

Lesson 23 - “The Lord Be Between Thee and Me For Ever”

1 Samuel 18-31

Purpose: To encourage us to be true to their friends, as Jonathan and David were, and avoid being consumed by jealousy and hatred, as Saul was.



My lessons take a different path than the Gospel Doctrine lesson manual. The lesson outline looks closer at the doctrinal topics included in the lesson purpose and scripture block. The lessons are designed to challenge mature, active Latter-Day Saints who have a solid Gospel foundation and are looking for insights into the scriptures that will broaden their faith and understanding.

If you are interested in downloading the Powerpoint file, links to source material or reading posts about improving Gospel Doctrine class preparation, delivery and engagement, you can join my Facebook Group and have full access to the content posted there. The link is <https://www.facebook.com/groups/188904648521022/>

Last Week's Lesson Challenge

Our challenge last week was to be introspective. How do we judge others? Likely it is by outward appearance. Do we make assumptions about others based upon their outward appearance before we even talk to them and get to know them? Of course we do. It's what we have learned all through humankind.

As part of being introspective, consider Elder Marvin J. Ashton's four questions.

How honest in heart am I?

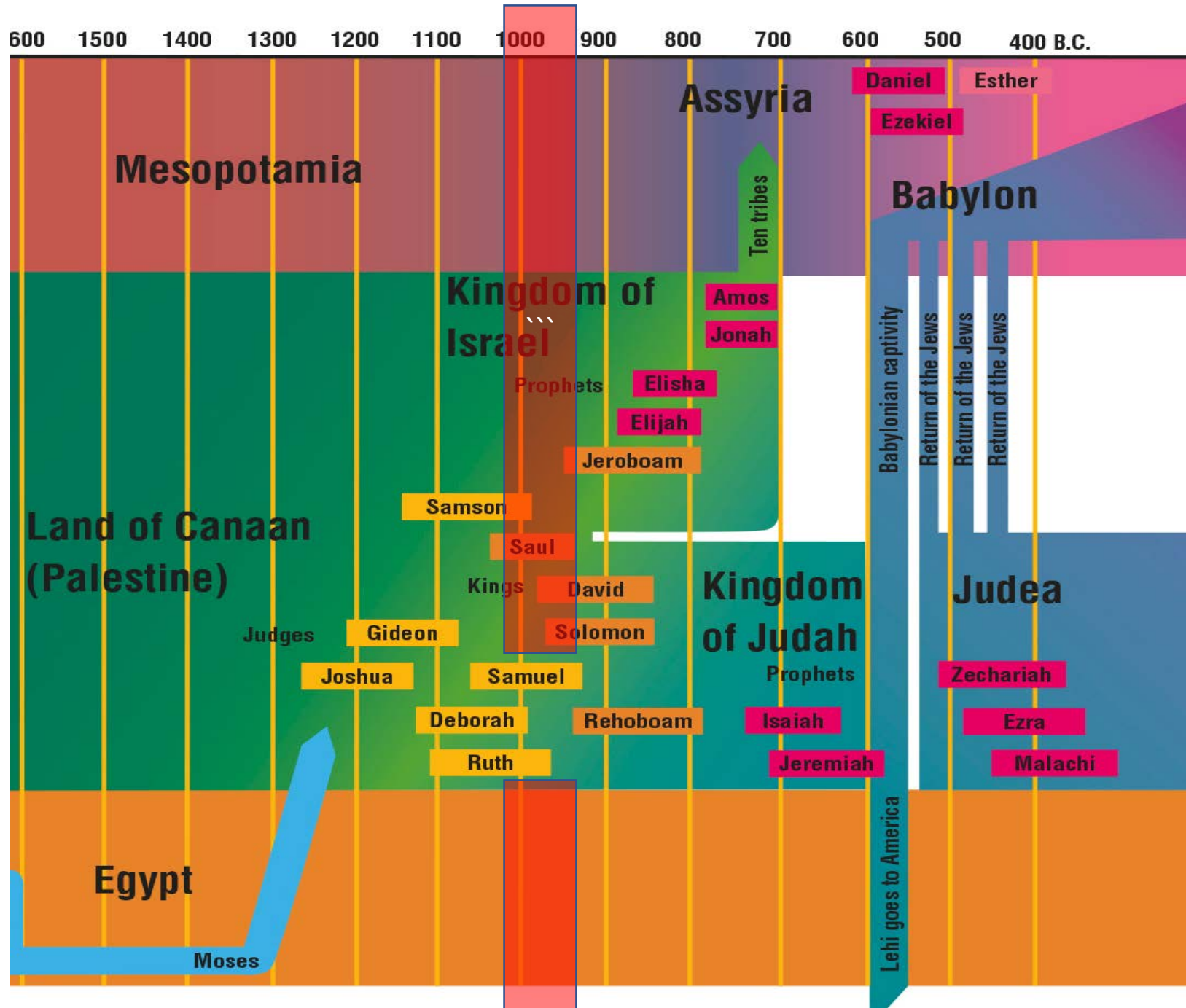
Do I have a willing heart?

