

## Saul Won't Relent in His Pursuit of David, Yet God Won't Relent in His Perfect Care

1 Samuel 23:1-29

- God continues to protect, provide for, and lead David, even as Saul doesn't relent in his pursuit. The Lord's comprehensive care and faithfulness for David are his hope, just as they are for us.
  - The chapter goes together as one, so details need to be summarized. The place names are all in Judah.
- I. The chapter describes David's rescue of Keilah, Saul's attempt to find him there and his escape, Jonathan's encouragement, the Ziphites conspiring with Saul, and David's further evading of Saul.
- **Vs. 1-6** - David is told the Philistines are attacking and robbing the threshing floors at Keilah (Stealing grain?). He asks the Lord if he should attack the Philistines, and the Lord says yes. His men tell him they're already afraid enough evading Saul, so he asks the Lord again, and the Lord promises he will give the Philistines to him. They defeat the Philistines, take their livestock (Provision?), and rescue the people of Keilah. Abiathar, who escaped to David in 22:20-23, is with him, with the ephod (Part of the high priest's attire, like an apron. It held the Urim and Thummim, and twelve stones, and was used to discern God's will [Chp. 14 and Jonathan and Saul. Chp. 21 and Ahimelech and Goliath's sword {Not in use by Saul?}] It's assumed he uses it here, as well as in the next verses.).
  - **Vs. 7-14** - Saul finds out where David is, and believes God's given him to him, for he's shut himself in by entering a town with gates and bars (Absurd.). He plans to go to Keilah with his army to besiege David and his men. David finds out, and tells Abiathar to bring the ephod. He asks the Lord if Saul will do this and if the men of Keilah will surrender him to Saul. The Lord answers that Saul will come down and Keilah will give David up (Judah, but they wouldn't want to be killed, like the priests. The Philistines just stole. This never happens. God is saying it will if David doesn't flee. Saul's willing to destroy another city.). So David and his 600 men depart Keilah, and go where they can (400 in 22:2.). Saul's told that David has escaped, and gives up. David remains in the strongholds in the wilderness, in the hill country of the wilderness of Ziph. Saul continues to seek him, but God does not give him into his hand.
  - **Vs. 15-18** - David's in the wilderness of Ziph at Horesh while Saul continues to pursue him. Jonathan comes to him at Horesh, and "strengthens his hand in God (Significant. Saul can't find him but Jonathan can.)." He says, "Do not fear, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find you. You shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you. Saul my father also knows this (Ultimately doesn't happen.)." They renew their covenant before the Lord (Third time.). David remains at Horesh, and Jonathan goes home (Last time they see each other.).
  - **Vs. 19-23** - The Ziphites (Vs. 14, 15 - David's location.) go to Gibeah and tell Saul David's hiding among them in the strongholds at Horesh, on the hill of Hachilah, south of Jeshimon. They tell him they'll surrender David to him (Also in Judah. Greater betrayal?). Saul says, "May you be blessed by the Lord, for you have had compassion on me (Again, absurd.)." He tells them to find out exactly where he is and who's seen him, for Saul's heard he's very cunning, and to mark the places where he hides, and come back to him with sure information. Then he'll come and search him out among all the thousands of Judah (Boasting.).
  - **Vs. 24-29** - The Ziphites return. David's told again Saul and his men are seeking him, probably from the Ziphites' information, so he and his men are in the wilderness of Maon, in the Arabah to the south of Jeshimon (He's becoming enclosed.). Saul hears, and pursues after David there. Saul's on one side of the mountain; David and his men are on the other side. David's hurrying to get away from Saul. They're closing in on David and his men to capture them (Critical.). A messenger comes to Saul, saying, "Hurry and come, for the Philistines have made a raid against the land." Saul gives up pursuing David for now to fight the Philistines. That place becomes known as the Rock of Escape, or Divisions. David goes and lives in the strongholds of Engedi.
- II. Several important demonstrations of God's protection and provision stand out, and have comprehensive application.
- A. David can and does go to the Lord in prayer.
- Vs. 2, 4, 10-12. 1 Pt. 5:7 - Casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.
- B. God's word guides, tells him to act, cultivates trust, removes fear, tells him what will happen, and promises his provision.
- Vs. 2, 4, 11-12. 2 Ti. 3:16 - All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.
- C. Jonathan encourages him with the future and certainty of God's plan.

- Vs. 17 - Ro. 8:30 - And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.
- D. God's sovereignty, as it has been already, is everywhere here.
- Vs. 7 - David does a good thing, here comes Saul again, and he's in jeopardy in Keilah, yet God is in this.
  - Vs. 11-12 - God tells him what would/could happen, though it doesn't, emphasizing his comprehensive knowledge, and the relationship between our choices and his providence.
  - The anticipated betrayal of Keilah, the actual betrayal of the Ziphites, and the scene at the mountain in vs. 26 are close calls, emphasizing how when things are the most critical, the Lord is faithful.
  - Vs. 27 - God diverts Saul with the Philistines, whom David defeated in vs. 5, raiding.
  - Vs. 14 - God did not give him into his hand.
  - The murder of the priests led to Abiathar coming to David, and being the means to communicate with God.
- E. The distress doesn't end as Saul persists and David goes from place to place, but neither does God's care.
- The name of the mountain in vs. 28 - Rock of Escape or Division.
- F. It continues to be clear that God is for David and against Saul.
- 1 Pt. 3:12 - For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.
- G. David knows the Lord is his only hope.
- His prayers. Jonathan's encouragement.
  - Psalm 54. To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments. A Maskil of David, when the Ziphites went and told Saul, "Is not David hiding among us?" O God, save me by your name, and vindicate me by your might. O God, hear my prayer; give ear to the words of my mouth. For strangers have risen against me; ruthless men seek my life; they do not set God before themselves. Selah. Behold, God is my helper; the Lord is the upholder of my life. He will return the evil to my enemies; in your faithfulness put an end to them. With a freewill offering I will sacrifice to you; I will give thanks to your name, O Lord, for it is good. For he has delivered me from every trouble, and my eye has looked in triumph on my enemies.
- H. While God is providing for him in his distress, he again uses him to provide for others in their distress.
- 22:1-2 (Oppressed and family.); 22:20-23 (Abiathar.). Vs. 5. He acts like a king, unlike Saul.
- I. God provides a priest.
- Vs. 6. The murder of the priests led to the priest God provided coming to David. Abiathar and his family.
  - This was essential in that setting to communicate with God to discern his will. Far more, for us, God has provided a Priest so that we can be reconciled to God, and come to him freely. This is all detailed in He. 4:14-16 - Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.
- J. God strengthens him with a friend and covenant.
- Vs. 15.18. This can be an actual human friend. Yet, beyond that, we are encouraged by Jn. 15:13-15 - Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.
  - Mt. 26:28 - For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.