

David Spares King Saul (1 Sam. 24)

Saul Goes To En Gedi (1 Sam. 24:1-2)

1 Now it happened, when Saul had returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, “Take note! David is in the Wilderness of En Gedi.” 2 Then Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel, and went to seek David and his men on the Rocks of the Wild Goats.

- Once again, Saul is not fulfilling his kingly duties. The most common description of Saul in the Bible is that he is afraid.
- One of the marks of a divinely-led leader is, of course, receiving divine communication – and Saul is not!
- Saul changes his tactics, using a smaller group of “special forces.” Even so, he still greatly outnumbers David.
- Notice the picture of “David’s Falls” at En Gedi.
- Interesting re Israel’s caves: <https://www.israel21c.org/top-10-caves-of-israel/>

David Cuts Saul’s Robe (1 Sam. 24:3-7)

3 So he came to the sheepfolds by the road, where there was a cave; and Saul went in to attend to his needs. (David and his men were staying in the recesses of the cave.) 4 Then the men of David said to him, “This is the day of which the LORD said to you, ‘Behold, I will deliver your enemy into your hand, that you may do to him as it seems

good to you.’” And David arose and secretly cut off a corner of Saul’s robe. 5 Now it happened afterward that David’s heart troubled him because he had cut Saul’s robe. 6 And he said to his men, “The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my master, the LORD’s anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the LORD.” 7 So David restrained his servants with these words, and did not allow them to rise against Saul. And Saul got up from the cave and went on his way.

- The sheepfolds were stone enclosures covered over with thorns.
- “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.” (John 10:1-2)
- Where does a faithful shepherd sleep?
- “Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.” (John 10:7b-9)
- Sheepfolds could be built by the mouths of caves.
- Literally, Saul was “covering his feet,” meaning he was relieving himself.

David’s Choice

- His men are appealing to a prophecy or referring to multiple, general prophecies.
- They seem to phrase their argument in spiritual words. (A devilish tactic!)
- Remember that the Israelites did not wear rounded robes.

- *Again the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the children of Israel: Tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a blue thread in the tassels of the corners.”* (Numb. 15:37-38)
- *“You shall make tassels on the four corners of the clothing with which you cover yourself.”* (Deut. 22:12)
- As David cuts the corner of the robe, there is a real symbolic action here, corresponding to the prophecy of Samuel.
- David was stricken in his conscience and he cut his men to pieces.

The Lord’s Anointed

- David felt guilty because he still considered Saul his master. He never viewed himself as a rebel.
- More importantly, David feels guilty because he moved against the Lord’s anointed. To dishonor Saul like this was to dishonor Yahweh, who had installed him in his office.
- *“You shall not revile God, nor curse a ruler of your people.”* (Exodus 22:28) This was probably applied to important civil leaders as well as the priests, prophets, and the king, who were all seen as specially chosen by Yahweh.
- Notice that Saul has no problem disobeying this commandment in the severest way possible, but David’s heart struck him for simply cutting the king’s garment.

How To Build A Kingdom

- Sparing Saul was a critical decision that set the course for David’s life and kingdom. David would let the Lord bring about the prophecies over his life in God’s own way and in God’s own timing.
- *It is an abomination for kings to commit wickedness, for a throne is established by righteousness.* (Proverbs 16:12)
- Our flesh is tempted to make things happen, especially if we have a clear word.
- When God has us in the winepress, it’s only because He knows how to get the best wine out of our lives.
 - *But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.* (Jas. 1:4)
 - *...the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.* (Jas. 1:20)

David Appeals To Saul (1 Sam. 24:8-15)

8 David also arose afterward, went out of the cave, and called out to Saul, saying, “My lord the king!” And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed down. 9 And David said to Saul: “Why do you listen to the words of men who say, ‘Indeed David seeks your harm’? 10 Look, this day your eyes have seen that the LORD delivered you today into my hand in the cave, and someone urged me to kill you. But my eye spared you, and I said, ‘I will not stretch out my hand against my lord, for he is the LORD’s anointed.’ 11 Moreover, my father, see! Yes, see the corner of your robe in my hand! For in that I cut off the corner of your robe, and did not kill you, know and see that there is neither evil nor rebellion in my hand, and I have not sinned against you. Yet you hunt my life to take it. 12 Let the LORD judge between you and

me, and let the LORD avenge me on you. But my hand shall not be against you. 13 As the proverb of the ancients says, 'Wickedness proceeds from the wicked.' But my hand shall not be against you. 14 After whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom do you pursue? A dead dog? A flea? 15 Therefore let the LORD be judge, and judge between you and me, and see and plead my case, and deliver me out of your hand."

- One of the most beautiful, emotional, and longest speeches in Samuel.
 - Notice how David honors Saul as his master, as the Lord's anointed, and as his father (father-in-law).
 - He also demonstrates respect physically, by bowing down.
 - David refers to the idea of the hand seven times. This emphasizes the power that God and David have over Saul.
 - He also mentions the eye or seeing several times. This emphasizes that everyone should recognize the true nature of the facts.
- David gives him a "proverb of the ancient people," that wickedness comes from the wicked. These events should prove that David is good and has good intentions. He may also be implying that Saul is acting wickedly.
- David did not feel obligated to say that Saul was right, but because of Saul's position he speaks to him deferentially, and will let God judge him.

Saul's Confession And Request (1 Sam. 24:16-21)

16 So it was, when David had finished speaking these words to Saul, that Saul said, "Is this your voice, my son David?" And Saul lifted up his voice and wept. 17 Then he said to David: "You are more righteous than I; for you have rewarded me with good,

whereas I have rewarded you with evil. 18 And you have shown this day how you have dealt well with me; for when the LORD delivered me into your hand, you did not kill me. 19 For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him get away safely? Therefore may the LORD reward you with good for what you have done to me this day. 20 And now I know indeed that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand. 21 Therefore swear now to me by the LORD that you will not cut off my descendants after me, and that you will not destroy my name from my father's house.” 22 So David swore to Saul. And Saul went home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

- It doesn't show up in English, but in the Hebrew, Saul used the same word, translated "good," three or four times. It's all reinforcing the idea that David is good and merciful, while Saul is the opposite.
- David swore to him, as he did to Jonathan, that he would not wipe out Saul's house. However, notice that Saul made no attempt to bring David back, and David certainly would not go with him. The breach is permanent.
- David gives us powerful lessons on walking in wisdom and in showing appropriate deference to leaders. There is also a vital lesson for us in allowing God to bring us a good outcome, rather than taking matters into our own hands and spoiling things, ruining our own hearts.

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