

INTRO: Many of us have heard the story of David and Goliath too many times to count. But have you heard what happened after Goliath? This morning, we continue our series in 1Samuel, and we come to chapter 18, which is on page 241 in your pew Bible. Yes, I'm aware that it's Easter. Yes, I realize that most of us are used to hearing a resurrection passage from the gospels preached on Easter Sunday. So why are we preaching the OT on Easter? What a perceptive question, I'm glad you asked. The main reason is that that's what Jesus preached on Easter Sunday. His conversation with the disciples on the road to Emmaus happened "that very day" (Lk 24:13). And "*beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself*" (24:27). And *he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, "thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations."* For Jesus, all Scripture is Christian Scripture. All of it is preaching His death and resurrection, and our repentance for forgiveness of sins. That's why Paul went into synagogue after synagogue and "*reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, 'This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ'*" (Acts 17:2-3). The Scriptures from which Paul reasoned with them were the Scriptures of the Old Testament. And Christian preaching of the OT is a reasoned proclamation that Jesus is the Christ. That's what we're about to do right now. But that's what we do every Sunday, because every Sunday is resurrection Sunday. So we're going to preach the OT like we do each week, in a way that explains and displays that Jesus is the promised priest-king who suffered for our sins and rose from the dead. So...whatever happened with David after Goliath? And how does that testify to Jesus' resurrection?

1Sam 18:1-5. "*As soon as he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. And Saul took him that day and would not let him return to his father's house. Then Jonathan made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, and his armor, and even his sword and his bow and his belt. And David went out and was successful wherever Saul sent him, so that Saul set him over the men of war. And this was good in the sight of Saul's servants.*"

This is right after David kills Goliath by faith in God's presence, power, and promises. Goliath had not just defied Israel; he had defied the God of Israel. So David goes to battle with Goliath "*so that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all the assembly may know that the Lord saves not with sword and spear.*" David's defeat of Goliath for God's fearful people in 1Sam 17 prefigures what Jesus would do for all who trust Him. Jesus would defeat the threatening powers of sin, death, and hell, by himself, without our help, as we looked on in fear and amazement. When King Saul sees that, he thinks "here's the kind of guy I need to have around." Up til then, David was a part time musician in Saul's administration, back and forth between strumming away Saul's bad spirits and shepherding his own dad's sheep back in Bethlehem. Now Saul makes him full time and puts him toward the top of the military chain of command. But the honeymoon won't last long...

Meanwhile, Jonathan, King's Saul's son, sees David's victory over Goliath, and he finds in David a friend that is more like a brother. Deep calls to deep. Godly devotion in David calls to godly devotion in Jonathan. David's commitment to Israel's God, his faith, his courage, his obedience to God in the face of danger, wins Jonathan's respect and loyalty. So he and David make a covenant, a pact, to be loyal friends and brothers to each other, through thick and thin. This is kinda like war buddies, or blood brothers, but it's even more important and more public than that. What Jonathan does is not just personal, it's political. Jonathan is so impressed with David's leadership that he immediately thinks, "This guy deserves to be heir to my dad's throne more than I do." That is the significance of Jonathan giving David his royal robe, belt, and sword. Those are not merely personal gifts. They're political gifts. By giving David his royal

robe, armor, belt, and sword, Jonathan relinquishes his right to succeed Saul as king. This gift makes David the new prince, the new heir to Saul's throne (cf. 20:30-31).

But when we read this in light of Jesus' as our risen Savior-King, we see here what is proper in our own response to Jesus. And that response is captured in John the Baptist's recognition of Jesus. In Jn 3:27-30, John the Baptist's disciples see Jesus attracting way more disciples than John, and what does John say? *"A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given to him from heaven. You yourselves bear me witness that I said 'I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.' The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is complete. He must increase, but I must decrease."*

When Jonathan gives David his royal robe, armor, and sword, that is actually a picture of Christian conversion. Jonathan gives up his natural right to rule the kingdom, and hands over the scepter to David, God's anointed savior-king. That's what Christian repentance looks like. It's giving up the throne of my own self-rule to be ruled by a better savior-king who will rule me for the purposes of God's better and eternal kingdom. It is a global switching of ultimate loyalties. It's a conversion from self-rule and from other previous rulers, to be ruled by God's chosen king. Jonathan doesn't want to be ruled by King Saul anymore, and he doesn't want to inherit Saul's throne for himself. Jonathan thinks David should rule God's kingdom. And that is the gospel according to Jonathan.¹

