

I Samuel Lesson 24

I Samuel Chapter 24

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Memory verses for this week: *Gen 1:31 And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.*

Introduction: We continue our study on Samuel this week. In last week's lesson, we studied about David and his men delivering the town of Keilah from the attack of the Philistines. Saul heard about David being in this walled city, and determined to come down and take David as prisoner. God warned David that the people of Keilah would turn him over, and he and his men fled to the wilderness of Ziph. The people that lived there told Saul where he was hidden, and chapter 23 closed with the army of Saul compassing all about David and his men. When it looked like there was no hope of escape, Saul received a message that the Philistines were attacking the Israelites, so he turned and left pursuing David. God may not always deliver the Godly the way we want, but he sure finds a way to do it.

I. David Shows Mercy to Saul in Engedi

1 Sam 24:1 And it came to pass, when Saul was returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, Behold, David is in the wilderness of Engedi.

1 Sam 24:2 Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats.

As I just mentioned, we closed Chapter 23 with Saul returning home due to the Philistines invading his country. After Saul put down the Philistines, he received word that David was in the wilderness of Engedi. Immediately Saul takes up his attempt to find David and put him to death. He brings 3,000 of his best men and seeks David in the wild country of the barren shore of the Dead Sea where there are many caves. It was in these caves that the wild goats found shelter and the shepherds penned their sheep.

1 Sam 24:3 And he came to the sheepcotes by the way, where was a cave; and Saul went in to cover his feet: and David and his men remained in the sides of the cave.

1 Sam 24:4 And the men of David said unto him, Behold the day of which the LORD said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee. Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily.

In one of these very large caves, David stayed hidden with his men, somewhere in the range of 400 men. Saul came into the very cave where David and his men were hiding. He came in to rest and had no idea that he had put himself in the hands of the men he sought to slay. David's men judged that God had put the leader here to allow David to slay King Saul.

They perceived this was God's way of fulfilling the promise that David would take the kingdom from Saul. The men urge David to rise up and slay Saul and this would end his relentless pursuit of them. From all we can see, it appears this would have been very easy for David to have done. Rather than assassinating Saul, David rather cuts off the bottom of the king's robe. It appears that Saul had removed the robe before David did this.

1 Sam 24:5 And it came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt.

1 Sam 24:6 And he said unto his men, The LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the LORD'S anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the LORD.

1 Sam 24:7 So David stayed his servants with these words, and suffered them not to rise against Saul. But Saul rose up out of the cave, and went on his way.

While this seemed like a small thing, verse 5 says that David's heart smote him about this act. He was deeply convicted that he should not have done this thing to the Lord's anointed. David saw Saul as the Lord's anointed and it was for God to bring death to the man, not for David to do. David was able to convince his men that he was right, and they agreed that it would be wrong to rise up against Saul.

This is a man being led by the Holy Spirit of God. Can you imagine how hard it would be to not put an end to the continual hounding that David experienced day after day. But with God's help, we can suffer persecution and rejoice that we are counted worthy.

When Peter and the other apostles were brought before the Sanhedrin council, they were not fearful for their lives, but spoke the truth.

Acts 5:27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them,

Acts 5:28 Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.

Acts 5:29 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

Acts 5:30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.

Acts 5:31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

Acts 5:32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

Acts 5:33 When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them.

..... Gamaliel told them to refrain from fighting against the apostles.

Acts 5:38 And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought:

Acts 5:39 But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.

Acts 5:40 And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

Acts 5:41 And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

Acts 5:42 And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

II David Identifies Himself to Saul

1 Sam 24:8 David also arose afterward, and went out of the cave, and cried after Saul, saying, My lord the king. And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed himself.

1 Sam 24:9 And David said to Saul, Wherefore hearest thou men's words, saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt?

David arose and followed Saul out of the cave and cries out to him. When Saul looked behind, David bowed with his face to the ground. David asks Saul why he listened to men who told him that he sought to hurt King Saul. David could easily have put Saul to death in the cave, but did not harm him in anyway. It is always a dangerous thing to listen to the rumors of men.

Matthew Henry said this about the men telling Saul that David was a danger unto him.

He lays the blame of his rage against him upon his evil counselors: *Wherefore hearest*

thou men's words? v. 9. It is a piece of respect due to crowned heads, if they do amiss, to charge it upon those about them, who either advised them to it or should have advised them against it. David had reason enough to think that Saul persecuted him purely from his own envy and malice, yet he courteously supposes that others put him on to do it, and made him believe that David was his enemy and sought his hurt. Satan, the great accuser of the brethren, has his agents in all places, and particularly in the courts of those princes that encourage them and give ear to them, who make it their business to represent the people of God as enemies to Caesar and hurtful to kings and provinces, that, being thus dressed up in bear-skins, they may "be baited."

