

Church of God Sunday School

DAVID SPARES HIS ENEMY

1 Samuel 21:1-3, 7-15; 22:1-2; 23-24; 26

David had run away to hide from King Saul! King Saul wanted to kill David! King Saul was jealous of David because the people loved him and God was with him.

David went to the little town of Nob, the city of the priests. He told Ahimelech, the priest, that he had been sent on an urgent, secret mission for the king and had had no time to take food or weapons. (That was a lie, but God saw everything that David did, just as He sees all that we do.) David asked Ahimelech to supply him with food and weapons, so Ahimelech gave him some bread and Goliath's sword.

While David was there, he saw Doeg, one of Saul's herds-men. David knew that Doeg might tell Saul where he was, so he fled to Achish, the king of Gath. When he got there, the servants of Achish asked the king: "Is not this David the king of the land? did they not sing . . . Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands?" David knew what they had told the king. He became afraid that Achish might try to kill him too!

David thought to himself, What can I do? He decided to act like a crazy person, a madman! That ought to make King Achish think he was harmless, shouldn't it? But King Achish did not want a madman around, so David ran away again.

That time he hid in a cave called Adullam. His brothers came to him there—and not only them—but about 400 other men came too! These were men who were in some kind of trouble or were discontented somehow or in debt. These men formed a small band of soldiers. David was their captain. He loved them all.

Meanwhile, that nasty man Doeg had gone back and told Saul where David had been. King Saul then ordered that all the priests be killed! Abiathar was the only person to escape, and he went to be with David too.

When David heard that the town of Keilah was being attacked by the Philistines, he asked God if they should go and fight with the Philistines. God's answer was yes; go. So David and his men went to Keilah. They fought the Philistines and took their cattle. After they had defeated the Philistines and saved Keilah, David and his men lived in Keilah for a while.

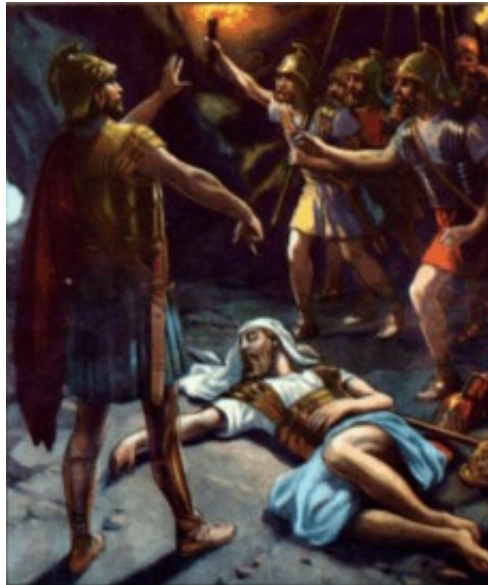
Someone told Saul that David was in Keilah. Saul thought it would be easy to capture David then, since Keilah was an enclosed city. But Saul forgot that God was with David, and David had talked to God. David asked God if the people of Keilah would turn him over to Saul, and God said they would. So David and his army of men, which had grown to be 600 by that time, left Keilah. They went wherever they could find a hiding place. In the wilderness of Ziph, they went to a mountain and hid in caves and strongholds.

Saul went to the wilderness of Ziph also. He looked for David in the wilderness, but God kept David and his men hidden.

One day David's very best friend, Jonathan, came to see him. He found David and reassured him: "Fear not: for the hand of Saul my

father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and that also Saul my father knoweth." David and Jonathan promised, again, that they would be true to each other. Then David went back into the wilderness, and Jonathan went to his house.

But Saul continued to hunt for David. When the people of Ziph told Saul which strongholds David was hiding in, Saul thought he could surely catch him. But David managed to escape to the wilderness of Maon. Saul chased after David there—and one time he almost caught him! Saul had David and his men surrounded; they were just ready to take them! But then Saul got word that the Philistines had invaded the land! So, Saul had to stop chasing David long enough to fight the Philistines.



Whew! That gave David and his men the chance to escape to strongholds in the wilderness of Engedi.

When Saul returned from chasing after the Philistines, he got back on David's trail again. That time, he gathered 3000 men and went to hunt for David among the rocks where the wild goats lived.

Saul went into a certain cave to lie down and sleep. He did not know that David and his men were already hiding in that very cave! After Saul had gone to sleep, David's men said to David, "Behold the day of which the LORD said unto thee . . . I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee."

David got up, sneaked over to the sleeping Saul and cut off part of his robe! Then David felt bad for having done that. His conscience bothered him! David could have killed Saul, but he did not want to hurt God's anointed man. David had a good heart.

Saul got up after his nap and left the cave. He did not even know of the danger he had been in while he slept. David quietly followed him.

After Saul was far enough ahead, David cried, "My lord the king." Saul turned and saw David bowing, with his face to the ground. David said, "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.

"Moreover . . . 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. . . . but mine hand shall not be upon thee."

Saul heard David and called to him, "Is this thy voice . . . David?" Saul was so overcome that he wept. He said: "Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil. . . . And now, behold, I know well that thou shalt surely be king" Saul wanted David to promise that he would not destroy his children or destroy his name after he was king. When David promised not to do those things, Saul went back home. David and his men returned to their stronghold.

