

1 Samuel 19
October 9, 2022

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

Q: Do we owe evildoers the full truth when they are out to harm someone we want to protect?
[Let people engage]

Transition: The Bible spells out in multiple passages that God hates lying. Yet, in chapter 16, why did God tell Samuel to lie when he was afraid of telling Saul that he was on his way to anoint a new king? God is truthful (15:29), hates lying (Prov 6:16–17; Zec 8:16–17) and expects people to tell the truth (Ex 20:16; Lev 19:11; Eph 4:25; Col 3:9; Rev 22:15). He commanded Samuel to offer a sacrifice, and the prophet was to tell that to anyone who asked without revealing the Lord’s fuller intentions. To disclose them would only help Saul and his supporters carry out their murderous plans against Samuel, an innocent man.

In today’s text, we experience this tension again of whether we should tell evildoers the full truth when they are out to harm someone we want to protect. This time it’s David’s wife, Michal, who lies about David’s whereabouts to Saul’s men who were instructed to kill David. Let’s see how this story unfolds.

BOOK:

Saul Tries to Kill David

19 Saul told his son Jonathan and all the attendants to kill David. But Jonathan was very fond of David ² and warned him, “My father Saul is looking for a chance to kill you. Be on your guard tomorrow morning; go into hiding and stay there. ³ I will go out and stand with my father in the field where you are. I’ll speak to him about you and will tell you what I find out.”

⁴ Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father and said to him, “Let not the king do wrong to his servant David; he has not wronged you, and what he has done has benefited you greatly. ⁵ He took his life in his hands when he killed the Philistine. The LORD won a great victory for all Israel, and you saw it and were glad. Why then would you do wrong to an innocent man like David by killing him for no reason?”

⁶ Saul listened to Jonathan and took this oath: “As surely as the LORD lives, David will not be put to death.”

⁷ So Jonathan called David and told him the whole conversation. He brought him to Saul, and David was with Saul as before.

⁸ Once more war broke out, and David went out and fought the Philistines. He struck them with such force that they fled before him.

⁹ But an evil spirit from the LORD came upon Saul as he was sitting in his house with his spear in his hand. While David was playing the harp, ¹⁰ Saul tried to pin him to the wall with his spear, but David eluded him as Saul drove the spear into the wall. That night David made good his escape.

¹¹ Saul sent men to David’s house to watch it and to kill him in the morning. But Michal, David’s wife, warned him, “If you don’t run for your life tonight, tomorrow you’ll be killed.” ¹²

So Michal let David down through a window, and he fled and escaped. ¹³ Then Michal took an idol and laid it on the bed, covering it with a garment and putting some goats' hair at the head.

¹⁴ When Saul sent the men to capture David, Michal said, "He is ill."

¹⁵ Then Saul sent the men back to see David and told them, "Bring him up to me in his bed so that I may kill him." ¹⁶ But when the men entered, there was the idol in the bed, and at the head was some goats' hair.

¹⁷ Saul said to Michal, "Why did you deceive me like this and send my enemy away so that he escaped?"

Michal told him, "He said to me, 'Let me get away. Why should I kill you?'"

¹⁸ When David had fled and made his escape, he went to Samuel at Ramah and told him all that Saul had done to him. Then he and Samuel went to Naioth and stayed there. ¹⁹ Word came to Saul: "David is in Naioth at Ramah"; ²⁰ so he sent men to capture him. But when they saw a group of prophets prophesying, with Samuel standing there as their leader, the Spirit of God came upon Saul's men, and they also prophesied. ²¹ Saul was told about it, and he sent more men, and they prophesied too. Saul sent men a third time, and they also prophesied. ²² Finally, he himself left for Ramah and went to the great cistern at Secu. And he asked, "Where are Samuel and David?"

"Over in Naioth at Ramah," they said.

²³ So Saul went to Naioth at Ramah. But the Spirit of God came even upon him, and he walked along prophesying until he came to Naioth. ²⁴ He stripped off his robes and also prophesied in Samuel's presence. He lay that way all that day and night. This is why people say, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

Process Observations/Questions:

Q: What did you most like about this passage? What resonated with you? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you least like about this passage? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you find in this passage that you didn't understand? [Let people engage]

Q: What do we learn about Jesus in this passage? [Let people engage]

LOOK:

Michal's example does not give Christians, or anyone else, permission to lie for the sake of personal convenience, or to hide wrongdoing. But Michal's actions demonstrate that, within an environment where human sin abounds, it is not always possible to choose between pure good and pure evil

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament (1 Sa 19)*. Victor Books.

II. David Trusts Men (19)

Saul's plan to murder David was no longer a secret, for now the king's servants were commanded to slay him. But Saul had been unable to kill David in previous attempts (18:11, 25), and now it appeared that his anger was spent, and David could return to the court. Here we see David's faith wavering, for instead of trusting God and seeking His will, he trusts in human beings.

A. He trusts Jonathan (vv. 1–10).

Certainly, the king's son could intercede for David. Saul even swore that he would protect David, but these promises were never fulfilled. No sooner did David win a great victory on the battlefield than Saul's old envy returned, and he threw the spear again. David made a mistake trusting Jonathan to "patch things up" for him. Saul's heart needed to be changed before his words would be trustworthy.

