



# THE BOOK OF samuel



## Week 26: David Spares Saul's Life

Quick thought from last week: read 1 Sam.23:26-28 Pt= God is in details; trust Him and do good and leave the rest in His hands

### **Read 1 Samuel 24:1-7**

Vs.1-2 Look at map for Engedi. "Crags of the Wild Goats" is an otherwise unidentified rock outcropping near the Dead Sea. But the area is where we also find the Fountain of the Goats, a beautiful stream that spills over a high cliff. Its waters fall some 600 feet. It is called no doubt because it is so difficult to reach. Dotting these rocky peaks were numerous limestone caves, which made a perfect place to hide. The water and caves provided shelter. And the high vantage point allowed David to see the approaching enemy first.

1. Saul came with 3,000 chosen men (vs.2) and David had only 600 (23:13), who were evidently not all in the same cave with him. Things were looking bad (or as my wife puts it: Things were looking right for a miracle). Describe a time in your life when things were looking right for a miracle; and describe what happened.

Answer:

Vs.3 Sheep pens were rows of stones raised about the mouths of caves, affording the sheep protection during the night.

Vs.3 Providentially, the cave that Saul chose to use was the same one in which David and his men were hiding.

Vs.4- There is no previous record of the divine revelation here alluded to by David's men. Perhaps this was their own interpretation of the anointing of David to replace Saul. If the alternate NIV reading is taken, the reference would not be to a verbal communication from God but to the providential nature of the incident. Things were looking right for a miracle). And David's men thought they got one.

Vs.4 Some suggest that David's confiscation of a portion of the royal robe signified the transfer of power from the house of Saul to the house of David. Regardless, by removing the corner of the robe, David made Saul's robe to be in a state of noncompliance with Torah requirements (cf. [Num 15:38–39](#); [Deut 22:12](#)).

2. As a result of David's action, he was conscience stricken because he felt that at some level lifting his hand was against "the anointed of the Lord" (v. [6](#)), which was felt to be rebellion against the Lord, who had commanded Israelites not to curse their rulers ([Exod 22:28](#)) and had previously punished Israelites who had expressed a rebellious attitude against constituted authority (cf. [Num 12:2–15](#); [16:1–35](#)). What should we do when our conscience bothers us?

Answer:

Make sure our conscience is properly informed. And if it is, apologize to God/others; and rectify the situation, if possible.

"shift from David as one whose life is endangered to David as one who spares life."

3. In vs.6 David would not allow his men to bring any harm to Saul. How might this apply to us today in regard to elected officials? (see 1 Peter 2:17)

Answer:

## **Read 1 Samuel 24:8-15**

vv. [8–21](#) contains the longest recorded quotes by both David (114 Hebrew words) and Saul (sixty-seven Hebrew words) found in 1 Samuel. They contain at least two major items: David’s most passionate affirmation of loyalty to the king and Saul’s confession that David would be Israel’s next king. It has also been called the most passionate and eloquent plea for reconciliation between persons recorded in all ancient literature.

In vv.8-15 David brought forward evidence to suggest that the premise upon which the attacks against him were based was entirely false. With the skill of an expert lawyer, David carefully laid out both eyewitness and material evidence to make his case. First, he discussed the eyewitness evidence. He pointed out that the evidence was fresh: it was based on events of “this day” (v. [10](#)). Furthermore, it was evidence that was directly available to Saul: “you have seen with your own eyes.” “the Lord delivered you into my hands,” and some of David’s men even “urged” David to kill the king. But “I spared you.”

David also declared his motive for sparing the king: it was because he respectfully recognized that Saul “is the Lord’s anointed.” David’s respect for human authority was based on his respect for divine authority.

Second, David presented material evidence to support the interpretation of events just given: a “piece of your robe in my hand” (v. [11](#)). David could have killed Saul but did not.

Finally, David led Saul to the desired verdict: he was “not guilty of wrongdoing or rebellion.” Thus he was no threat to Saul, and the king should stop treating David as if he were.

In attempting to kill an innocent man, Saul was violating the Torah and was in danger of bringing divine wrath upon himself (cf. [Exod 23:7](#)). Thus David was actually pleading for Saul to save himself, not just to spare David.

As he began to conclude his presentation to Saul, David’s language rose to the level of poetry. After whom goes forth Israel’s king? After whom are you seeking? After a lifeless dog? After a single flea? With these words David tacitly accused the king of acting like a fool and squandering resources.

David brought his address to a conclusion by employing five consecutive clauses that have the Lord as the subject, moving the focus away from Saul to an authority high above the king. He appealed to the Lord to (1) “be our judge, (2) “decide” the dispute, (3) “consider” his cause, (4) “uphold” it, and finally (5) “vindicate” him (v. [15](#)).

4. By referring to unnamed “men” in vs.9, instead of Saul as the initiator of hurtful actions against him, we have an example of “putting the best construction on things.” What does that mean and how should we do it today?

Answer:

vs.11 called him “father.” because he is David’s father-in-law (18:27)

5. Verse12 is a reminder of Romans 12:19 (“Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay.’”; also Dt.32:35). In what kind of situations, if any, do you find this difficult to do?

Answer:

### ***Read 1 Samuel 24:16-22***

6. Was vs.17 a genuine confession by Saul?

Answer:

This is temporary remorse (see.26:2) probably sheds from self-pity rather than repentance

Vs.20 Saul clearly and finally admits that David will be king, as Jonathan had already acknowledged.

Vs.21 Like his son Jonathan in [20:42](#), Saul exacts from David an oath of protection for his descendants. David fulfills this promise when he brings Mephibosheth, Jonathan’s son, under royal protection; see [2 Samuel 9](#)

Vs.22 From previous experience, David did not place any confidence in Saul’s words.

*The stronghold* is either the one at Adullam ([1 Sam. 22:1](#); etc.) or the stronghold of Masada; see on [22:4](#).

Saul Persecutes, David Flees — Engedi to Wilderness of Ziph

- Route of David and his men from Engedi to the wilderness of Maon
- Route of David's men from Maon to Carmel and back
- Route of the Ziphites from Ziph to Gibeah
- Route of Saul and his men from Gibeah to the hill of Hachilah
- Route of David and Abishai from Carmel to Saul's camp at the hill of Hachilah

- Event(s) with location
- Event(s) with uncertain location
- City
- City — less relevant
- City — location uncertain

