁹ Now the distressing spirit from the LORD came upon Saul as he sat in his house with his spear in his hand. And David was playing music with his hand. ¹⁰ Then Saul sought to pin David to the wall with the spear, but he slipped away from Saul's presence; and he drove the spear into the wall. So David fled and escaped that night. ¹¹ Saul also sent messengers to David's house to watch him and to kill him in the morning. And Michal, David's wife, told him, saying, "If you do not save your life tonight, tomorrow you will be killed." ¹² So Michal let David down through a window. And he went and fled and escaped. ¹³ And Michal took an image and laid it in the bed, put a cover of goats' hair for his head, and covered it with clothes. ¹⁴ So when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, "He is sick."

¹⁵ Then Saul sent the messengers back to see David, saying, "Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may kill him." ¹⁶ And when the messengers had come in, there was the image in the bed, with a cover of goats' hair for his head. ¹⁷ Then Saul said to Michal, "Why have you deceived me like this, and sent my enemy away, so that he has escaped?" And Michal answered Saul, "He said to me, 'Let me go! Why should I kill you?'" ¹⁸ So David fled and escaped, and went to Samuel at Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and stayed in Naioth. ¹⁹ Now it was told Saul, saying, "Take note, David is at Naioth in Ramah!" ²⁰ Then Saul sent messengers to take David. And when they saw the group of prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as leader over them, the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied. ²¹ And when Saul was told, he sent other messengers, and they prophesied likewise. Then Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they prophesied also. ²² Then he also went to Ramah, and came to the great well that is at Sechu. So he asked, and said, "Where are Samuel and David?" And someone said, "Indeed they are at Naioth in Ramah." ²³ So he went there to Naioth in Ramah. Then the Spirit of God was upon him also, and he went on and prophesied until he came to Naioth in Ramah. ²⁴ And he also stripped off his clothes and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Therefore they say, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

Background Notes

Because of David's great victory over Goliath, David became a popular hero in Israel. He was promoted to the rank of general in the Israeli military forces. David married Michal, one of the king's daughters, and became very good friends with Jonathan, King Saul's son. This was the good news.

The bad news was that because of David's popularity, King Saul became extremely jealous of David. He broke his original promise that David would be permitted to marry Merab, Saul's first-born daughter. He demoted David from his high military position. Saul tried to get David killed by the Philistines, and he even tried to kill David himself – twice - by hurling his spear at him! In 1 Samuel 19, things went from bad to worse, and Saul made several more attempts to kill David. Jealousy is a deadly sin, but God can protect his servants, and the Lord protected David from all these attempts on his life.

A word of explanation is needed about Michal's trick of hiding David's escape by putting an "idol" in David's bed, when David was supposedly sick. What was this idol doing in David's home? In that culture, possession of "household idols" in the home didn't necessarily mean that a person was involved in idolatry -- just as having a Christmas tree in your home today certainly doesn't mean that you're involved in idolatry, even though the Christmas tree does trace back to pagan practices in the distant past. Small household idols were used as title deeds to the property in patriarchal times, and the large image in David's house probably belonged to Michal and was used as a decoration. In any case, David was never involved the worship of idols, or idolatry.

Doctrinal Points

1. God can use natural means to protect His servants.

In this chapter we see that God used both natural means and supernatural means to protect David from King Saul. Verses 1-17 list four natural means that God used to protect David: friends, human ability, family and circumstances.

David's good friend, Jonathan, went to bat for David. Jonathan reminded his father, King Saul, of all the good things that David had done for him and for the nation, and Jonathan convinced Saul that taking David's life would be a sin against innocent blood. "*So Saul heeded the voice of Jonathan, and Saul swore, "As the LORD lives, he shall not be killed" (v6).* Saul's change of heart lasted only a short time, but God used Jonathan, David's friend, to help protect David. And this happened, by the way, on more than one occasion.

In verses 9-10 the Lord used David's own natural ability, his agility, and Saul's inability with a spear to protect David. This was the third time that David escaped from King Saul when the evil spirit came upon him. Wouldn't you have loved to hear the comments after Saul missed David this third time? In any case, God used human ability (and human inability) to protect David.

In verses 11-17 God used Michal, David's wife, to protect him. Michal's ingenuity in concealing David's escape is to be admired -- but not her lies! This situation is similar to the case of Rahab, who lied to protect the spies of Jericho in Joshua 2. Rahab is never commended for her lying. God could have protected the Jewish spies without Rahab's lies. In Hebrews 11 and James 2 where Rahab is mentioned, she is commended for her faith in the God of Israel. In the same way, God could have protected David without Michal's lies. In fact, Michal's lie about David threatening her life probably intensified Saul's attempts to kill David. But Michal did help David escape, by letting him down through a window.

Psalm 59 gives us a little more about the circumstances surrounding this escape. The title of Psalm 59 says that the occasion of this Psalm was when Saul sent men, and they watched the house in order to kill David. Apparently, the ambush forces were not watching the back window, and God used these circumstances to help David escape and protect him.

So, God used all of these natural means – friends, human ability, family, and circumstances to protect David, and the Lord can do the same for us. I can vividly remember a time when the Lord protected us from a huge 80-car pile-up accident on a snowy interstate highway -- by delaying us for 5 minutes at a gas station! God can use natural means to protect His servants.

2. God can use supernatural means to protect His servants.

This chapter reminds me a lot of 1 Kings 17, when God provided for Elijah's needs by natural means and supernatural means. God had Elijah drink water from the brook Cherith – a natural means of providing for his needs. And God had ravens drop off meat and bread twice a day. That is **not** a natural means of supply, for sure! God supernaturally controlled those birds to provide for Elijah!

God uses natural and supernatural means to both provide for and to protect His servants, and that's what we have in 1 Samuel 19. King Saul was told that David was with Samuel at Naioth, where Samuel had set up a school for young prophets. So, Saul sent men to capture David, but the spirit of God came upon King Saul's henchmen, and they prophesied -- in spite of themselves! This happened three times. Finally, Saul himself came to Naioth, and he likewise was forced by the spirit of God to prophesy in spite of himself. He stripped himself of his royal apparel and prophesied all day and all night, while David was protected.

Can God use supernatural means to protect His people today? Yes, of course He can! Once when I was riding the elevated train in Chicago, four teenaged thugs surrounded me with the obvious intention of robbing me. I started to witness to them, and suddenly they all took off! Did God use angels to drive them off? Maybe, but I don't know. Hebrews 1:14 says that God uses angels to give service to those who are saved. However, the fact that God can use angels to protect His people does not mean that Christians will never get hurt or become martyrs. No. But God can use supernatural means to protect His servants.

Practical Application

Let's be peacemakers, like Jonathan!

Did you ever try to reason with unreasonable people? We tend to say that it is a hopeless situation - and that's the kind of situation that Jonathan was in. King Saul had a serious problem with jealousy. He was completely unreasonable. Jonathan probably realized that trying to reason with his father would only bring temporary peace.

But Jonathan was a peacemaker. He tried for peace, even at the risk of his own life - and he was successful. Jonathan was able to attain a measure of peace on David's behalf, even though it was only temporary. Jonathan's efforts to make peace may have saved David's life. God used his efforts to protect David.

God will bless our efforts to be peacemakers, too -- even when we're trying to reason with unreasonable people. Let's be peacemakers like Jonathan!