

**David Evades Capture (1 Sam. 23)**

**Shall I Go? (1 Sam. 23:1-2)**

*1 Then they told David, saying, “Look, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah, and they are robbing the threshing floors.” 2 Therefore David inquired of the LORD, saying, “Shall I go and attack these Philistines?” And the LORD said to David, “Go and attack the Philistines, and save Keilah.”*

- Threshing floors could be used as storage areas for grains and other food. It may also mean the Philistines were raiding at an opportune time.
- David deliberately seeks Yahweh (YHWH), addressing God as the one who made covenant promises to defend Israel.
- Interestingly, we don't know precisely how David sought the Lord. Abiathar the priest was not yet there, so he might have sought God through Gad.

**Inquiring of the Lord: OT & NT**

In *Judges* and *Samuel*, God speaks in various ways, such as: dreams and visions; prophetic words; and, angelic appearances. These were initiated by Him.

The people also sought supernatural guidance through means that they initiated:

- Casting of lots (*cont'd on next page*)

---

---

---

---

---

- *Urim and Thummim*
  - These were two sacred objects, perhaps special stones, that enabled the priests or others to perceive God’s intention.
  - We think that this name means “Lights and Perfections” in Hebrew.
- Of course, people were also expected to live by the Law of Moses.

**New Testament Guidance Is Different**

- We also have God’s Word to obey, but guidance is more widespread.
- Today we don’t have prophecy that is on the level of Scripture. All revelations must be judged before being accepted.
- We should all be able to hear God and make godly decisions through our fellowship with the Holy Spirit. (Colossians 3:15)

God’s communication with David and His lack of communication with Saul makes this a pivotal chapter in their saga.

**David Saves Keilah (1 Sam. 23:3-5)**

*3 But David’s men said to him, “Look, we are afraid here in Judah. How much more then if we go to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?” 4 Then David inquired of the LORD once again. And the LORD answered him and said, “Arise, go down to Keilah. For I will deliver the Philistines into your hand.” 5 And David and his men went to Keilah and fought with the Philistines, struck them with a mighty blow, and took away their livestock. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah.*

---



---



---



---



---

- Because of his men’s fears, David takes the additional step of inquiring of God again. God says, *I, myself, will deliver the Philistines into your hand.*
- The writer tells us that David *saved* Keilah. David was now going to start protecting Judah, as Saul had done.
- It’s also likely that Saul was leaving Israel open to attacks unnecessarily.
- David displays his good character in his willingness to defend Israel in the midst of his own difficulties.

**The Flight From Keilah (1 Sam. 23:6-13)**

*6 Now it happened, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David at Keilah, that he went down with an ephod in his hand. 7 And Saul was told that David had gone to Keilah. So Saul said, “God has delivered him into my hand, for he has shut himself in by entering a town that has gates and bars.” 8 Then Saul called all the people together for war, to go down to Keilah to besiege David and his men.*

*9 When David knew that Saul plotted evil against him, he said to Abiathar the priest, “Bring the ephod here.” 10 Then David said, “O LORD God of Israel, Your servant has certainly heard that Saul seeks to come to Keilah to destroy the city for my sake. 11 Will the men of Keilah deliver me into his hand? Will Saul come down, as Your servant has heard? O LORD God of Israel, I pray, tell Your servant.” And the LORD said, “He will come down.”*

*12 Then David said, “Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul?” And the LORD said, “They will deliver you.” 13 So David and his men, about six hundred, arose and departed from Keilah and went wherever they could go. Then it was told Saul that David had escaped from Keilah; so he halted the expedition.*

---



---



---



---



---

- The men of Keilah have proven to be treacherous, or at least ungrateful.
- Remember, the word was out about the slaughter at Nob.
- Saul continues to make a very odd show of religion.
- Saul also, strangely, overestimates himself and underestimates God.
- It is very significant that David is acting here as a servant of the Lord, on God's business. He has access to the ephod and God is gradually adding to him all the various facets of kingly leadership.
- The membership in David's little army is booming!

**A Final Meeting Of Friends (1 Sam. 23:14-18)**

*14 And David stayed in strongholds in the wilderness, and remained in the mountains in the Wilderness of Ziph. Saul sought him every day, but God did not deliver him into his hand. 15 So David saw that Saul had come out to seek his life. And David was in the Wilderness of Ziph in a forest. 16 Then Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David in the woods and strengthened his hand in God. 17 And he said to him, "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. Even my father Saul knows that." 18 So the two of them made a covenant before the LORD. And David stayed in the woods, and Jonathan went to his own house.*

- This is the last recorded meeting of these best friends.
- They make another covenant, unless this was a confirmation of their earlier promises. Back in Chapter 20, David agreed not to harm the family of Jonathan.

---



---



---



---



---

- Notice how David is safe even though Saul is hunting him literally every day.
- Jonathan, who has shown great wisdom before, knows that Saul will fail. He believes he will be the second in David’s kingdom, David’s lieutenant, so to speak.

**The Men Of Ziph Also Betray David (1 Sam. 23:19-23)**

*19 Then the Ziphites came up to Saul at Gibeah, saying, “Is David not hiding with us in strongholds in the woods, in the hill of Hachilah, which is on the south of Jeshimon? 20 Now therefore, O king, come down according to all the desire of your soul to come down; and our part shall be to deliver him into the king’s hand.”*

*21 And Saul said, “Blessed are you of the LORD, for you have compassion on me. 22 Please go and find out for sure, and see the place where his hideout is, and who has seen him there. For I am told he is very crafty. 23 See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking places where he hides; and come back to me with certainty, and I will go with you. And it shall be, if he is in the land, that I will search for him throughout all the clans of Judah.”*

- Saul puts these men to work as spies. David wrote Psalm 54 about this incident: *To the Chief Musician. With stringed instruments. A Contemplation of David when the Ziphites went and said to Saul, “Is David not hiding with us?”*

*1 Save me, O God, by Your name, and vindicate me by Your strength.*

*2 Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth.*

*3 For strangers have risen up against me, and oppressors have sought after my life; they have not set God before them. Selah*

---



---



---



---



---

*4 Behold, God is my helper; the Lord is with those who uphold my life.  
5 He will repay my enemies for their evil. Cut them off in Your truth.  
6 I will freely sacrifice to You; I will praise Your name, O LORD, for it is good.  
7 For He has delivered me out of all trouble; and my eye has seen its desire upon my enemies.*

- Saul actually blesses people in the name of Yahweh!

### **Saul Unable To Seize David (1 Sam. 23:24-29)**

*24 So they arose and went to Ziph before Saul. But David and his men were in the Wilderness of Maon, in the plain on the south of Jeshimon. 25 When Saul and his men went to seek him, they told David. Therefore he went down to the rock, and stayed in the Wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard that, he pursued David in the Wilderness of Maon. 26 Then Saul went on one side of the mountain, and David and his men on the other side of the mountain. So David made haste to get away from Saul, for Saul and his men were encircling David and his men to take them.*

*27 But a messenger came to Saul, saying, "Hurry and come, for the Philistines have invaded the land!" 28 Therefore Saul returned from pursuing David, and went against the Philistines; so they called that place the Rock of Escape. 29 Then David went up from there and dwelt in strongholds at En Gedi.*

- Notice how clever the writer is here: David hears, Saul does not!
- It seems clear that God intervenes to frustrate Saul's plans.
- David ends up in the region of En Gedi, an oasis with a powerful spring of water.

---

---

---

---

*All quotes NKJV except as noted. New King James Version®  
Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.*