God has set apart and sent a better savior king to rule our lives. That king is Jesus. Christ's victory over the powers of sin, death, and hell, in his life, on the cross, and at the resurrection, should compel us to give up our self-rule and hand Him the keys of the kingdom. Jesus' resurrection, much like David emerging from battle with Goliath unscathed, proves that Jesus is the king of God's kingdom. That's the sign we've been looking for—Jesus' resurrection. That's why we should switch our natural loyalties, we give up what we understood as our own rights to rule our own kingdom, and we enter into both a personal and political pact, a covenant, with Jesus, to rule and reign over us, because he really is better than us. Jesus must increase, I must decrease. That is what Jonathan thought of David. That is what John the Baptist thought of Jesus. And that is what we are to think of Jesus. The real heir to the throne of God's kingdom has arrived in Jesus. So we lay down our perceived rights, our pretensions, and our ambitions at Jesus' feet. We recognize that all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Jesus, just as he told his disciples after his resurrection. And we direct all people to Him, not to us.

And when you do that, your souls gravitate to other people who do that. On a human level, Jonathan found a deep common bond with David in their faith and loyalty to the God of Israel. There is something about covenant faithfulness to the covenant God that knits people's hearts together and makes them want to covenant with each other. Deep calls to deep. That's one great reason that we pursue committed covenant friendships in the context of committed membership in the local church. When we join the church, we sign a statement of doctrine and a covenant of behavior and commitment to each other that outlines for us how we're committing to believe and live together. Biblical doctrine and holy living are the dual threads God uses to knit our hearts together with each other. We're not all members of this church just because we all want to be nice and respectable. What knits us together is our common covenant commitment to Jesus Christ, our trust in his promises, and our obedience to his word. That's what drives Christian community and fellowship—doctrine and devotion. Doctrine might well divide true

¹ So also Firth, "David remains opaque, because his motivation is not central, and his actions are a foil to Saul's. In modelling these responses to Yahweh's presence, the narrator poses questions to the reader. In particular, we are asked about our own response..., whether we are able to respond to this presence by surrendering our own goals rather than resisting it because our own ambitions take priority" (AOTC, 212-213).

churches from false churches, true doctrine from false doctrine, and even true believers from false converts. But doctrine is also what unites true Christian with other true Christians, even when they have nothing else in common but Christ.

Well, in v.5, David succeeds everywhere, both in foreign war and in the eye of public opinion. And his very success becomes the source of his problem with Saul.

1Sam 18:6-16. *As they were coming home, when David returned from striking down the Philistine, the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with songs of joy and with musical instruments. And the women sang to one another as they celebrated, ‘Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands.’ And Saul was very angry, and this saying displeased him. He said, ‘They have ascribed to David **ten** thousands, and to me they have ascribed thousands, and what more can he have but the kingdom? And Saul eyed David from that day on. The next day, a harmful spirit from God rushed upon Saul, and he raved within his house while David was playing the lyre, as he did day by day. Saul had his spear in his hand. And Saul hurled the spear, for he thought, ‘I will pin David to the wall.’ But David evaded him **TWICE**. Saul was afraid of David **because the Lord was with him**, but had departed from Saul. So Saul removed him from his presence and made him a commander of a thousand. And he went out and came in before the people. And David had success in all his undertakings, **for the Lord was with him**. And when Saul saw that he had great success, he stood in fearful awe of him. But all Israel and Judah loved David, for he went out and came in before them.’”*

They come back from the war that ensued after David killed Goliath, and the women who had kept the home fires burning come out, at least from their own perspective, to meet their king, Saul, victorious in battle. They’re singing a little ditty they composed. And they mean no disrespect at all to Saul. Thousands and ten thousands was a **standard pair** in Hebrew song and poetry. They meant no slight to Saul. Saul even came first in the pair, to honor him as king.² Still, that line stuck like a burr in Saul’s saddle. He couldn’t unhear it, he couldn’t stop playing it over in his mind, and he saw the writing on the wall. It sounded like a referendum on his reign, like his approval ratings were tanking, while David’s were skyrocketing. To Saul, this was the death knell of his own reign—requiem for a regency. “They think David did the heavy lifting and I was just along for the ride. They’re giving him ten times the credit they’re giving me. Now it’s only a matter of time before they want David to replace me on the throne. He already has their hearts and their admiration; that’s 99% of the game. All that’s left for him to get now is my crown.