Do I have an understanding, loving heart?

“If ye have experienced a change of heart, and if ye have felt to sing the song of redeeming love, ... can ye feel so now?” (Alma 5:26).

Would anyone wish to share their thoughts and experiences this past as they contemplated last week's lesson?

Samuel, Saul and David



Does the Latter-Day Saint view
of David differ from Judaism
and / or mainstream
Christianity?

David was a son of Jesse of the tribe of Judah. He is a direct descendant of Abraham. He is a direct ancestor of Jesus Christ.

He was a courageous youth who slew a lion, a bear, and the Philistine giant Goliath. David was chosen and anointed to be king of Israel. Like Saul, in his adult life he was guilty of grave crimes, but, unlike Saul, he was capable of true contrition. He was therefore able to find forgiveness, except in the murder of Uriah. His life can be divided into four parts:

- (1) at Bethlehem, where he was a shepherd;
- (2) in the court of King Saul;
- (3) as a fugitive from King Saul;
- (4) as king over Judah at Hebron, and
- (5) as king over all Israel.

<https://www.lds.org/scriptures/gs/david?lang=eng>

Genealogy of David and Jesus Christ

Abraham	Jotham
Isaac	Ahaz
Jacob	Hezekiah
Judah and Tamar	Manasseh
Perez	Amon
Hezron	Josiah
Ram	Jeconiah
Amminadab	Shealtiel
Nahshon	Zerubbabel
Salmon and Rachab	Abiud
Boaz and Ruth	Eliakim
Obed	Azor
Jesse	Zadok
David and Bathsheba	Achim
Solomon	Eliud
Rehoboam	Eleazar
Abijah	Matthan
Asa	Jacob
Jehoshaphat	Joseph and Mary
Jehoram	Jesus
Ahaziah	

David's sin of adultery with Bathsheba was followed by a series of misfortunes that marred the last twenty years of his life. The nation as a whole was prosperous during his reign, but David himself suffered from the consequences of his sins. There were constant family feuds, which, in the case of Absalom and Adonijah, ended in open rebellion. These incidents are a fulfillment of the pronouncement of Nathan the prophet upon David because of his sin.

In spite of these disasters, David's reign was the most brilliant of Israelite history, for

- (1) he united the tribes into one nation,
- (2) he secured undisputed possession of the country,
- (3) he based the government on the true religion so that the will of God was the law of Israel.

For these reasons, David's reign was later regarded as the nation's golden age and the type of the more glorious age when the Messiah would come.

David's life illustrates the need for all persons to endure in righteousness to the end. As a youth, he was said to be a man after the Lord's "own heart"; as a man, he spoke by the Spirit and had many revelations. But he paid a heavy price for his disobedience to the commandments of God (D&C 132:39).

Does the Latter-Day Saint view of David differ from Judaism and / or Mainstream Christianity?