III. He solemnly protests his own innocence, and that he is far from designing any hurt or mischief to Saul: "There is neither evil nor transgression in my hand, v. 11. I am not chargeable with any crime, nor conscious of any guilt, and, had I a window in my breast, thou mightest through it see the sincerity of my heart in this protestation: I have not sinned against thee (however I have sinned against God), yet thou huntest my soul," that is, "my life." Perhaps it was about this time that David penned the seventh psalm, concerning the affair of Cush the Benjamite (that is, Saul, as some think), wherein he thus appeals to God (v. 3-5): If there be iniquity in my hands, then let the enemy persecute my soul and take it, putting in a parenthesis, with reference to the story of this chapter, Yea, I have delivered him that without cause is my enemy.

1 Sam 24:10 Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that the LORD had delivered thee to day into mine hand in the cave: and some bade me kill thee: but mine eye spared thee; and I said, I will not put forth mine hand against my lord; for he is the LORD'S anointed.

1 Sam 24:11 Moreover, my father, see, yea, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand: for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou and see that there is neither evil nor transgression in mine hand, and I have not sinned against thee; yet thou huntest my soul to take it.

David explains to Saul that he could have killed him in the cave and tells him to look at the skirt of his robe. Rather than killing him, he cut off a portion of the robe. David explains how his men encouraged him to take Saul's life, but he refused to put forth his hand against the Lord's anointed. He informs Saul that he had not hearkened to the voice of his men and he felt it would be wrong for him to put Saul to death. He goes on to tell him that there was no evil nor transgression in his hand, and that he had not sinned against him. While David had done all this good, Saul still hunted to take his soul from him.

1 Sam 24:12 The LORD judge between me and thee, and the LORD avenge me of thee: but mine hand shall not be upon thee.

1 Sam 24:13 As saith the proverb of the ancients, Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked: but mine hand shall not be upon thee.

1 Sam 24:14 After whom is the king of Israel come out? after whom dost thou pursue? after a dead dog, after a flea.

1 Sam 24:15 The LORD therefore be judge, and judge between me and thee, and see, and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thine hand.

David reminds Saul of how he has gone to a lot of trouble to try and kill one that had done him no harm. He asks that God judge between the two of them and avenge him. But as for David, he assures Saul that his hand would be upon him. He quotes a proverb that Saul was most likely familiar about how wickedness proceedeth from the wicked, but mine hand shall not be upon thee. David likens Saul's efforts against him as one seeking to catch a flea or seeking a dead dog that could do no harm unto him. Again David asks God to be the one to judge and to deliver him from the hand of Saul as he had done so many times before this day.

III. Saul Answers David and Departs

1 Sam 24:16 And it came to pass, when David had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul, that Saul said, Is this thy voice, my son David? And Saul lifted up his voice, and wept.

1 Sam 24:17 And he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.

1 Sam 24:18 And thou hast showed this day how that thou hast dealt well with me: forasmuch as when the LORD had delivered me into thine hand, thou killedst me not.

1 Sam 24:19 For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away? wherefore the LORD reward thee good for that thou hast done unto me this day.

When Saul heard David's words, he acknowledges that David was speaking the truth and it caused him to weep. He commends David as a man more righteous than himself in letting his enemy go when he could have killed him. He goes on to tell David that God would surely reward him for his goodness.

1 Sam 24:20 And now, behold, I know well that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand.

1 Sam 24:21 Swear now therefore unto me by the LORD, that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, and that thou wilt not destroy my name out of my father's house.

1 Sam 24:22 And David sware unto Saul. And Saul went home; but David and his men gat them up unto the hold.

Saul confesses that David would surely one day be king of Israel and calls on David to swear that he would not cut off Saul's family nor destroy his name out of

his father's house. David being the great man he was agrees that he will not bring harm or cut off his family. Saul returns to his home and stops pursuing David at this time. David remained in the stronghold of the cave. Later events prove that David was wise not to trust the king. Psalms 57 and 142 were probably written at this stage of David's life. These Psalms show David's dependence on the Lord during these trying times.

Psa 57:1 To the chief Musician, Altaschith, Michtam of David, when he fled from Saul in the cave. Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast.

Psa 57:2 I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me.

Psa 57:3 He shall send from heaven, and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up. Selah. God shall send forth his mercy and his truth.

Psa 57:4 My soul is among lions: and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.

Psa 57:5 Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; let thy glory be above all the earth.

Psa 142:1 Maschil of David; A Prayer when he was in the cave. I cried unto the LORD with my voice; with my voice unto the LORD did I make my supplication.

Psa 142:2 I poured out my complaint before him; I showed before him my trouble.

Psa 142:3 When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path. In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me.

Psa 142:4 I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul.

Psa 142:5 I cried unto thee, O LORD: I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living.

Psa 142:6 Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low: deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I.

Psa 142:7 Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name: the righteous shall compass me about; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me.

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.