Saul is now jealous of David, and it literally drives him crazy. Here we enter that dark and tangled labyrinth of jealousy, coveting, and envy. **Coveting** is wanting what’s not ours to have (I covet what God gave someone else). **Jealousy** insists that we are more deserving of what God has given others (I’m jealous that they have what I deserve more than them). **Envy** resents others for having what we want (I envy/dislike/resent them for enjoying what I want). David is getting the credit and attention and praise that Saul covets (10th C). But David is getting that because He is God’s anointed, not Saul. It’s not Saul’s praise to have. Saul is then jealous because he thinks he is more deserving of the praise that David is getting. So he envies or resents David for having what Saul thinks he deserves more. And envy is an

² “The parallelism may suggest David and Saul are treated as equals in battle, a possibility strengthened by the fact that the word translated ‘ten thousands’ may simply mean ‘myriads’. Moreover, ‘thousands’ and ‘ten thousands’ are a stock pair (e.g., Ps 91:7). Read this way, the two lines are synonymous, so David and Saul are placed on a par... On the other hand, this may be intensifying parallelism... Whatever the women’s intent..., Saul sees the threat posed, as his authority is no longer unique. Rather than the king leading the nation in battle (8:20), both Saul and David do so” (Firth, AOTC, 209).

embittered form of anger that produces homicidal rage, as we'll see. Breaking the tenth command (coveting-jealousy-envy) makes Saul want to break the sixth (murder); but it all started when he broke the second years earlier in chapter 13 (don't worship me in ways I didn't command, or in ways that are against my command). And now, is coveting, jealousy, and envy makes Saul feel threatened by David and suspicious of him. *"And Saul eyed David from that day on."*

Here again, though, Saul's jealousy of David foreshadows the Pharisee's jealousy and envy of Jesus, and for the same reasons. When Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey in Luke 19:38-40, people sing him a song, *"Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"* And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, *'Teacher, rebuke your disciples. He answered, 'I tell you, if these were silent the very stones would cry out.* They didn't like how much credit the crowds were giving Jesus. They were calling him king, which threatened their own position of status and power, and their own security in Rome. Saul feared that David would take away his place, and the Pharisees feared the same thing of Jesus in **John 11:48** *"...everyone will believe in him and the Romans will come and take away our place and our nation."* And when they hand Jesus over to be crucified, even a non-Christian politician like Pilate "knew it was out of envy that they delivered him up" (Mt 27:18). Yet as God's presence was with David, so even more was God present with Jesus.

Saul's jealous anger begins in v.8-9 a day before the harmful spirit comes back on him in v.10. The harmful spirit, then, is not working against Saul's natural inclinations or overriding Saul's supposed innocence. The harmful spirit is simply working in and through Saul's natural sinfulness. The harmful spirit never moves Saul do anything out of character for Saul. The harmful spirit simply incites Saul to act according to his character and take his own jealousy to its logical end. The harmful spirit doesn't do Saul wrong, or treat him like an unwilling puppet. The harmful spirit simply moves Saul along to do the wrong that already comes naturally to Saul, in order to bring Saul down and raise David up.

18:10-11. The harmful spirit from God now arrives, interestingly, while David is playing the lyre. David's playing was supposed to alleviate Saul's crazy spells, but now the music is no longer working. All of a sudden Saul gets up and chucks a couple of spears at David. Now from our perspective as readers, we know why he did that—he's jealous of David. But of course, David himself doesn't yet know Saul is jealous of him, so at this point David probably just thinks "Wow, he's getting really bad, delusional actually. What is the deal?" David's natural ignorance of Saul's jealousy is probably why David is still willing to marry into the family later in the story, even though we know Saul has a literal axe to grind against David. David just thinks Saul has lost it. Yet because God is with David, David escapes Saul's spear...twice in a row.

