

## 1 Samuel 24

**After Saul finished dealing with the immediate Philistine threat (23:28), what did he do (vv. 1-2)?**

He resumed his hunt for David. David got a short breather. Saul was back on the offensive. Our enemy Satan pursues us just like Saul pursued David – relentless, looking for a chink in our armor. It is a constant battle (Ephesians 6:12).....largely invisible but just as real as the battle David fought. Saul traced him to the rocky cliffs at En Gedi.

**When Saul arrived at En Gedi, what did he do (v. 3)?** He went into a cave to relieve himself.

**Where were David and his men (v. 3)?** The cave he chose was not empty. Farther in, the man he ruthlessly hunted was restraining his men from taking the monarch's life!

Saul had to attend to his personal needs at the exact moment he passed by the exact cave where David was hiding. **Did God arrange all this?** This was no coincidence, but sovereignly arranged by God to test David, to train David, and display the godly heart of David.

**How did David's men respond (v. 4)?** David's men were excited at the opportunity in front of them, and believed it was all a gift from God. They knew it was no coincidence that Saul came alone into that cave at that moment. So, they thought this was an opportunity from God to kill Saul.

Apparently, on some previous occasion, God had promised David: *"to you, 'I will give your enemy into your hands for you to deal with as you wish."* They believed that this was the fulfillment of that promise, and that David needed to seize the promise by faith and by the sword. But David knew of no command from God to take the kingdom by force. He was content to await God's time and method.

The men interpreted David's opportunity as a providential act of God. Interpreting providence is complex, but we must always evaluate our opportunities, and the advice of friends, in the light of God's Word, even when others claim to know God's will.<sup>1</sup>

**At the urging of his men, what did David do (v. 4)?** He crept up unnoticed and cut off a piece of the king's robe as evidence of his opportunity to kill him.

**Upon further reflection, how did David respond to his previous action (vv. 5-7)?** Even when he cut off a corner of the king's robe, his conscience bothered him. He did not take lightly the fact that Saul had been anointed as Israel's king. God must remove this king; David was to respect him until the Lord removed him.<sup>2</sup>

**When Saul left the cave, what did David do (vv. 8-15)?** David went out of the cave and called after Saul. Bowing to the king as an act of submission and humility, David told him that the slanderous reports of David wanting to harm him were untrue. That very day David could have taken his life, but he did not because Saul was the LORD's anointed. The portion of the robe in David's hand was evidence of his kindness. A wicked man might want to avenge himself, but David had no such desire. He asked Saul why he should conduct such a relentless campaign against one who was as harmless and insignificant as a dead dog and a flea.<sup>3</sup>

When David bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground, he showed great trust in God, because he made himself completely vulnerable to Saul. Saul could have killed him very easily at that moment, but David trusted that if he did what was right before God, God would protect him and fulfill the promise. Sometimes there is a fine line between trusting God and testing God.

In David's words to Saul, he twice called on the Lord to act as Judge (vv. 12, 15). He was content to leave his case to defend and save him in the hands of God rather than do what might seem right to the natural man. One of the things Peter remembered about our Lord was that *"When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly."* (1 Peter 2:23). May God enable us to be as trustingly calm in the face of adversity!<sup>4</sup>

**How did Saul respond to David's courageous confrontation (vv. 16-21)?** He was temporarily moved to tears by David's words. In repentance, Saul acknowledged the righteousness of David's behavior and his own wickedness. Surprisingly, he admitted that David would one day be king in Israel, and he made David take a solemn oath that he would deal kindly with his family. Then Saul left peaceably. But the respite David enjoyed was short. Saul would soon forget his kindness.<sup>5</sup>

Saul was probably bipolar. Here we see a moment of sanity in the midst of insanity.

**What was going through Saul's mind (v. 21)?** In that day, when one royal house replaced another, it was common for the new royal house to kill all the potential rulers from the old royal house. Saul knew that one day, David and his descendants would rule over Israel, and he wanted David to promise that he and his descendants would not kill or mistreat the descendants of Saul.

**After David gave his oath to Saul, what did the two men do (v. 22)?** Saul returned home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold (22:4).

**Why didn't David go back home with Saul and be restored to his home and his place at the palace?** Because David knew, that as much as Saul meant it at the moment, the struggle would be to *remain* in the place of victory. David had every right to say, *"I'm going to stay in the stronghold until I see the direction of Saul's life."*

Many times, a person repents and claims to recognize their sinful ways just like Saul did. But the validity of repentance and a changed heart isn't demonstrated by the emotion or sincerity of a moment. It is demonstrated by the ongoing direction of one's life.

David was determined that when he sat on the throne of Israel, it wouldn't be because *he* got Saul out of the way, but because *God* got Saul out of the way. Determined not to manipulate his way to the throne, he wanted God's fingerprints on that work, not his own, and he wanted to ascend to the throne with a clean conscience.

**When it came to respect, did David respect the man or the position?** Both. We need to respect the man as he serves in the God-given position. We need to respect him as a human being made in God's image. While we may disagree with his moral standards.....Romans 13:1 *Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established.*

---

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on 1 Samuel, 2024 Edition (published by Sonic Light), 174.

<sup>2</sup> William MacDonald, Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 315.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 316.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.