B. He trusts Michal (vv. 11–17).

Though his wife loved David, there was never a strong spiritual tie between the two, as her later actions proved. She warned David that Saul was watching him, so together they concocted a lie. This was the beginning of serious trouble for David, for it is never right to do evil that good may come of it (Rom. 3:8). Note that Michal used an idol to give the impression that David was sick in bed! She was now deceiving her own father and only making matters worse. Read Ps. 59 for additional insight into this situation.

C. He trusts Samuel (vv. 18–24).

This perhaps was the wisest move David made, for this man of God would be able to pray for him and counsel him. Note that Samuel defeated Saul, not with lies or weapons, but with the Spirit of God. By using spiritual weapons, Samuel delayed Saul and gave David opportunity to get away.

Merrill, E. H. (1985). *1 Samuel*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 450) Wheaton, IL: Victor Books

Chapter 19. After an initial and successful attempt by **Jonathan** to soothe his father's feelings toward **David** (vv. 1–7), **Saul** set in motion further steps to destroy David. First, he tried to slay him once more with his own hand (vv. 9–10); then he hired conspirators to murder him **in his bed**, a plot foiled by **Michal** (vv. 11–17). Next Saul **sent men to Naioth at Ramah** where **David** had taken refuge with **Samuel** (vv. 18–24). (**Ramah** was Samuel's hometown.) Their efforts were also unsuccessful for they, and later **Saul**, were overwhelmed by **the Spirit of God** who **came** on them and caused them to "act like prophets" (NIV, **prophesied**, vv. 20–21, 23–24).

This means that they fell into a trance or an ecstatic state, a condition which immobilized them and made them incapable of accomplishing their evil intentions.

Cabal, T., Brand, C. O., Clendenen, E. R., Copan, P., Moreland, J. P., & Powell, D. (2007). *The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith* (pp. 429; 437–438). Holman Bible Publishers.

16:2 If God hates lying, why did He tell Samuel to lie? God is truthful (15:29), hates lying (Prov 6:16–17; Zec 8:16–17) and expects people to tell the truth (Ex 20:16; Lev 19:11; Eph 4:25; Col 3:9; Rev 22:15). He commanded Samuel to offer a sacrifice, and the prophet was to tell that to anyone who asked without revealing the Lord’s fuller intentions. To disclose them would only help Saul and his supporters carry out their murderous plans against an innocent man.

19:1 On whether Jonathan and David had a homosexual relationship, see note on 18:1–4.

19:9 On God’s sending an evil spirit to torment Saul, see note on 16:14.

19:13–17 Was Michal right to deceive and lie? God hates lying (Prov 6:16–17; Zec 8:16–17) and expects people to tell the truth (Ex 20:16; Lev 19:11; Eph 4:25; Col 3:9; Rev 22:15). On the other hand, Saul’s intentions were to kill an innocent man; Michal was not obligated to give him information that would help him carry out this wicked act. If Michal did not hide David’s escape and then lie about her cover-up, both she and David would probably have died.

Michal’s example does not give Christians, or anyone else, permission to lie for the sake of personal convenience, or to hide wrongdoing. But Michal’s actions demonstrate that, within an environment where human sin abounds, it is not always possible to choose between pure good and pure evil (see note on Ex 1:19).

19:19–24 On Saul’s prophetic activity, see note on 18:10.

19:23–24 On why there are two different accounts of the origin of this saying, see note on 10:11.

19:24 On whether this contradicts Samuel’s previous statement that he would never again see Saul, see note on 15:35.

Philbeck, B. F. (1972). *1 Samuel*. In H. F. Paschall & H. H. Hobbs (Eds.), *The Teacher’s Bible Commentary* (p. 174). Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers.

David Escapes Saul’s Assassins (1 Sam. 19:1–24)

The passage—When Saul’s first attempts to kill David failed, he turned to other devices. His first efforts to get his servants to assassinate his young rival were thwarted when Jonathan temporarily convinced his father that David meant him no harm (vv. 4–5). David’s popularity continued to rise, however, and Saul made another attempt on his life. Dodging Saul’s spear, David fled to his own home followed closely by Saul’s hired killers. Only a clever ruse devised by his wife Michal, Saul’s daughter, allowed David to escape undetected. Michal’s devotion to

her husband reflects honor upon her and adds weight to the indictment of Saul's unjust attacks upon David.

Rather than moving toward Bethlehem as Saul might have expected, David fled to Ramah to seek counsel from Samuel. When Saul learned where he was hiding, troops were dispatched with orders to bring him back. Saul's plans were frustrated, however, when the soldiers fell under "the spirit of God" and began "prophesying" among Samuel's band. Saul decided to capture David personally, but he too was incapacitated by a "prophetic seizure."

Special points—During this period, ecstatic or irrational behavior was apparently an important element in prophetic activity. At a later time, greater stress was put on the moral and spiritual qualities of the prophet's ministry.

The Holy Bible: New International Version. (1984). (1 Samuel 19). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

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