And maybe for that very reason, Saul realizes God has left him, and is now with David instead. Saul finally gets it. And that scares Saul enough to put David out of the royal court and into the battle field. Twice in vv.12-14 we read that the Lord was with David, and we'll read it again in v.28. God is with David to bless and protect him for the purpose God has for him. Yet God's real presence with David does not exempt David from suffering that is not David's fault. **God is lifting up David, and God is with David, through the experience of suffering that is no fault of David's.** That sounds a lot like Jesus' rise to the throne—suffering, then glory. Or better, glory through suffering. And all who want to be godly in Christ Jesus will suffer as He did, not for sin, but for righteousness. God was sovereign over David's unjust suffering. God was sovereign over Jesus' unjust suffering. And God is sovereign over our unjust suffering when we remain loyal to Jesus and suffer for it. Why did Saul rave and chuck spears at David?

Because of a harmful spirit from God. God is sovereign over our suffering, and even over the people and spirits who directly or visibly cause it.

Saul's inclination to be jealous of David and even kill him reveals Saul's true character. Saul is not concerned for God's praise or kingdom. Saul is about Saul's praise and kingdom. Once that is threatened, Saul goes nuts. It's not merely that God has left Saul. It's that God is now with David, his junior, his subordinate. And this Saul cannot abide; so he puts David out of his house and into the battlefield, which ends up making things worse, because now David has even more public success in war. The Lord is with him again in v.14. And all this success makes Saul even more afraid of David. Saul is not afraid David will kill him; he's afraid David will replace him. Saul may also fear David in the sense that Saul is afraid to be the one trying to kill David. If the Lord is with David, then Saul may have thought better of being the one to murder him. But maybe Saul could manipulate circumstances so he doesn't have to be the one to pull the trigger. Let's keep reading in v.17.

1S 18:17-27. *“Then Saul said to David, ‘Here is y elder daughter Merab. I will give her to you for a wife. Only be valiant for me and fight the Lord’s battles.’ For Saul thought, ‘Let not my hand be against him, but let the hand of the Philistines be against him.’ And David said to Saul, ‘Wo am I and who are my relatives my father’s clan in Israel, that I should be son-in-law to the king?’ But at the time when Merab, Saul’s daughter, should have been given to David, she was given to Adriel the Meholathite for a wife.”* Now Saul becomes sly. Instead of hurling sticks, Saul dangles a carrot for David. Here's my daughter Merab. You fight, and she's yours.” Of course, Saul already owes David a wife—that was the reward for killing Goliath. But now Saul moves the goalpost. Win my battles against the Philistines over the next few months, and then you can marry my daughter.” But inside Saul is saying, “the more he fights, the sooner he falls...and if I don't have to take the fall, for David's fall, all the better. Win-win. And David will fight more if he knows he thinks there's a woman at the end of the tunnel. But by then, the Philistines will have done my dirty work for me.” And here, David comes off almost like a boy scout, so innocent, naïve almost. Saul just tried to kill him, but David chalks it up to one of Saul's crazy spells, and now Saul wants David as a son-in-law?³ David's like, “I could never. Besides, I've got Moabite blood from my dad's side of the family.” Yet if you know the story of 2nd Samuel, you realize David will not remain so innocent; he'll use the same strategy to kill off Uriah to cover up his own sin. But for whatever reason, Saul reneges on the offer of a wife. He ends up giving Merab to Adriel. It's unclear why. Maybe Saul got impatient. Maybe David didn't want Adriel or Adriel didn't want David. Whatever the case, it falls through. But in v.20, Saul realizes he has another pawn to move on the board.

“Now Saul’s daughter Michael loved David. And they told Saul, and the thing pleased him. Saul thought, ‘Let me give her to him, that she may be a snare for him and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him.” This is becoming like a Christian Days of our Lives. How convenient! Michal is in love with David! Or, maybe it's just Michal respects David and wants to follow Jonathan in aligning herself with David politically. Either way, Saul realizes that Michal has some kind of strong loyalty and affection for David, and Saul can use that, in tandem with the Philistines, as a two-pronged strategy to off David. Michal will function like David's Delilah, and it's a mixed drink of domestic distraction and foreign war, the old home-and-away brew.