David's strength and reliance on the Lord marked him as an exceptional leader and the epitome of Israelite heroism. Subsequent rulers were measured against his stature, and his name was linked with that of the awaited messiah. Scripture indicates that David's blessings, including his wives, were given to him as a result of God's favor.

But when David also acquired wives and concubines, apparently under his own authority, he was condemned by God (Jacob 2:23-24). Certainly David lost divine approval as a result of his adulterous union with Bathsheba and the subsequent contrived murder of her husband, Uriah.

Because of David's transgressions, his eternal blessings were taken from him (TPJS, pp. 188-89). The Lord granted David a continuation of life for another twenty-one years, perhaps because of his immediate and deep remorse (cf. Ps. 51), his acts of repentance, and his continued faithfulness to Jehovah. However, he must await in the spirit prison the redemption promised to him (Acts 2:34; WJS, p. 74). Even with the assurance of the Lord's ultimate mercy (Ps. 86:13), David lost much that God had given him on earth, he fell "from his exaltation" and his wives were given unto another" (D&C 132:39). Yet his personal integrity appears in his insistence that he be punished in place of his people, whom he saw in vision being destroyed.

http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/David,_King

Jacob 2:23-24

23 But the word of God burdens me because of your grosser crimes. For behold, thus saith the Lord: This people begin to wax in iniquity; they understand not the scriptures, for they seek to excuse themselves in committing whoredoms, because of the things which were written concerning David, and Solomon his son.

24 Behold, David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me, saith the Lord.

Lesson 22 is a comparison of friendship. On one hand, the love that two friends, David and Jonathan, shared. On the other, the envy and jealousy that King Saul felt for David. Jonathan is one of King Saul's sons. After David kills the Philistine Goliath, King Saul takes the now celebrity, David, into his household.

[1 Samuel 18:1-4](#)

1 And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.

2 And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house.

3 Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul.

4 And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.

[1 Samuel 18:10-16](#)

10 ¶ And it came to pass on the morrow, that the evil spirit *from God (JST 1 Sam. 18:10 ... which was not of God ...)* came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house: and David played with his hand, as at other times: and there was a javelin in Saul's hand.

11 And Saul cast the javelin; for he said, I will smite David even to the wall with it. And David avoided out of his presence twice.

12 ¶ And Saul was afraid of David, because the Lord was with him, and was departed from Saul.

13 Therefore Saul removed him from him, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people.

14 And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and the Lord was with him.

15 Wherefore when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely, he was afraid of him.

16 But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them.

It was while serving in Saul's court that David slew Goliath in combat. "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield," he told the Philistine giant, "but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel." He then flung the stone that crashed into Goliath's head, rendering him unconscious long enough for David to decapitate him with the giant's own sword. This sword, incidently, was later to become David's own weapon through a strange turn of events.

The victory was a turning point in the career of the youthful David. His popularity increased dramatically—with all but Saul, whom it alienated. The king, wincing under the unintended insult of the refrain sung by the women of Israel, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands" (1 Sam. 21:11), ultimately began to seek the life of his armor-bearer.

Twice in fits of anger, while David was playing for him, Saul threw his javelin at the young musician. Later he had David placed over a major segment of the army and sent into the thick of battle with the Philistines, hoping that he would be slain by them. On one occasion Saul promised his daughter Michal to David on the condition that he bring back evidence of the death of 100 Philistine warriors. Much to Saul's chagrin the plot failed; David slew 200 warriors and was soon back to claim his bride.

By that time, however, David was well aware that his life was in constant jeopardy so long as Saul was subject to his sudden fits of anger.

Jonathan, the son of King Saul, had also proven himself courageous and faithful. Traditionally he would have been heir to the throne instead of David, so it would have been natural for him to see David as his enemy. Yet when David returned from the battlefield and appeared in King Saul's court "with the head of [Goliath] in his hand[,] ... the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul" (1 Sam. 17:57; 1 Sam. 18:1).

