

Like Jonathan

Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. – 1 Samuel 18:3

The account of the David's life in 1-2 Samuel and 1 Chronicles is filled with much foreshadowing of the Christ. There are so many ways that David typified our Lord. But buried in the text we can see ourselves as well, particularly in David's friend Jonathan. The remarkable story of Jonathan and David's friendship yields lessons that should light our path and remind us of who we are and how we should carry ourselves as believers.

Jonathan's name means "God has given." Once we exist, there is no undoing the eternal nature of our souls. Life is a gift from God and therefore filled with purpose. There is a reason we are here. Others can learn from our example if we walk faithfully. Indeed, each of us is fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14-16) – gifts to the world from God.

Jonathan was the son of a rebel. His father Saul started well, but rebelled against the Most High, and suffered the inalienable consequences. There were strings attached to being the progeny of the first King of Israel – duties and obligations that, if questioned or countered, carried serious and dangerous consequence. Indeed, Saul's wrath was seen on more than one occasion when Jonathan intimated the most reasonable of questions and intercessions. It is interesting that Saul's derangement saw Jonathan as the rebel, and not himself as such (1 Samuel 20:30). But are we not of our father, the devil (John 8:44), who is the first of all rebels (Isaiah 14:14). And must we not be vigilant in our dealings with him who walks about as a roaring lion, seeking to devour us (1 Peter 5:8)?

Jonathan had a right to the throne. It was his legally. Being the son of a king means you are heir to his power. We can safely conjecture that everyone in the court knew this, and that they encouraged Jonathan in seizing what was his. Does this not remind us of our rebellious former master, constantly whispering in our ears as he did in our primal parents, "Ye shall be as gods..." (Genesis 3:5)?

Jonathan, however, abnegated his right to the anointed of God – the shepherd of Bethlehem Judah. He perceived Jehovah's pleasure in David and wisely befriended the boy. Instead of tenaciously holding to his assumed destiny, he laid it at the feet of one better than he. This is not the anticipated reaction of a prince! Jonathan reminds us of ourselves who, when we perceived the Lion of Judah as the Christ of God, willingly laid down our arms and surrendered to His will – knowing that the suffering of the loss of all things could be counted as dung, that we may win Christ (Philippians 3:8).

Finally, despite his wise and loving choice, Jonathan was still subject to the systemic problems resulting from his father's revolt against Heaven's decrees. Slain on Mount Gilboa, Jonathan would have to wait until the resurrection to see his friend assume the throne. Because of our father's rebellion, we too, are appointed to die, and after this the judgement (Hebrews 9:27). But there is coming a Day – for us, for Jonathan, and for David as well – when we will receive the final result of our faith, when Jehovah makes good on every promise in His Word, and we behold with our own eyes the Son of God ruling and reigning from Jerusalem. Until then, let us strive to be like Jonathan – selflessly covenanted to the Son of David, our Lord Jesus. -- *D. Murcek*