³ “David was playing his lyre because Saul was having one of his ‘spells’.... That may well have been how Saul's attendants talked about him at such times: ‘The king's really bad today, David.’ They may well have thought of Saul's condition as something not quite under his control (cf. 16:15). In any case, Saul's moodiness was well known, and David would have no particular reason to interpret Saul's spear throws as murderous in design. More likely they were construed as outbursts of Saul's recurring madness. Dangerous but not malicious” (D.R. Davis, FOTB, 196).

In vv.21-23 Saul gets serious and wants David to know it, but it's all lies. "You shall now be my son-in-law." He even tells his servants to take David aside and pump sunshine into his ears—"behold the king has delight in you, and all his servants love you." Well, one out of two isn't bad. All Saul's servants love David; just not Saul himself. David still protests, this time based on class, "since I am poor and have no reputation?" David has nothing to give, no bride price (Gen 34?). But Saul has an answer for that too in v.25. "*Then Saul said, 'Thus shall you say to David, 'The king desires no bride-price except a hundred foreskins of the Philistines that he may be avenged on the king's enemies.'*" All Saul wants is 100 Philistine foreskins. Of course, Philistines aren't just going to offer those to David without a fight. David will have to kill 100 Philistine men. Here again, the logic is, "Let the Philistines do my dirty work. David will be a real daisy to get that one done." V.26 "*Now Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines.*" And from Saul's moral and political perspective, he's keeping it 100—why incur the guilt and public shame of murdering your enemy, when he'd be just as dead if he died in battle? Even in this, the Jews treated Jesus just like Saul treated David. Pilate told them in John 18:31 "*Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law. 'The Jews said to him, 'It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death.'*" Keeping it 100. You can orchestrate Jesus' death at Roman hands and still be clean for Passover (Cf. Jn 19:6-7; Mt 27:1; Lk 23:2).

Well, as soon as David hears that he can earn Michal's hand, really deserve his place in the royal family, he's all in. "*And when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to be the king's son-in-law. Before the time had expired, David arose and went, along with his men, and killed **two** hundred of the Philistines.*" David is still totally unaware that Saul isn't just trying to grill him. He's trying to kill him. David genuinely feels unworthy to marry into the royal family—unless he can earn his way, fight his way in. So he leaves no doubt. He comes back with 200 Philistine foreskins, double what Saul asked.⁴ Of course, Saul thought he had hatched the perfect plan, only to realize he's between a rock and a hard place. Now he's gotta make good on his word and give Michal to David, which means David is actually royalty now, exactly what Saul was trying to avoid!

1S 18:27-30 "*And David brought their foreskins, which were given in full number to the king, that he might become the king's son-in-law. And Saul gave him his daughter Michal for a wife. But when Saul saw and knew that the Lord was with David, and that Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him, Saul was even more afraid of David. So Saul was David's enemy continually. Then the commanders of the Philistines came out to battle, and as often as they came out David had more success than all the servants of Saul, so that his name was highly esteemed.*"

Now Saul really has the heebie-jeebies about David. He fears him, and then he hates him. He sets himself against David as his enemy now, precisely because **he knew the Lord was with David**. And now to Saul's bitter regret, he realizes that his own plot against David is the very means by which David began gaining a reputation that he didn't have in v.23. David said in v.23 "I have no reputation." But now he's earned a reputation, precisely because Saul put him in the position to earn it, when Saul thought he was putting David in a position to be killed. And is this not exactly what happened with Jesus at the cross? The very death the Jews plotted against Jesus to get rid of him, was the means by which God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is KING.

⁴ "Saul is stuck; he has made the offer and now needs to follow the process through, though in doing so he grants additional authority to David, since he can now claim status within the royal family" (Firth, AOTC, 212).