Jonathan helped David escape while he tried to soften Saul's heart . Jonathan's loyal defense of his friend angered Saul, who tried to kill Jonathan, his own son, in a fit of rage. In spite of this, Jonathan continued to secretly assist David at the peril of his own life.

<https://www.lds.org/ensign/2006/06/lessons-from-the-old-testament-true-friendship-and-self-respect?lang=eng>

Why did the friendship of David and Jonathan grow while Saul became David's enemy?

The answer to this question is a lesson for all who seek to develop the kind of true friendship and Christlike love that is illustrated in this dramatic Old Testament story.

In a [June 2006 Ensign article titled “Lessons from the Old Testament”](#), Elder Lynn A. Mickelsen Of the Seventy taught the following three points that illustrated how Jonathan had such love and friendship with David.

Charity “Seeketh Not Her Own”

The Savior said the first and great commandment is to “love the Lord thy God.” The second, He explained, is also a commandment to love: “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Matt. 22:37, 39; see also vv. 36, 38). David and Jonathan’s friendship exemplifies Alma’s charge to the Saints to have “their hearts knit together in unity and in love one towards another” (Mosiah 18:21).

Unfortunately, many people concentrate so intensely on their personal lives that they have neither the time nor the energy to reach out to others. They develop self-centeredness, a trait that led Saul to focus on his own insecurities instead of rejoicing with the rest of Israel in David’s accomplishments.

The Israelite women who sang about David’s and Saul’s military successes apparently made no mention of Jonathan, even though he was an accomplished warrior in his own right. The lack of praise for Jonathan did not harm his friendship with David, because in a true friendship there is no egotism or self-centeredness, only charity. Charity, as the Apostle Paul and Mormon both declare, “seeketh not her own”. This is the kind of love the Savior expects of His followers.

The Importance of Self-Respect

Self-respect develops as we come to understand our divine heritage. When we have the assurance that we are all children of a loving Heavenly Father, we not only understand our own worth but we also see the great worth of others. We need not feel threatened when others are praised and we are not, nor should we feel prideful when we are praised and others are not, because we feel our kinship as brothers and sisters, children of Heavenly Father.

Our self-respect and our love for others deepen as we gain understanding of the Atonement. The infinite love of the Father for us as His children is expressed in the sacrifice of His Son, through which each individual is blessed. “The worth of souls is great in the sight of God; For, behold, the Lord your Redeemer suffered death in the flesh; wherefore he suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him” (D&C 18:10–11; emphasis added). Our knowledge that “God is no respecter of persons” (Acts 10:34) should help us to assume the same attitude toward all of His children.

Becoming “Full of Love”

Knowingly disobeying God’s commandments destroys our self-respect and limits our capacity to love. Saul was unwilling to befriend David as Jonathan did because his own disobedience had caused him to fall out of favor with God, and he knew it. “Saul was afraid of David, because the Lord was with him, and was departed from Saul” (1 Sam. 18:12). In contrast, Jonathan did not feel threatened by David, for he did not worry about his own place in the kingdom.

Achieving this selfless love is not easy. The natural man tends to be more like Saul than Jonathan. Nevertheless, “through the atonement of Christ the Lord,” we can overcome any selfish tendencies and become “full of love” (Mosiah 3:19). We can “cleave unto charity” (Moro. 7:46), which is the kind of love the Savior acted with when He accomplished the Atonement and “[laid] down his life for his friends” (John 15:13; see also Ether 12:33–34).

Charity is a gift from Heavenly Father “which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ” (Moro. 7:48). It comes directly and exclusively from Him, and we are required to pray “with all the energy of [our] heart” to receive it (Moro. 7:48).

True friendship strives for unity of purpose, will, desire, heart, and mind. There must be complete trust and transparency, with no hidden agendas. True friendship transcends love as the world understands it. Based on charity, it is patient and kind. As David and Jonathan demonstrated so memorably, it does not envy; it does not boast; it is not proud. It is not rude, selfish, or easily angered. It keeps no record of wrongs; it does not delight in evil but rejoices in truth. It can bear anything; it always trusts, always hopes, and always perseveres. It never fails (see 1 Cor. 13:4–8; Moro. 7:45–47). Our goal in mortality should be to establish this kind of friendship with each other and with the Savior, thus helping to secure our place with the Eternal Father.

