

you can escape and live. May the Lord be with you as he used to be with my father.¹⁴ And remember, you must demonstrate the love and kindness of the Lord not only to me during my own lifetime,¹⁵ but also to my children after the Lord has destroyed all of your enemies.”

¹⁶ So Jonathan made a covenant with the family of David, and David swore to it with a terrible curse against himself and his descendants, should he be unfaithful to his promise.¹⁷ But Jonathan made David swear to it again, this time by his love for him, for he loved him as much as he loved himself.

¹⁸ Then Jonathan said, “Yes, they will miss you tomorrow when your place at the table is empty.¹⁹ By the day after tomorrow, everyone will be asking about you, so be at the hideout where you were before, over by the stone pile.²⁰ I will come out and shoot three arrows in front of the pile as though I were shooting at a target.²¹ Then I’ll send a lad to bring the arrows back. If you hear me tell him, ‘They’re on this side,’ then you will know that all is well and that there is no trouble.²² But if I tell him, ‘Go farther—the arrows are still ahead of you,’ then it will mean that you must leave immediately.²³ And may the Lord make us keep our promises to each other, for he has witnessed them.”^a

^{24,25} So David hid himself in the field.

When the new moon celebration began, the king sat down to eat at his usual place against the wall. Jonathan sat opposite him and Abner was sitting beside Saul, but David’s place was empty.²⁶ Saul didn’t say anything about it that day, for he supposed that something had happened so that David was ceremonially impure. Yes, surely that must be it!²⁷ But when his place was still empty the next day, Saul asked Jonathan, “Why hasn’t David been here for dinner either yesterday or today?”

^{28,29} “He asked me if he could go to Bethlehem to take part in a family celebration,” Jonathan replied. “His brother demanded that he be there, so I told him to go ahead.”

³⁰ Saul boiled with rage. “You son of a bitch!”^b he yelled at him. “Do you think I

^a Literally, “The Lord is our mediator forever.”
paraphrase is the median equivalent.

don’t know that you want this son of body^c to be king in your place, shall yourself and your mother?”³¹ As long as fellow is alive, you’ll never be king. Now and get him so I can kill him!”

³² “But what has he done?” Jonathan demanded. “Why should he be put to death?”

³³ Then Saul hurled his spear at Jonathan, intending to kill him; so at last Jonathan realized that his father really meant when he said that David must die.³⁴ Jonathan left the table in fierce anger and did not eat all that day, for he was hurt by his father’s shameful behavior toward David.

³⁵ The next morning, as agreed, Jonathan went out into the field and took a young boy with him to gather his arrows.

³⁶ “Start running,” he told the boy, “that you can find the arrows as I have hidden them.” So the boy ran and Jonathan hid an arrow beyond him.³⁷ When the boy almost reached the arrow, Jonathan shouted, “The arrow is still ahead of you!”³⁸ Hurry, hurry, don’t wait.” So the boy quickly gathered up the arrows and brought them back to his master.³⁹ He, of course, did not understand what Jonathan meant, but Jonathan and David knew.⁴⁰ Then Jonathan gave his bow and arrows to David and told him to take them back to the field.

⁴¹ As soon as he was gone, David came out from where he had been hiding near the south edge of the field and they sadly wept, hands, tears running down their cheeks, until David could weep no more.⁴² Then Jonathan said to David, “Cheer up, for we have entrusted each other and each other’s children into God’s hands forever.” So David parted, David going away and Jonathan returning to the city.

21 DAVID WENT TO the city of Beth-lehem to see Ahimelech, the priest. Ahimelech trembled when he saw him.

“Why are you alone?” he asked. “There is no one with you?”

² “The king has sent me on a mission,” David lied. “He told me not to tell anybody why I am here. I have told you where to meet me later.”³ Now, what

^b Literally, “son of a perverse, rebellious woman.”
^c Literally, “son of Jesse.”
^d Literally, “David wept until David exceeded.”