CONCLUSION

The Lord's presence and favor is worth more than all worldly advantages combined.⁵ Saul had political power, the wealth associated with it, he attached every powerful person to himself, and he had a kind of cunning that could position people on a political board to get him what he wanted. David, meanwhile, comes off in this chapter like a total boy scout—naïve to Saul's jealousy of him, ignorant of Saul's plots against him. David doesn't know what he doesn't know. Yet the Lord departs from Saul, and is with David; so David succeeds, despite his naïveté and despite all Saul's plots and ploys, because "the Lord was with David." The whole difference between Saul and David here is stated three times. The Lord was with David. The Lord was with David. The Lord was with David. And Saul knew it.

Yet as close as God was with David, the Lord was with Great David's Greater Son all the more. Nicodemus admitted as much when he said to Jesus in **John 3:2** "*We know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.*" Jesus himself said in **John 8:29** "*He who sent me is with me,*" and again in **John 10:38** "*the Father is in me, and I am in the Father.*" That's why Peter preached in **Acts 10:38** "*God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.*" As God was sovereign over Jesus' suffering, so he is sovereign over ours.

God is sovereign over all our suffering and over those who directly inflict it on us. The Lord was with David, yet it was a harmful spirit from this same Lord that moved Saul to chuck his spear at David, twice! God is sovereign over all our suffering, and over those who directly inflict it on us. Christian, no matter what you suffer, you suffer it under the watchful eye and the sovereign hand of the God who loves you and saves you. Your times, your sorrows, the injustices you have suffered at the hands of others, your risks, and all your unknowns, are firmly in the hand of the God who loves and saves you. Nothing—not even your worst sorrows—come to you, Christian, otherwise than from God's hand, and He will sanctify your sufferings. The flame will not hurt you, I only design your dross to consume and your gold to refine. **I will be with you** your trials to bless, and sanctify to you your deepest distress. Jesus promises His church, I will be with you to the end of the age. And it is in the security of his presence that we go and make disciples of all the nations. Which raises the question...

How do you get the Lord's presence and favor? You switch loyalties like Jonathan did. You get with the one whom God is with—with Jesus. You side with Jesus against your sin, and against the world in its rebellion against God. You quit trying to rule your own kingdom, and you hand yourself over to Jesus' righteous rule. You admit that Jesus is more worthy to take the throne of your heart than you are. You trust God's word in the good news of Jesus death and resurrection for our sins, and the offer of forgiveness if we repent from our sin and self-rule to trust and obey Jesus. We take God's word in Scripture seriously—his commitments and promises, as well as his threats and warnings. Like David, we fear God more than we fear man. We esteem God more than self. And we ask God to unite us to His Son Jesus Christ, in whom all the fullness of the Godhead lives bodily.

⁵ So also D.R. Davis, "...the point has been drummed into us: David is successful because Yahweh is with him, and everyone (almost) loves David" (FOTB, 195).
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As Saul plotted against David because he feared David, so the world plots against the church because it fears the church. But the world fears the church like Saul feared David. Saul didn't fear David because he thought David would kill him. He feared David because God was with David. In Acts 5, when Peter and John preach the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus, the Jewish leaders want to kill them for it, because that message threatened their power and their whole worldview. But Gamaliel warned them against messing with the apostles later in Acts 5. *Keep away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or undertaking is of man, it will fail, but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!*” That's just what we find Saul doing. Saul knew God was with David, yet he's plotting to kill David anyway.

In v.28, *When Saul knew the Lord was with David, he was even more afraid of David, and became David's enemy continually.* That is just how Satan rails against the church all throughout church history in **Rev 12:13, 17** *“when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child...Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.”*

The world resents the church precisely because we preach the resurrection of Jesus. And the world resents the resurrection of Jesus because if Jesus is risen from the dead, it threatens everyone's feeling of personal sovereignty over their own kingdom and their personal freedom to sin as they choose. Jesus' resurrection threatens our own definition of self and world, of right and wrong, of truth and error. His resurrection challenges our right to rule ourselves as we see fit. Ultimately, Jesus' resurrection threatens the insulated worldview that insists there is no transcendent God who exists apart from our approval of him; a God who speaks, expects, and evaluates; a God who rules, judges and saves; a God who defines sin and hates it, a God who calls all people everywhere to repent. But Jesus really does deserve to reign on the throne of our souls. He is better, wiser, and stronger than all the Sauls and Jonathans in the world. And Jesus' resurrection is the ultimate proof that God is with Him. The question is, are you?