In June 1998 New Era article titled “Real Friendship”, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles wrote the following about the friendship of Jonathan and David:

Aristotle said once that friendship is a single soul dwelling in two bodies. No definition of friendship could better describe the relationship of David and Jonathan in the Old Testament. Jonathan, the son of King Saul, was a valiant soldier in his own right and a worthy young prince in Israel. But when David came onto the scene fresh from his mighty victory over Goliath, having already been anointed by the prophet Samuel, it was he, not Jonathan, who would be successor to the increasingly disobedient Saul.

To a lesser man—or a lesser friend—than Jonathan, David would have been a terrible threat, a natural rival. But he wasn’t. We don’t know that Jonathan expected to succeed his father as king, but he certainly could have foreseen that possibility. What we do know is that “the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul” (1 Sam. 18:1). So great was their devotion to one another that they “made a covenant” of loyalty. As a symbolic token of his devotion to the newly anointed king, Jonathan stripped himself of the princely robe he wore “and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle” (1 Sam. 18:4).

<https://www.lds.org/new-era/1998/06/real-friendship?lang=eng>

When Saul's transgressions brought hostility between him and young David, Saul privately commanded his officers to kill David. But the ever-faithful Jonathan warned his friend, helped him hide out of Saul's view, and continually spoke to his father of David's virtues. He was so successful in praising David that Saul repented and made a vow that David's life would be preserved. "And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence, as in times past" (1 Sam. 19:7).

But Saul was so overcome by evil at this stage of his life that he could not keep his word and once again tried to kill David. In a daring escape David fled to Jonathan, who again pledged his love and his protection, saying to David, "Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee" (1 Sam. 20:4).

Jonathan's protection of David, of course, raised Saul's anger against his own son. In a rage Saul threw a javelin at Jonathan—just as he had done to David earlier. Jonathan escaped, telling David he must flee for his life. Their sorrow over this circumstance was so deep and their love for one another so great that they "wept one with another, ... And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, The Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever" (1 Sam. 20:41–42).

Although Saul continued to seek David's life, Jonathan secretly assisted David and gave him encouragement, promising that "the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee" (1 Sam. 23:17). And always they renewed their covenant of friendship and loyalty.

In summary, we should consider the following:

- Jonathan's faith in Jehovah and his willingness to live the commandments gave him the ability to look beyond his own wants and invite David to be his friend even when he might see David as a threat.
- Saul's lack of faith and his disobedience drove him to be jealous of David and want to kill him.
- Elder Lynn A. Mickelsen Of the Seventy taught the following three points that illustrated how Jonathan had such love and friendship with David.
 - Charity "Seeketh Not Her Own" -
 - The Savior said the first and great commandment is to "love the Lord thy God." The second, He explained, is also a commandment to love: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself". David and Jonathan's friendship exemplifies Alma's charge to the Saints to have "their hearts knit together in unity and in love one towards another" (Mosiah 18:21).
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 - Self-respect develops as we come to understand our divine heritage. When we have the assurance that we are all children of a loving Heavenly Father, we not only understand our own worth but we also see the great worth of others.
 - Becoming "Full of Love"
 - True friendship strives for unity of purpose, will, desire, heart, and mind. There must be complete trust and transparency, with no hidden agendas. True friendship transcends love as the world understands it. Based on charity, it is patient and kind. Our goal in mortality should be to establish this kind of friendship with each other and with the Savior, thus helping to secure our place with the Eternal Father.

This Week's Lesson Challenge

Consider how much more you will gain in your life if you first strive to see others as an opportunity for friendship rather than a challenger or competitor.

Also consider how your own lack of faith or disobedience is holding you from finding true friendship both here on earth and with the Savior.