Had Saul really changed in his heart toward David? Had he allowed God to change his heart? No. When God changes your heart, you are a totally new person as far as your desires and your actions. Saul's heart still had jealousy and hatred in it. His heart had not changed. So it was not surprising that, after some time, Saul was back after David again.

Once more, the people of Ziph told Saul where David was. (Were they tattletales or what?)

David knew that Saul was hunting for him again. When David knew where Saul's camp was, he waited until dark; then he and Abishai crept up to Saul's camp. Saul and all his men were sound asleep: God had put a deep sleep on them. Saul's spear was stuck in the ground by his head. Abishai wanted to kill Saul, but David said, "Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the LORD's anointed, and be guiltless?"

David just took Saul's spear and his water pot. Then he went to a hill far away from Saul's camp. He stood on the top of the hill and called to Abner, the captain of Saul's army. Abner said, "Who art thou that criest to the king?"

David said to Abner: "Art not thou a valiant man? . . . wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king? . . . This thing is not good that thou hast done. . . . ye are worthy to die, because ye have not kept your master, the LORD's anointed. And now see where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his bolster." In other words, David was saying: "Shame on you, you naughty Abner. You were not doing your duty!" David was mocking Abner.

When Saul realized that it was David talking, he said again, "Is this thy voice . . . David?" Then David said: "It is my voice, my lord, O king. . . . Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth before the face of the LORD: for the king of Israel is come out to seek a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains."

Then Saul admitted he had sinned and "played the fool" and "erred exceedingly."

David said: "Behold the king's spear! . . . let one of the young men come over and fetch it. . . . the LORD delivered thee into my hand to day, but I would not stretch forth mine hand against the LORD's anointed." David then asked that the Lord value his life as much as he had valued Saul's and to deliver him from his trial and tribulation.

Saul was glad that David had not killed him when he could have. Saul said, "Blessed be thou, my son David: thou shalt both do great things, and also shalt still prevail." Then David and Saul each went back to their own places.

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**MEMORY VERSE:**

*"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which spitefully use you and persecute you."*

—Matthew 5:44  
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David was fleeing from King Saul who wanted to kill him. He was hiding in a cave near Engedi. What happened there?

Cross out the letters in these squares, and read the message.

1	35	56	85
6	36	57	89
7	37	61	90
12	38	71	96
13	39	73	
18	45	79	
23	46	80	
28	47	81	
34	53	84	

	B ₁	K ₂	I ₃	N ₄	G ₅					
C ₆	D ₇	S ₈	A ₉	U ₁₀	L ₁₁	E ₁₂				
M ₁₃	C ₁₄	A ₁₅	M ₁₆	E ₁₇	L ₁₈	I ₁₉	N ₂₀			
T ₂₁	O ₂₂	K ₂₃	T ₂₄	A ₂₅	K ₂₆	E ₂₇	G ₂₈	A ₂₉		
R ₃₀	E ₃₁	S ₃₂	T ₃₃	B ₃₄	R ₃₅	S ₃₆	B ₃₇	T ₃₈		
P ₃₉	D ₄₀	A ₄₁	V ₄₂	I ₄₃	D ₄₄	Q ₄₅	B ₄₆	C ₄₇		
C ₄₈	R ₄₉	E ₅₀	P ₅₁	T ₅₂	E ₅₃	U ₅₄	P ₅₅	R ₅₆	S ₅₇	
A ₅₈	N ₅₉	D ₆₀	V ₆₁	S ₆₂	L ₆₃	I ₆₄	C ₆₅	E ₆₆	D ₆₇	
O ₆₈	F ₆₉	F ₇₀	W ₇₁	A ₇₂	K ₇₃	P ₇₄	I ₇₅	E ₇₆	C ₇₇	E ₇₈
V ₇₉	M ₈₀	N ₈₁	O ₈₂	F ₈₃	A ₈₄	O ₈₅	H ₈₆	I ₈₇	S ₈₈	L ₈₉
W ₉₀	O ₉₁	U ₉₂	T ₉₃	E ₉₄	R ₉₅	U ₉₆	R ₉₇	O ₉₈	B ₉₉	E ₁₀₀

David was ◆ + | | ○

about what he had done.

He told his men × + * to

■ ▲ | * Saul.

When the king × * □ *, David called out, "My Lord the king!"

He + + ◆ * * down to him. Saul was ◆ ▲ | ▸ | ★ ◆ * * to see

David! David ◆ ■ + ◆ * * Saul the piece of robe. He asked Saul ◆ ■ ○ he

was ■ ▲ × * ★ × ↖ an innocent man. Saul was glad David had not

✓ ★ × × * * him when he had the chance.

Find out more. Use the code to finish the story here.

♥ = A	⊗ = E	★ = I	☆ = M	↖ = Q	▲ = U	○ = Y
+ = B	□ = F	↗ = J	× = N	= R	⊗ = V	⊗ = Z
⇒ = C	↘ = G	✓ = K	+ = O	◆ = S	◆ = W	
⊗ = D	■ = H	× = L	▸ = P	* = T	● = X	



David Spared Saul's Life