

Jonathan and David

Two young adults have just cemented their friendship with a covenant. One, fresh from battle, just led an assault against the Philistines and slain their hero. The other, the son of a king, 1 Samuel 18:1,3-4 describes their covenant, “*The soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul . . . Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan took off the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his armor, even to his sword and his bow and his belt (NKJV).*” People sometimes think the highest form of love between two people is that of a husband and wife. The love between a man and a woman creates a physical union as the two become one flesh (Genesis 2:24), but the love between Jonathan and David brought about a union of souls which was deeper than the physical union of two bodies. In 2 Samuel 1:26, David says of this spiritual love, “Your love to me was more wonderful than the love of women.” Jonathan and David’s love was closer to the “greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends (John 15:13).”

Jonathan was willing even to give the throne to David. Jonathan gave David his robe, armor, weapons, and belt. The Romans had a saying, “*Vestis Virum Redit,*” “The clothes make the man.” What a person wears often represents status, authority, and function. Blue uniforms, badges, bib overalls, and expensive suits are examples. Jonathan’s robe represented his royal authority and power and his position as heir to the throne of Israel. Jonathan’s giving his robe indicated his willingness to share even the throne. Jonathan specifically expressed this willingness to David, in I Samuel 23:17, “you will be king over Israel and I will be next to you.”

In the blood covenant we have with Christ, we have a union which is even more intimate than that shared by Jonathan and David. As their union was greater than a mere union of flesh, so is ours with Christ greater than even Jonathan and David’s. They had a union of souls, while we are united to Christ in both soul and spirit. Christ shares with us His royalty, even His

Divinity. 1 Peter 2:9 shows that royalty when it says to us that now “you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood.” And 2 Peter 1:4 refers to the divine nature when it says that through Christ we can “become partakers of the divine nature.”

Jonathan gave David not only his robe, but also his weapons and armor, representing that he gave David power and protection. 1 Samuel 20 records Jonathan’s protection of David from Saul. David believed Saul desired to kill him. David reminded Jonathan of their covenant, and they derived a plan. First, David did not appear during a festival. On the first day of the feast, Saul said nothing, but then on the second, he asked about David. When Jonathan defended David’s absence, Saul became irate and attempted to kill his own son. Jonathan had interposed his life between David and the tyrant. This, in spite of the fact that the tyrant was his own king and father.

Jonathan and David were the type of good friends described in Proverbs 18:24: “A man of many friends comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.” Most friends are of the fair weather type: gone as soon as it gets a bit cloudy. Too many of *these* friends bring disaster. The time, energy, and money that have been spent with this type of “friend” quickly become wasted when times get tough and the “friend” looks for greener pastures. But concerning friends of the kind like Jonathan and David, Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 says, “Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up . . . And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him.”

In the same manner as Jonathan and David, Christ takes an attack upon us as an assault directly upon Himself. When Paul, known at that time still as Saul, was on his way to persecute the church in Damascus, Christ appeared to him in a blaze of glory and power and interrogated him, asking him, not, “why are you persecuting the church?” but “why are you persecuting *Me* (Acts 9:4)?” When Saul replied with “Who are you, Lord?” the Lord replied, “*I am Jesus whom you are persecuting* (Acts 9:5 NKJV).” To persecute the church is to persecute Jesus. To attack those with whom Christ has a blood covenant is to attack Christ directly, for He is one with us.

Understanding our covenant relationship with Christ helps us understand that Romans 12:19 is a promised blessing rather than a dread command: “Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord.” In the case of Saul, Christ was coming to bring judgment. Saul would either repent, or else! Fortunately for him, and us, he repented.

Christ also gives to us His weapons and His armor. Ephesians 6:10-13 says, “Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.” Fortunately, we do not have to rely upon our own armor in this battle, or even our own strength to utilize His weaponry and armor; God gives us His righteousness, His Truth, His power, even His faith. We need rely on nothing of our own. We need no longer fight our own battles with our own strength; Christ fights through us; Christ lives through us; and we live through Him.

David and Jonathan’s covenant was permanent, and even death could not “do them part.” Jonathan had a son named Mephibosheth. After Jonathan was slain in battle, David, as the new king, found and cared for Mephibosheth because of his covenant with Jonathan. Normally, a new king would destroy any descendants of a previous rival to the throne. For Jonathan’s sake, Mephibosheth received a different fate. The details are recorded in 2 Samuel 9:1-11. In summary, Mephibosheth was hiding out in Lo-Debar, which translated means, “No-thing.” He went to the king’s summons expecting to go from being nothing to being dead. Instead he was given one of the most exalted positions within the nation, a place at David’s personal table, considerable possessions of land, and was treated as David’s own son. All because of a covenant he may not even have been aware of, a covenant whose power could not be defeated by the power of the grave.

Similarly, the spirit of Christ prophesies, in Zechariah 9:11, “because of the blood of My

covenant with you, I have set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.” Christ’s covenant removes from us the destiny of death and hell, lifts us up into the most exalted state in the universe, sits us at table with the King of Kings, and adopts us as children of God and joint heirs with Christ of all the treasures of Heaven and earth (Romans 8:17).